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Education and Culture

Socrates

Spanish Paper on Educational and Teaching System



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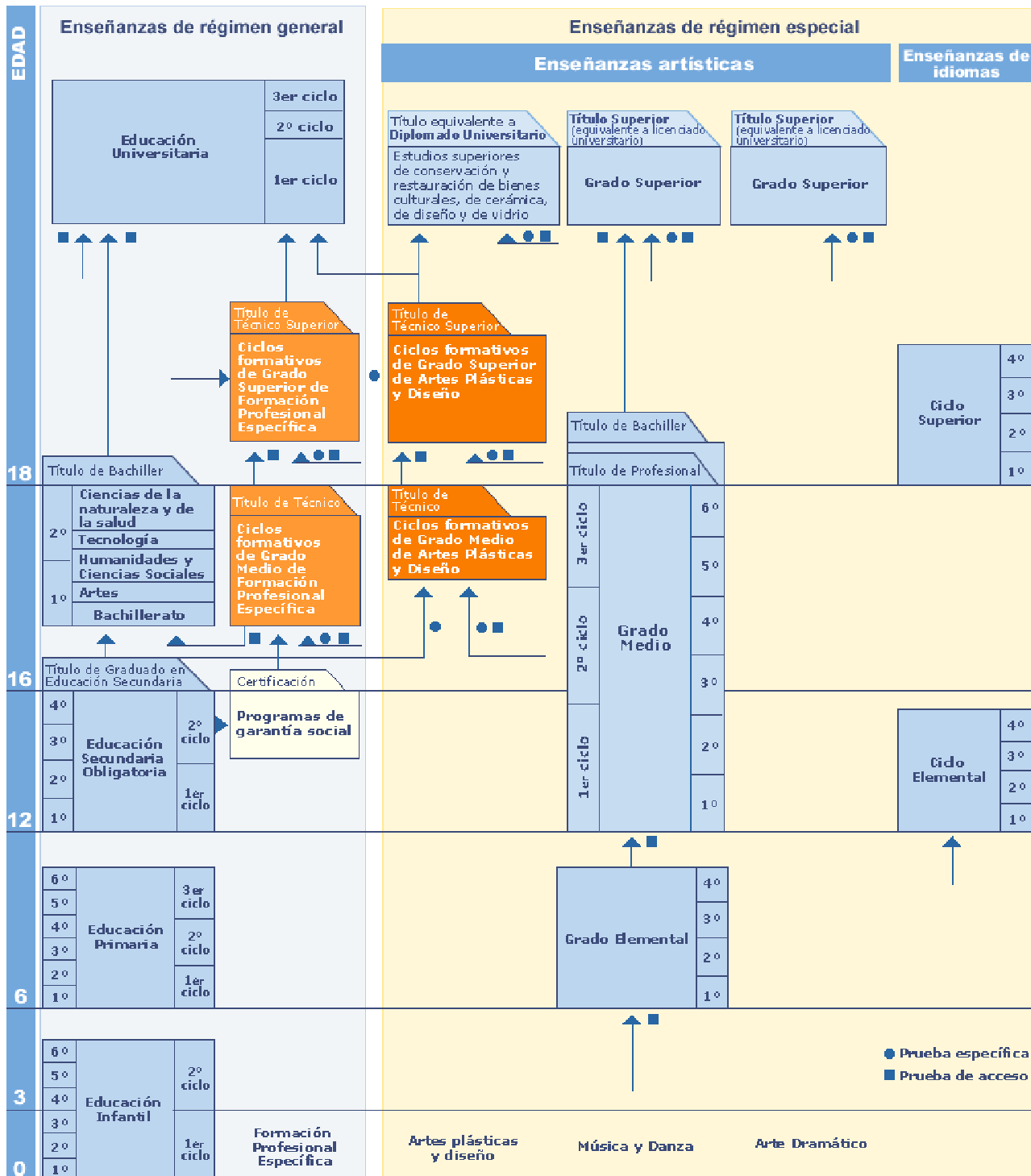
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1. Description of education system



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1.1 Education population

The total population registered in Spain by 31 December 2004 was 42,935,001, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics. The 50.84% being female population.

The number of people under 24 years of age amount to 11,509,228 (26.81% of the population), of which 48.70% are females.

According to data from the Ministry of Education and Science, there are 8,430,939 pupils in the 2004/05 academic year including all educational levels.

