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## **THE STATE OF ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION OF EDUCATION QUALITY IN LITHUANIA AND RASEINIAI MUNICIPALITY (EVALUATION REPORT)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Constantly changing environment requires performance orientation in every mainstream school and reaction to constantly changing educational system challenges. The quality of performance and self-evaluation helps school heads to choose purposefully the priorities for improvement activities. Schools activities evaluation associated with the attitude of a Good school conception, relevant to every school focusing its activity to progress and continuous improvement of the educational process. Every school as a community has to know the changes of self-assessment and evaluation, to have the ability of thinking over purpose of self-assessment and evaluation, analyse its use and difficulties, activity's quality monitoring, the meaning of self-assessment and evaluation during the process of managerial decisions.

### **THE LEGAL BASIS AND POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION QUALITY AND SCHOOLS ACTIVITIES SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Mainstream schools activities self-assessment and evaluation system created and implemented in accordance with acts and government strategy papers:

1. The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education (2011);
2. Government progress strategy "*Lietuva 2030*" (2011);
3. Government education strategy for 2013–2022 (2013);
4. The conception of a good school;
5. The schedule of pre-school, basic and secondary education programmes;
6. The conception of formal education quality assurance system;
7. The concept of pupil's achievements and progress evaluation

School activity, the state of education and the quality of provided services, pupil's achievements and progress is evaluated also during the accreditation of mainstream education programme, teachers' certification, school heads' certification, diagnostic and standardised tests. The procedure of using these evaluation instruments is determined by these acts of law:

1. Teachers and pupils assistance specialists (except psychologists) certification regulations;
2. State and municipal school heads, their deputies for education, heads of departments organising certification regulations;
3. Secondary education programs accreditation criteria and procedures description;

#### 4. National pupils achievements test organisation and performing procedure description.

The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education obliges to carry out monitoring, researches, schools' self-assessment and outer evaluation to enhance the education quality, certification for school heads and teachers, evaluation of learning achievements

School activity and education quality evaluation is achieved at different levels using various estimation instruments:

1. School level – is achieved by school activity self-assessment, is obtained by performing activity monitoring and preparing educational state report, performing teachers certification, checking pupils' achievements and progress during standardised tests.

2. Municipal (owner rights and orders implementing institutions) level – is obtained by performing regular education activity monitoring and supervision, provides methodical and consulting support for preparing strategic plans and other activity papers as well as for school activity enhancing, performing school heads certification, initiates and organises diagnostic and standardised tests.

3. National level - carrying out the outer school evaluation, secondary schools programmes accreditation, implementation of final exams and basic education achievements.

Educational monitoring, research, education activities self-assessment and external evaluation carried out by:

At school level- evaluating the quality of education activities planned and implemented by the school command along with the school community. Activities quality monitoring and self-assessment can be carried out by school activities quality self-assessment team, school strategic plan drafting group, methodical council or other working groups, put together for specific activity. All members of the school community involved in responsible self-assessment not only by presenting or collecting data, but also reflect on them and assume responsibility for school improvement processes and the implementation of decisions.

At Municipalities (owner of the rights and duties of the body) level the state of education and monitoring and educational service quality evaluation performing Municipal education division, which coordinates implementing of education policy in municipality and educational institutions activities.

At national level evaluation quality of education activities is performing National school evaluation agency, Ministry of Education and Science, Education Development Centre, National Exam Centre.

### **EDUCATION CONDITIONS. THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RASEINIAI MUNICIPALITY**

In 2016-2017 there functioned 6 gymnasiums, 7 basic schools (4 of them are multifunctional centres), Raseiniai special school, 1 progymnasium, 7 pre-schools, 2 non-formal children educational schools professional education institution- Public Institution – Raseiniai technological and business school in district. There functioned 2 educational helping institutions – Raseiniai district educational centre and Raseiniai pedagogical psychological office.