Their distribution among the different levels is provided as follow:

- ✓ **Pre-primary 1418307**
- ✓ **Primary 2494596**
- ✓ **Compulsory Secondary 1876322**
- ✓ **Special 29283**
- ✓ **Vocational Training 516504**
- ✓ **Baccalaureate 632154**
- ✓ **University 1462771**
- ✓ **All levels 8430939**

1.2 Language of instruction

In Accordance with the Spanish Constitution, *Castellano* is the official language of Spain. Therefore, all Spanish citizens must know the language and have the right to use it. Together with *Castellano*, there are other official languages in their corresponding Autonomous Communities.

These co-official languages are *Catalán, Gallego, Valenciano* and *Euskera*. In those Communities where there is a co-official language, both this and *Castellano* are considered compulsory teaching languages in all non-university educational levels.

The use of the Autonomous Community language as a teaching language varies in the different Communities, depending on how widespread that language is and on the linguistic policies each Community is implementing.

1.3 Planning functions and extent of public-sector funded education

In the 2004/05 academic year, the 71.6% of the overall number of pupils enrolled in all educational levels is in public education. This percentage varies slightly within the different levels.

The central government retains responsibility for the general regulation of the system, but since 1978, most responsibilities have been devolved to the 17 regional governments (Autonomous Communities). Society's participation in education is essential to the Spanish education system. School Councils, both on the state and regional and on the local and individual school levels, are created to encourage the participation and consulting of the social groups involved in non-university education.

The State School Council is the national body for social participation in the general planning of education and for advice regarding bills or regulations proposed or announced by the government. Each publicly financed establishment has a school council, which is the participatory body for the control and management of the establishment of the different sectors who constitute the educational community.

It comprises then management team, representatives from the teachers, pupils, parents, administrative and service personnel and, in the case of private establishments financed with public funds, representatives from the ownership of the establishment. The school council has, among others, the following functions: deciding upon pupil admission, approving the budget of the establishment, analysing its functioning, and being informed about the proposal to the education authorities of the appointment or dismissal of the management team members.

The University Coordination Council is the nation-wide advisory and participatory body for the State level in higher education, furthermore, each university has its own Social Council, in addition to other complementary channels for participation.

The education Senior Inspection service monitors the structure and organization of education and a technical inspection service operates in each of the Autonomous Communities, and guarantees compliance with the rules laid down by the State, as well as with legislation in general, ensuring the fulfilment of the basic conditions for guaranteeing equity for all Spanish citizens in the exercise of their educational rights and duties. Each Autonomous Community is responsible for the organization and functioning of its own technical inspection service, for all the establishments, services, programmes, and activities for both public and private establishments.

1.4 Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education constitutes the first level of the education system. It covers age 0-6 years and it is structured into two cycles of three years each. Despite being a non-compulsory level, it has an educational nature and it is free of charge during the second cycle, 3 to 6 years of age, both in public and private establishments financed with public funds.

1.5 Compulsory full-time education

1.5.1 Phases

Primary education 6-12 years of age

Lower secondary education 12-16 years of age

Education is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16, and is divided into two educational levels; primary education, made up of three stages, each lasting two years, and lower secondary education, made up of four school years.

1.5.2 Admission criteria

To enter primary education, children must be 6 years old. Certain admission criteria (family income, catchment area, and siblings at school) apply when a school is over-subscribed. Students transfer automatically from primary to lower secondary level. Compulsory education is free of charge both in public and private establishments financed with public funds.

1.5.3 Length of the school day/week/year

The school calendar is established by each Autonomous Community, although certain minimum standards, which guarantee the homogeneity of the centres, must be observed. The school year comprises 180 days at primary level and 175 days at secondary level, between mid-September and late June. Schools open five days a week with an average of 25 lessons at primary level and 30 lessons at secondary level per week. A lesson lasts 55 minutes at primary level and 60 at secondary. The minimum number of annual teaching hours is 810 at primary level and 906 at lower secondary level.

1.5.4 Class size / student grouping (average)

The maximum class size is 25 at primary level and 30 at secondary level. Students are grouped according to age. Mixed age groups exist in some rural areas where classes are very small. Primary classes have one teacher for all subjects, except for Music, Physical Education and Foreign Languages; secondary students have separate subject teachers.

1.5.5 Curricular control and content

As far as the curricular autonomy area is concerned, three levels of curricular formulation have been established. Using the core curricula that the central Government establishes for the entire State as a starting point, each Autonomous Community draws up its own official curriculum (first level of curricular formulation). The educational establishment then adapts and expands upon this basic curriculum in what is known as the second level of curricular formulation. The third formulation level corresponds to classroom programming, which is constituted by a series of teaching units drawn up by the teacher for each concrete group of pupils.

Compulsory studies at primary level include Natural, Social and Cultural Environment, Artistic Education, Physical Education, Spanish Language and Literature, the Co-official Language and Literature of the corresponding Autonomous Community (if any), Foreign Languages and Mathematics. The subject of Catholic Religion is compulsorily offered by the educational establishments but is voluntary for the pupils.

The lower secondary core curriculum covers Spanish Language and Literature, the Co-official Language and Literature of the respective Autonomous Community, Foreign Languages, Mathematics, Physical Education, Natural Sciences, Plastic and Visual Education, Social Studies, Geography and History, Technology and Music. The subject of Catholic Religion is compulsorily offered by the establishments but is voluntary for the pupils.

In primary education, methodology is global and interdisciplinary, directed at the integration of the different experiences and knowledge of pupils and adapted to their personal characteristics. In lower secondary education, methodology must also be adapted to each pupil's needs and foster their ability to learn on their own as well as to work in team.

The government passed in December 2000 the Royal Decree 3473/2000, which establishes that the contents of lower secondary education (ESO) are to be sequenced by year and no distinction is made between concepts, procedures and attitudes, whereas the evaluation criteria are also established separately for the first cycle and for each year of the second one.

As regards the annual load, the areas of Mathematics and Spanish Language and Literature are increased in 35 hours each while the annual load for Plastic and Visual Education and Music is reduced in 35 hours. The modifications concerning the annual load had been implemented in school year 2001/02 while the other modifications were implemented in 2002/03 for the 1st and 3rd years, and have come into force in 2003/04 for the 2nd and 4th years of lower secondary education.

1.5.6 Assessment, progression and qualifications

There is no national or regional system of testing. The minimum core curriculum includes basic guidelines for assessment, which is an integral part of the curriculum.

In primary education, the assessment must be continuous and consider pupil's progress in the different areas. The form teacher is responsible for decisions on promotion. Promotion between primary education cycles depends on students meeting curricular objectives, although students can repeat a year if necessary.

Those pupils reaching to the next cycle with a negative assessment in one or several subjects will receive the suitable back-up or support activities in order to catch up. Special attention is to be paid at primary education to the carrying out of early diagnostics and the establishment of reinforcement procedures so as to avoid school failure at an early age.

In lower secondary education, the assessment is continuous but different depending on the subject. Pupils may take an extraordinary exam of the subjects they have not passed at the end of the year, at the dates fixed by the Autonomous Communities. Upon completion of each of the courses of the stage, the evaluation team decides on the promotion of pupils to the following year considering their maturity and possibilities of

recovery and progress during the following years. Pupils who still have more than two subjects after the extraordinary exam will have to stay one more year in the same course.

Each course can only be repeated once. After repeating, if pupils do not meet the requirements in order to go into the following year, the evaluation team, with the advice of the counselling team and the parents' consent, will decide on their promotion to the following year on the conditions established by the education authorities according to pupils' educational needs.

On completion of compulsory schooling, students receive the *Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* certificate (certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education). In order to obtain this certificate, students must pass all the subjects of the stage or, under exceptional circumstances, without meeting this requirement in accordance with the conditions established by the education authorities. The certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education grants access to Baccalaureate or intermediate level Specific Vocational Training.

1.6 Upper secondary and post-secondary education

1.6.1 Types of education

Baccalaureate Age 16-18

Intermediate Level Specific Vocational Training Age 16-18

These two types of post-compulsory education may be provided separately or in the same establishment, which, in turn, are the same establishments providing compulsory education. *Baccalaureate* has a two-year duration and intermediate level Specific Vocational Training has a varying duration (normally one year and a half) according to the characteristics of the professional profile.

1.6.2 Admission criteria

Students must hold a certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education to access either of the two types of education mentioned above. There are no tuition fees in publicly funded establishments but parents may be required to pay for materials, transport or meals, depending on their level of income.

1.6.3 Curricular control and content

The Baccalaureate minimum core curriculum is determined at national level, but the Autonomous Communities educational authorities and the schools develop and adapt the curriculum to their own context.

There are four modalities of Baccalaureate: Arts; Natural Science and Health; Humanities and Social Sciences; and Technology.