## Types of educational institutions and changes of their quantities in 2011-2016

School year	Number of schools and their departments	Primary education departments	Basic schools/ Multi-functional centres	Progim - nasiums	Secondary schools	Gymnasiums	Pre-schools	Non-formal children educational schools
2012-2013	24	2	8	-	3	3	6	2
2013-2014	24	2	8	-	3	3	6	2
2014-2015	24	2	7	1	1	5	6	2
2015-2016	24	2	7	1	-	6	6	2
2016-2017	22	-	7	1	-	6	6	2

**Number of pupils.** According to the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2016 data there were 3738 pupils in 1-12 classes in municipal mainstream schools. 801 were taught by pre-school educational programmes and 247 by preschool educational programmes. In total 4786 children were educated in educational institutions on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 2016.

**Education funding.** The income of Raseiniai district municipal budget in 2016 was 31.746.700 Eur along with the government donations, and dedicated funds from the government budget in accordance with the Republic of Lithuania act. 42.6 % of overall municipal budget were dedicated for education.

Year	The municipal budget revenue, Eur	Dedicated for Education, Eur	The part of municipal budget (%)
2016	31 746 700	13 522 200.0	42.6
2015	31 125 546	12 277 798.95	39.5
2014	29 453 284.3	12 494 844.8	42.7
2013	25 717 910	12 088 015.5	47
2012	28 048 714.1	12 890 871.2	46

## EDUCATION STATE MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION ACTIVITY SUPERVISION

The monitoring of Raseiniai district municipal education state and education quality evaluation is carried out by the department of Municipality education responsible for coordinating education policy implementing in municipality and educational institutions activity. Raseiniai district municipality Education and social affairs department activity in 2016 was organised implementing strategic plan to enhance education and upbringing facilities quality and accessibility.

Education, culture and upbringing department of Education and social affairs department has 5 employees: the head, 1 specialist assisted for education, 1 specialist assisted for education and sport range, 1 specialist assisted for education and culture range, 1 specialist as interinstitutional cooperation coordinator.

The monitoring of education is being done according to approved Education monitoring organising and performing schedule. A report is prepared annually on the state of Raseiniai district municipal education. 60 education monitoring indicators were used for implementing education

strategic aims were analysed in preparation of the report in 2016. During 2016 they implemented educational institutions activity supervision and carried out 15 upbringing activity implementation revise, teachers and heads certification, pupils' progress and achievements evaluation analysis and evaluation during performed exams and Diagnostic and standardised tests in 2<sup>nd</sup>,4<sup>th</sup>,6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes through fulfillment monitoring and supervising. For methodological and consultative assistance organised 23 briefings, meetings - discussions with education, culture institutions managers, for discussing the organisation of institutions, management and educational activity issues.

During the education monitoring and education quality evaluation specialists of the Department collect statistical data and performs an analyse. A stage of collecting and analysing data and information about individual schools is a part of evaluation process at schools. Evaluators collect a variety of different sources. Collected and analysed data and documents attributed to the nature of one of the following 4 categories:

**1.Statistical data** concerned to activity results and other quantitative indicators: the main indicator is pupils achievements or national tests results, which sometimes compared to regional or local level results. Such data complement the other quantitative information, for example: the number of pupils in the class, the ratio between pupils and teachers, the number of children having special needs, persons, who left school not finished education, change of teachers and so on.

**2.Reports and the other qualitative documents.** Analysed and using ready outer evaluation, internal audit department, controller service, the Country's control and other control institutions evaluation reports and certificates. Analysed school website and also general school policy documents.

**3.Administrative documents.** Review the strategic and annual activity plans, schedules, school head orders on school activity, municipal institutions meetings protocols, activity plans, school premises plan, internal regulations, financial statements, school education plan, pedagogical activity descriptions.

**4. Various school stakeholders** - school heads, teachers, parents, pupils or representatives of local community and documents about them or their carrying out activity. A part of this information is collected during visits to school, discussions or meetings.