In December 2000, the government passed the Royal Decree 3474/2000, which introduces modifications concerning the structure, minimum core curriculum and teaching load of upper secondary education. It establishes the common subjects for each year. This Royal Decree was implemented in the year 2002/03 in the case of the 1st year and in the year 2003/04 for the 2nd year of upper secondary education.

The government passed the Organic Act on Vocational Training and Professional Qualifications in the year 2002, which sets up the National System on Qualifications and Vocational Training and provides a reform of these types of training with the goal of ordering into one single system the present subsystems of vocational training. The '*Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales*' (National Catalogue on Professional Qualifications) becomes the institutional head of the system. Its aim is to facilitate integration and adequacy between Vocational Training and the labour market, as well as lifelong learning, workers' mobility and labour market unity.

1.6.4 Assessment, progression and qualifications

Baccalaureate students are subject to continuous assessment throughout the course, but different depending on the subject. Pupils who fail some subject at the end of the year can take an extraordinary exam. Promotion and stay regulations set the maximum stay in this stage at four years. Those who fail more than two subjects in the first year, or more than three subjects in the second year, must repeat the year, whereas students who fail less than three subjects will only have to take those three. Successful students receive the *Bachiller* certificate. Continuous assessment also applies to the vocational course and successful students receive the *Técnico* certificate in the area of specialisation concerned.

2. Education systems for people in special needs

Legislation establishes a new framework for the attention of pupils with specific educational needs: those who require educational compensation due to socio-economic and socio-cultural reasons, foreign pupils, highly gifted pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils with special educational needs are those that need specific support and educational attention due to either physical, psychic or sensory disabilities, or severe behavioural problems. The general tendency is to integrate these pupils into mainstream schooling. Special schools or units still exist for those whose needs cannot be met in mainstream education.

3. Methods of teaching

Pre-primary and primary teachers must have a *Maestro* teaching diploma. Secondary school teachers must have a *Licenciado*, or architecture or engineering degree, plus a pedagogical specialisation course. Primary school teachers are trained to teach all subjects except music, physical education and foreign languages, for which specialist teachers are employed. Primary teachers are generalists and secondary teachers are specialists in one subject.

University professors must hold a doctorate; those professors teaching in colleges where the first cycle of University studies are taught, (three-year degrees), are not required to have it, although they must have a *Licenciado*, Architecture or Engineering degree. The *LOU* regulated several university teaching aspects, among which, the following should be mentioned: the establishment of a new recruitment system for the teaching staff which guarantees the principles of equality, merit and capacity; the establishment of a legal framework for the teaching staff; and the promotion of professors' and researchers' mobility within the Spanish and the international system. In public establishments both professors and teachers are usually civil servants.

4. The use of ICT in the educational system

5. Ongoing reforms

The **Organic Act on the Quality of Education** (LOCE) was passed on December 23rd, 2002. The Royal Decree 827/2003, June 27th, established the implementation calendar of the new regulation of the education system and fixed the temporary calendar covering from the measures that have already been implemented during the 2003/04 academic year up to those that should be implemented in the 2007/08 academic year.

The government changed in Spain after the General Elections on March 2004. The new Government through the Royal Decree 1318/2004, May 28th, partially readjusted the implementation calendar of the regulation of the education system proposed by the LOCE. Postponing two years the implementation of most of the educational measures established by the LOCE, excepting for two aspects: gratuity of primary education from 3 to 6 years of age and foreign language education. Furthermore, it maintains the measures

that have already come into force during the 2003/04 academic year which refer to the evaluation and promotion criteria for Compulsory Secondary Education.

Hence, the present situation of the non-university education system is as follows: the following education laws regulating it, coexist: LODE-1985, LOGSE-1990, LOCFP-2002 and LOCE-2002, however, due to the postponement of the coming into force of some sections of this last law, the situation of the education system in the 2004/05 academic year is the same as in the previous academic year. Aiming at facilitating the debate about the new educational reform promoted by the new Government, the Ministry of Education and Science developed, in September 2004, a document with proposals organized in seven sections: general reflections on the quality of education and equality of opportunities; proposals to strengthen pre-primary and primary education stages; ideas on compulsory secondary education with measures and ways of improving attention to diversity; proposal for an earlier introduction to foreign language learning and on the information and communication technologies; analysis of the demands created by education in values and citizenship training, the study of the new demands resting upon teachers; and finally, issues regarding the participation and joint responsibility of the education community in the task of educating.

A debating process and social reflection on it have been carried out from the presentation of the aforementioned document until December 2004. After collecting the contributions raised on the debate from the different educational and social authorities, the Minister of Education presented the Bill of the Organic Act of Education on March 30th 2005.

The Bill started from the necessity of facing a "legislative simplification and clarification" given the proliferation of legislations on education produced in the last years. Hence, the new act would repeal the previous ones LOGSE-1990, LOPEG-1995 and LOCE-2002, recasting their texts and their subsequent modifications in only one Act, besides producing certain modifications on the LODE-1985.

The Preliminary Section of the Bill begins with a chapter devoted to the principles and aims of education as core elements articulating the education system. The **fundamental principle** is *quality education* for all pupils, in conditions of equity and guaranteeing equal opportunities. The *participation of all the educational community* is considered very important to achieve this quality. Another relevant principle is the *transmission of values*. Among the **aims of education** stand the following: the full development of the personality and the emotional capacities of the pupils, the education on the respect of the fundamental rights and liberties and the equality between men and women, the education on the exercise of tolerance and freedom within the democratic principles of coexistence and the education on the prevention of conflicts and on their pacific resolution. Education is conceived as **permanent learning** in the Bill, and a specific chapter is devoted to it in its Preliminary Section. It devotes, as well, a chapter to the definition and organization of the **curriculum** giving in it special importance to the inclusion of the *key competencies* among the components of the curriculum.

One of the novelties of the Bill is the introduction of a new subject called *Citizenship or Civic Education*, that will be taught in some courses of primary education, compulsory secondary and baccalaureate. Lastly, the Preliminary Section deals with **territorial cooperation and among Administrations**, aiming at, on the one hand, achieving higher efficacy of the resources allocated for education, and, on the other hand, of reaching the established general objectives.

The organization of education, its levels and stages is established in Section I. According to the Bill, the basic structure of the education system would not change, although there would be some modifications.

Conceived as a single stage, **pre-primary education** would be organized in two cycles, both of them with an educational purpose forcing the establishments to have a specific pedagogical proposal from the first cycle.

In the second cycle an early contact with foreign languages and the information and communication technologies will be fostered, besides encouraging an approximation to reading-writing and the introduction to numeracy. Primary and compulsory secondary education have a compulsory nature. **Primary Education** strongly emphasizes the attention to pupils' diversity and the prevention of learning difficulties proceeding as soon as they are detected. One of the novelties of the Bill would be the carrying out of a diagnosis evaluation of the key competencies reached by pupils at the end of the second cycle of this stage (10 years of age). It would have an exclusively formative and guiding nature. **Compulsory Secondary Education** has to combine the beginning of a common education with the attention to pupils' diversity, allowing the educational establishments to adopt the organizational and curricular measures most adequate to the pupil's characteristics, in a flexible way, in use of their pedagogic autonomy. Hence, it is proposed a more common curriculum in the first three courses, with programmes to reinforce the key skills of pupils who need so, and a fourth year of a guiding nature with a flexible organization of the common subjects and with three optional ones.

There will be a diagnosis evaluation in this level as well, in this case, at the end of the second year of compulsory secondary education (14 years of age). **Programmes of curricular diversification** are included from the third year of this stage to pay attention to pupils with special learning difficulties. Moreover, **Initial Vocational Qualification Programmes** are established for young people over 16 and under 21 who may have not obtained the certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education. These programmes are aimed at avoiding early school drop out, opening expectations of subsequent formation and qualification, and facilitating access to working life; they may be exceptionally accessible for pupils over 15 who are not in condition of successfully finishing the stage.

The **Baccalaureate** still consists of two years but it will be developed in three different modalities (Arts, Science-Technology and Humanities-Social Sciences). Students with positive evaluation in all subjects will obtain the Baccalaureate certificate. After obtaining the certificate, pupils may start working, enrol in Advanced Vocational Training or enrol in superior studies. To enter university passing a single authorised test taken by all pupils who have the Baccalaureate certificate will be a must.

The proposal introduces more flexibility to access **Vocational Training** and suggests setting up different connections between general education and vocational training. **Artistic education**, whose organization had not been revised since 1990, deserves special mentioning in the Bill. The proposal would mean the regulation, on the one hand, of Professional Artistic Education that groups Music and Dance education in the elementary and intermediate levels, as well as Design and Plastic Art Studies in intermediate and advanced levels. On the other hand, it would establish the so-called Higher Artistic Education, that groups advanced levels of Music and Dance, Dramatic Art Education, the Studies for Conservation and Restoration of Artistic Objects and Advanced Studies of Plastic Art and Design.