## SCHOOL HEADS' CERTIFICATION

Heads certification performed in accordance with the procedure for certification procedures School heads, their deputies for upbringing. Certification performed in two stages:

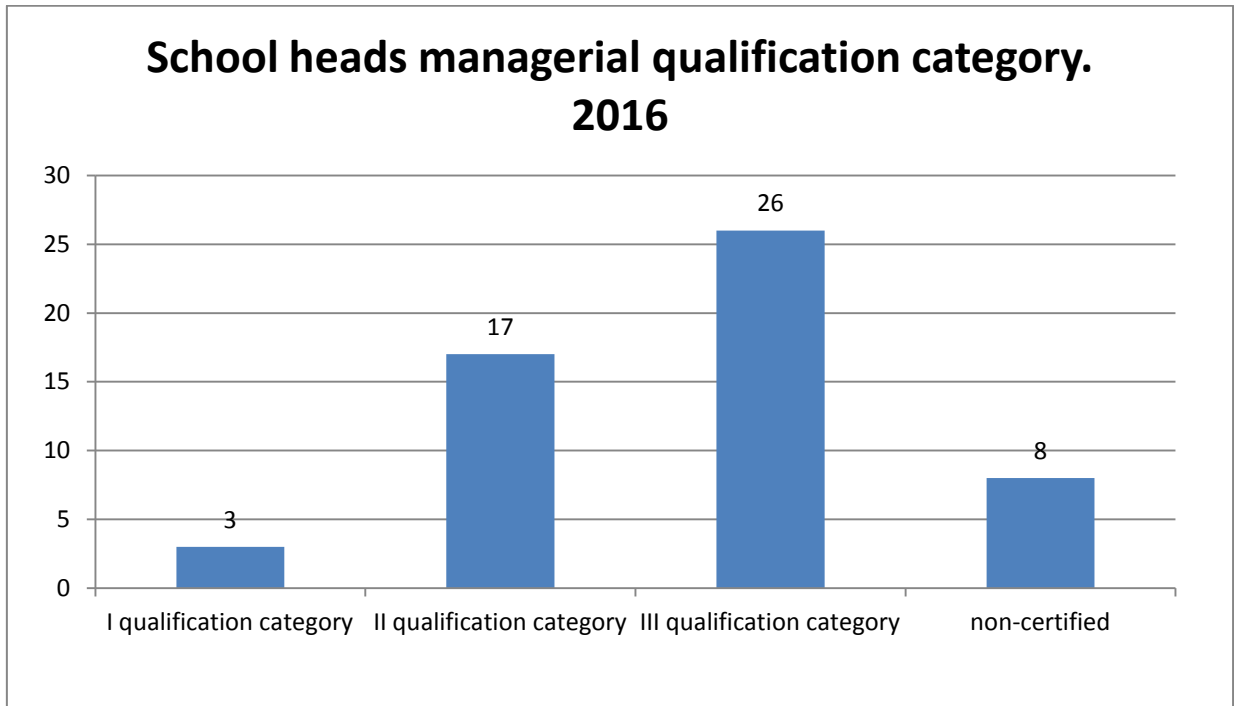
I stage - education consultants (management experts) evaluate attested head activity at school, have a look at heads activity report, school documents, educational environments, have a meeting and communicate with representatives of community, representatives of self-government institutions discusses on enhancing head's activity plan.

II stage – the head and an expert working group chairman present the head's activity report and activity improvement plan to the Management Certification Commission.

Once certified, the head may be granted I,II or III managerial qualification category. III category is the lowest and I is the highest.

To evaluate school head's activity during certification can only persons who have competence as management expert of educational consulter. There are 8 management experts in Raseiniai district municipality.

At the end of 2016 46 (85.2%) out of 54 heads employed in district mainstream and non-formal educational schools had managerial qualification categories. 26 (48.1%) of them had III managerial qualification category, 17 (31.5%) had II managerial qualification category and 3 (5.6 %) had I managerial qualification category. 8 (14.8%) were non- certified.



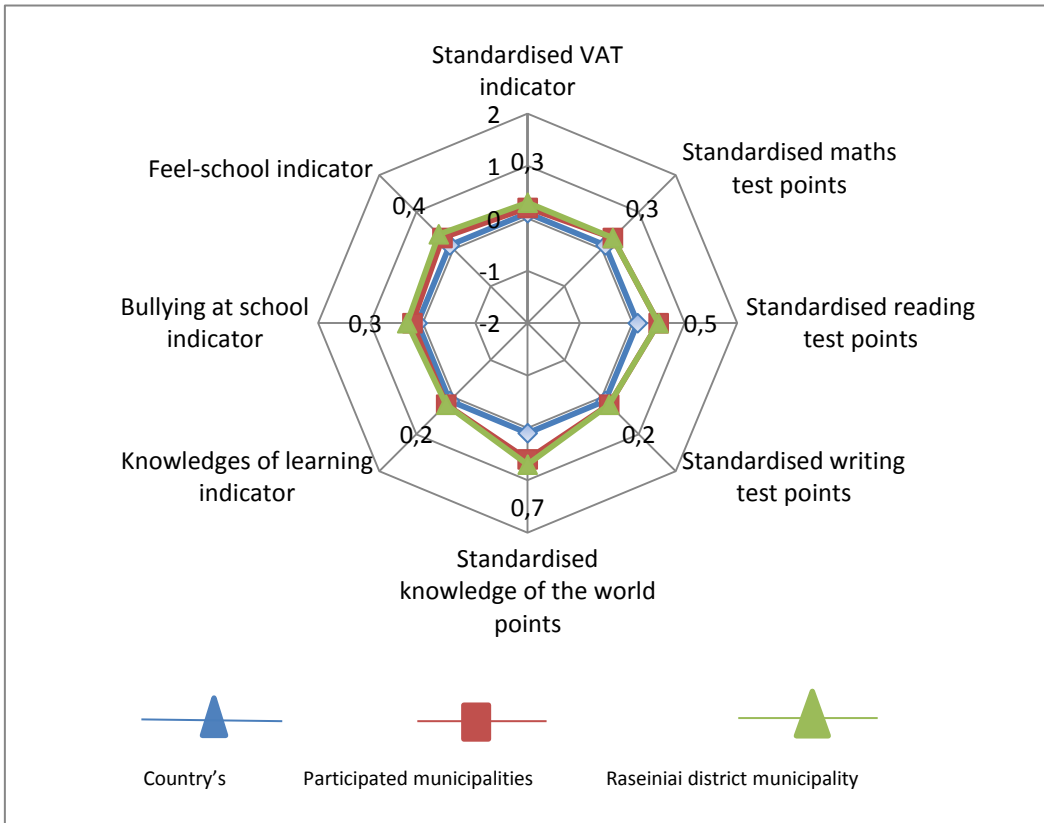
### **DIAGNOSTIC AND STANDARDISED TESTS IMPLEMENTATION**

Raseiniai schools participated for the second time in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes pupils's achievements inspection using standardised assessment tools- standardised tests, and for the first time in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes in 2016. Raseiniai district municipality follows the attitude that achievements of all the pupils are important and monitoring of every pupil learning achievement should be performed according objective learning achievements data.

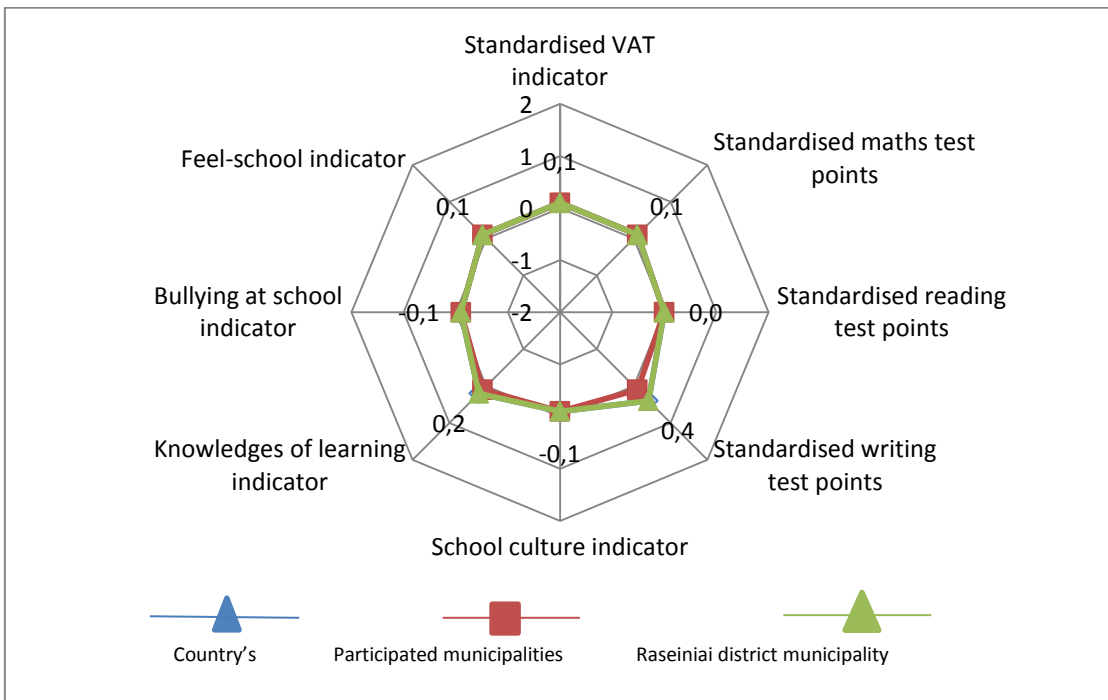
For the evaluation of pupils achievements in 2016 were performed standardised tests: reading (text comprehension), writing (text creation and knowledge of language structure) and maths diagnostic tests for the 2<sup>nd</sup> class pupils, reading (text comprehension), writing (text creation), mathematics and knowledge of the World for the 4<sup>th</sup> class, reading (text comprehension), writing (text creation), mathematics, science and social science for the 8<sup>th</sup> class pupils. Also were used questionnaires for the pupils of 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes.