The Bill also regulates **language education**, stipulating that it will be organised by the official schools of languages, adjusting it to the levels of language learning established by the European Union.

Lastly, Section I pays especial attention to **adult education** aiming at having the possibility of acquiring, updating, completing or widening the knowledge and aptitudes of all citizens for their personal and professional development, in accordance with the principle of Permanent Education.

In order to guarantee equity, Section II deals with the groups of **pupils who require an educational provision different from the mainstream**, establishing the objective of reaching their full inclusion and integration. Specific treatment is needed not only by disabled

pupils but also by those with high intellectual capacities and those who have joined the Spanish education system lately.

The Bill also deals with **inequity compensation** through specific programmes developed in educational establishments or in geographical areas where a compensatory educational intervention is necessary. It is proposed that schooling programming in public and private establishments should guarantee an adequate and balanced distribution among the schools of the pupils in need of educational support.

Section III of the Bill deals with the importance **teachers** should acquire. Priority attention is given to their initial and in-service training, whose reform will be done within the context of the new European space for higher education aiming at answering the needs and new demands of the education system. Initial training should include, besides the appropriate scientific education, pedagogic training that will be rounded off by the tutorial and counselling of the new teachers by their more experienced colleagues.

Moreover, the Section considers the improvement of the conditions in which teachers work, as well as the acknowledgement, support and social appraisal of teaching. Section IV is about the **educational establishments**, their typology, and their legal system; as well as, it is about the programming of the establishments' network considering education a public and social service. In this sense, the main lines that have proved efficient since the 1985 Organic Act on the Right to Education are maintained, modifying others upon which the educational community had been pledging to improve.

The Bill understands **participation** as a basic value for the education of autonomous, free, responsible and committed citizens, hence, educational authorities will guarantee the participation of the educational community in the organization, governing, functioning and evaluation of the educational establishments, as it is stated in Section V. Special attention is given to the autonomy of the educational establishments, regarding both pedagogical issues, through the elaboration of their educational projects, and the economic management of the resources and the drawing out of their organizational and functioning regulations. The Bill gives more prominence to the collegiate bodies for the control and ruling of the establishments, which are the school council, teachers' assembly and the teaching coordination bodies, dealing with the competencies of the direction of public educational establishments, the selection procedure of the head teachers and the acknowledgement of the **management function**.

Section VI is devoted to the **evaluation of the education system**. It is considered a fundamental element for the improvement of the education and the increase in the transparency of the education system. The general evaluation of the education system is assumed by the Institute for Evaluation, that will work in cooperation with the corresponding bodies established by the Autonomous Communities. A yearly report should be given to the Parliament in order to account for the functioning of the education system.

In Section VII **educational inspection** is entrusted to support the elaboration of the educational projects and the self-evaluation of the educational establishments as a key aspect to improve the education system.

Senior Inspection Service is entrusted to the State. This chapter gathers the functions of the educational inspection, its organization and the powers of the inspectors. Additional regulations refer to the implementation **calendar** of the Act, the **economical resources** necessary to implement it, the area of **religion**, the **text books** and the **curricular materials**. Many of the additional regulations have to do with **teaching staff**, establishing the basis of the regulatory scheme of the functions of public teaching, the duties of the corps of university professors and of the rest of teaching corps,

the admission requirements for the different corps, the teaching career, the carrying out of inspection duties, as well as teacher's initial and pedagogic training. Regarding **pupil admission**, it sets the tributary information necessary to prove the economic conditions of the families, and it sets the **requirements that private establishments** teaching in baccalaureate the modalities of natural and health sciences and technology have to meet. Other additional regulations refer to **cooperation between the municipalities** and the educational authorities and to the possible cooperation agreements between the former and the local Corporations.

Finally, the **agreements in the second cycle of pre-primary education** and the **agreements with other States members of the European Union** are fixed so that certain public educational establishments may provide an integrated curriculum allowing a double degree.

Temporary provisions deal with teacher's **anticipated voluntary retirement**, **civil servant teachers' mobility**, the **duration of the term of office of the ruling bodies** and the **management** in the public educational establishments, the **pedagogic training**, the **adjustment of the establishments to teach preprimary education**, the **modification of the agreements** and the **access to the teaching of foreign languages to pupils under 16**.