In the graph below we can see that the fourth, sixth and eighth classes added rate (by + 0.3, + 0.1, and 0) is positive, but lower compared to last year fourth and eighth-classes value-added indicators (in 2015 it was + 0.6 and + 0.7).

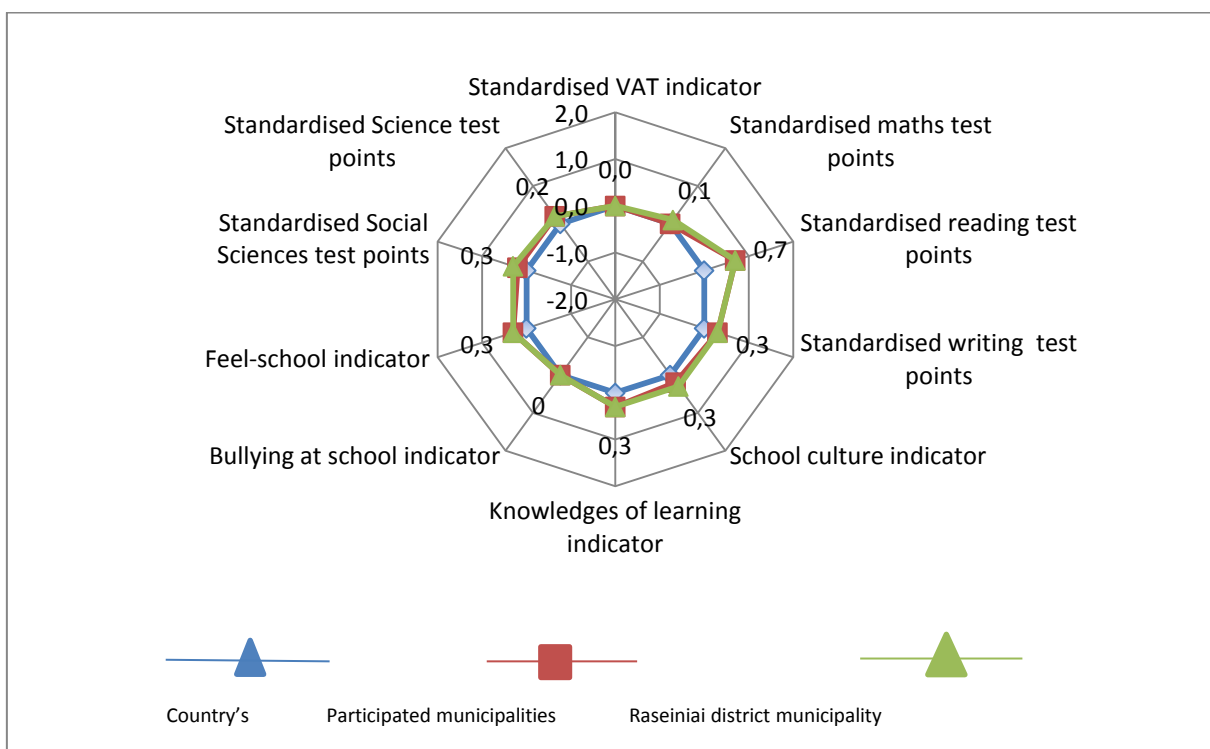
### 4<sup>th</sup> class



### 6<sup>th</sup> class



## 8<sup>th</sup> class



The majority of the tested subjects results average were positive, but results from some schools could not satisfy neither school nor Municipality, so it is a must constantly look for and introduce innovative learning methods, create new and effective learning strategies considering:

- to higher thinking skills training;
- the practical application of life skills;
- the formation of pupils' skills to solve problems;
- creativity, critical thinking, initiative promoting;
- systematic pupil's progress monitoring and recording;
- the achievement gap reduction between pupils from individual schools;
- about 70% of the schools test scores were close for annual pupils' grade point averages, but in some schools the results were unexpected.

### **Findings on the project „Standardised tests application in municipalities in 2016”**

Preparations for standardised tests took place on a voluntary basis, all schools have applied to participate in the study;

1. Test assesses pedagogues have gained valuable practical experience;
2. About 70% of the schools test scores were close for annual pupils' grade point averages,
3. Informative and well-formed profiles made a positive impact on pupils' learning motivation, it was great importance for the schools, for the teachers, pupils, parents.
4. Test results revealed the strengths and weaknesses of school activities;
5. All schools have developed school activities and individual pupils' progress improvement plans;
6. Positive schools feedback on the Education and Social Affairs of the Department of Education, Culture and Education Division specialists as well as Pedagogical psychological services and representatives from Raseiniai educational centre advice at schools promotes to further cooperation between the municipalities and schools to improve education field.

## SCHOOLS ACTIVITY QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

According to the school, implementing general education programs, activities quality self-assessment (further - the Methodology) schools performed self-assessment activities. School activities quality self-assessment objectives:

1. to develop data-based management culture of the school;
2. to motivate the school community to focused results-oriented discussion about a good school;
3. to consolidate the school community's commitment to the quality of education and responsibility, using the self-assessment as a daily practice - introspection, reflection, dialogue;
4. to the school improvement process involving all members of the community and other interested groups.

School activities quality self-assessment carried out in accordance with the following principles:

- cooperation,
- creativity,
- responsibility,
- objectivity,
- sustainable and shared leadership learning,
- humanity,
- democracy,
- confidentiality and tolerance.

Education Act sets that self-assessment of school activities areas, performance of the methodology is chosen by the school board. School activities self-assessment is one of possibilities evaluation school activities quality. A school activities quality self-assessment model is created of evaluation areas, which are detailed in topics, and the topics are divided into indicators. A school activities quality self-assessment model consists of 4 evaluation areas related by causative links: the results, education and self-development and pupils' experience, educational environment, leadership and management. School culture is not distinguished to separate areas, its aspects are described in achieving results areas. School activities quality self-assessment areas:

1. The first area is results - the most important school activities quality attribute. The aim of evaluation this area seeking to find out what is achievement educating every individual pupil, and what are school activities summarised results and also to grasp the change in results, both a pupil and a school progress.

2. The second area is education, self-development and pupils' experience. This area leads education results in two educational process aspects: formal education and school life in total, all the experience achieved at school or organised by school, involving school culture effect. Evaluating this area is seeking to find out how education is planned and organised and what experience pupils have at school.

3. The third area is educational environments. This area highlights physical and virtual learning environments importance to education. Evaluating this area emphasised on the development environment and the education relationship, involving educational process participants into the creation of spaces.

4. The fourth area is leadership and management. This area highlights as far as running a consistent and coherent whole school community reaching pupils' learning progress and achievements and personality maturity (growth). Evaluating how is reached decision at school community about activities prospect, what kind of provisions based on ongoing activities, how is reaching personal achievement of professional excellence.



School activities quality self-assessment is a part of management cycle. The self-assessment principles oblige school leaders, deputies for education, teachers act together in consultation with pupils, their parents (cares, youths) on pupils' reaching values, their progress and achievements improvement, creating atmosphere based on trust and respect to each other. School activities quality self-assessment initiated by the school head, self-assessment areas of performance and methodology chosen by the school board.

School activities quality self-assessment could be performed these ways:

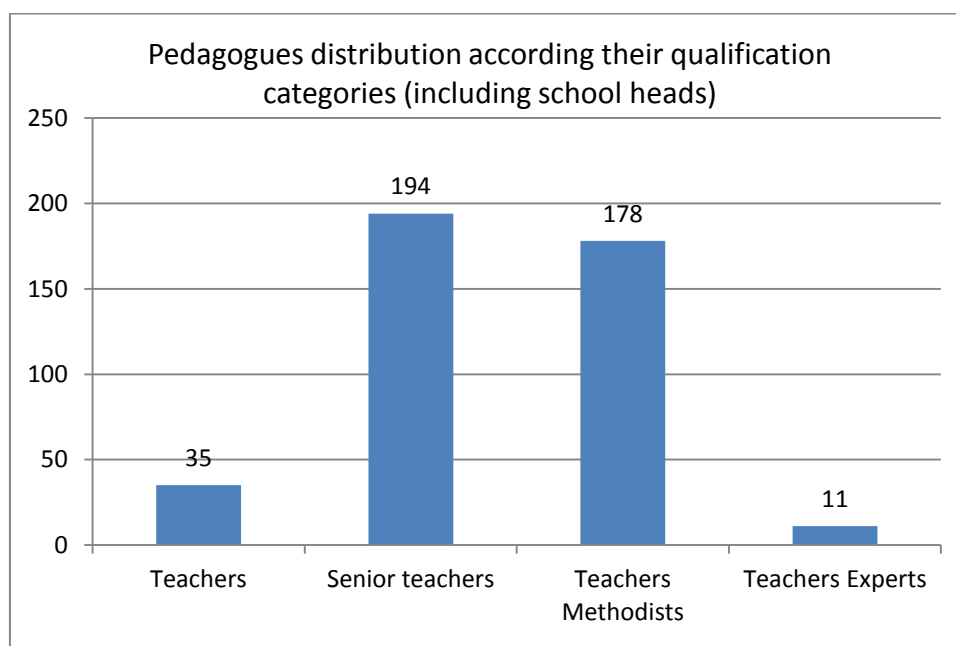
1. Wide (or overall) assessment. During it school community evaluates the whole areas, topics and indicators;
2. Thematic self-assessment - selected area or theme or a narrower activity aspect for closer state quality investigation, its aim to state the situation in a particular area;
3. Analysis of the surfaced school problem– carried out identified of the particular problem thoughtfully evaluating problematic area. The aim of problem analysis is to collect data, which shows the reason of unsatisfying situation and to give data based problem solving way.

During the performing of school activities quality self-assessment is collected reliable data, choosing the right social research methods. To collect and process data it is recommended for school to use National school activity evaluation agency on-line system [www.iqesonline.lt](http://www.iqesonline.lt).

For school activities quality self-assessment widely applied additional data sources: quantitative data monitoring school, pupils' progress and achievement of learning data, teachers and heads self-assessment and certification data, various carried out surveys and studies at school and so on. These data complement the direct data received during the self-assessment, they are used analysing the situation and basing decisions of ways for school quality and improvement.

### **TEACHER AND PUPIL SUPPORT SPECIALISTS CERTIFICATION ENFORCEMENT**

2016-2017 academic years Raseiniai district municipal schools employ 97% certified teachers. 8.1 % of them have teacher (professional) category, 44.8% - senior teacher (professional) category, 41.1% -methodologist (professional) category, 2.5% - teacher (professional) expert. 3.5 % non-certified pedagogues.



Teachers and education support specialists certification is performing guided by the teachers and pupil support specialist certification regulations. Annually by Raseiniai District Municipality educational institutions is prepared teachers and student support specialists certification programme of the year. The program is prepared for three years and adjusted annually, according to the teachers' requests and funding dedicated to specific institution. 34 teachers and specialists providing assistance to pupils were planning for certification in 2016, 22 out of them were certificated (64.7 % of all planned, 35,3% changed their decision).

## **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

School activities quality evaluation system consists of school self-assessment, which is the most important school activity ensuring the quality factor and external quality assessment.

School activities external quality assessment – formative assessment of ongoing school process, providing information for adjusting school activities and improving results

An external evaluation organised by the National School Evaluation Agency and the owner of the rights and obligations of the institution or the municipal executive authority. The owner of the rights and obligations of the institution or the municipal executive authority initiates, plans and organises the external evaluation of established schools, provides advice and assistance for school during its self-assessment before an external evaluation and after, monitors and analyses of school activities after an external evaluation.

An external evaluation at school is carried out by external assessors team.

The aim of external evaluation is to motivate schools to improve for a better education (self-development) quality and better pupils achievement.

External evaluation principles

1. Contextuality – evaluation of school performance quality of each school is recognised as a real social, economic, cultural, technological and educational context;

2. Objectivity – evaluation of school activities quality aspects decisions are based on reliable data, information and a mutual external evaluator team agreement;

3. Clarity – external evaluation team, school community and other external assessment organising persons share information in a timely agreed manner, analysing data, discuss on activities assessments and its adjustments;

4. Ethical – external assessors guided External assessors conduct rules (1<sup>st</sup> appendix);

5. Periodicity – assessment is organized and carried out in each country's school at least every 7 years. Evaluated schools list the following calendar year approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the current year till 10 September. During the assessment used 25 indicators system and 4 activity areas of the same school like in the school activities self-assessment:

- Results;
- Education(self-development) and pupils experience;
- Educational (self-development) environments;
- Leadership and management.

External school activities quality assessment is based on the carried out school self-assessment.

Schools evaluated periodically, at least every 7 years. Lithuania has applied overall external evaluation assessment of all four external evaluation fields. The evaluation focuses on monitoring lessons and analysing the processes taking place in the school. For monitoring and analyse educational activities ongoing school processes dedicated 75 % time of assessment and it is 75 % collected information. After the observed lessons is being told at least 3 strong aspects and no more than 2 improvable ones of the lessons.

**The external assessment process consists of 3 phases:**

- a) the first phase involves the separate school data collection and analyse;
- b) the second stage is preparing a visit to school, on purpose to monitor the work, to check the documents and talk with school representatives, as well as with other relevant stakeholders;
- c) the third stage prepared evaluation report. It describes the school context, all 4 areas and presented conclusions – at least 10 strongest and no more than 5 improvable ones school activity aspects.

Short external evaluation report is published to the public – distinguish strong and improvable aspects of school activities, but the school may, at its discretion, to publish the full report.

After evaluation, the school must initiate and organise the presentation of the findings of the external evaluation to the parents and pupils. The evaluation results are presented to the school community during general meetings, during methodological groups discussions, at the class meetings and so on. After the assessment, the school and municipal executive authority take care of activities improvement. Agency together with the Ministry of Education and Science monitor and analyse the progress of schools and the impact of provided assistance after external evaluation, if at least one of the topics and indicators rating was 1 or N level.

The National School Evaluation Agency prepares yearly annual report, which presents assessed schools situation of the schools activities quality, more detailed analyses any problematic area (such as school strategies, pupils' learning quality).

## **Final Provisions**

Motivating school self-assessment and evaluation processes and quality and during the assessment received information for more efficient use of school improvement, invoke and education support institutions representatives, after the evaluation at school targeted cooperating with schools, helping it to improve activity quality. To improve school activity and to ensure education quality can be applied financial support instruments to schools, supporting school improvement. School activity quality monitoring, self-assessment, evaluation, using various evaluating instruments, and improvement are interrelated cause and effect relationships, they influence each other. Improvement and evaluation cycle is usually associated with the school's strategic planning cycle. The results of school activities quality self-assessment and evaluation, the evaluation of school heads and teachers, pupils achievements and progress evaluation is a base mutual decisions by consensus achieved on the quality of activity, on the progress achieved by the school and the students' learning progress and achievements and school as organisation activities quality improvement, provide directions to improve, organisation pursued values and progress.