



Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö

Undervisnings- och kulturministeriet

Ministry of Education and Culture

Action Plan Report for Global Education Brand Finland

William Doyle



Foreword

The Finnish education system is based on an attractive model known throughout the world. Many development trends of the world economy, technology and intellectual resources have led to the creation of a historic opportunity for Finland to lead the coming wave of a global education reform – for the direct benefit of the Finnish economy, the children and teachers of Finland, and the children of the world.

Finland needs to chart all the international networks and actors that are currently salient for restructuring Finnish education and ensure cooperation with these parties. Finland will also produce high-quality material presenting the Finnish comprehensive school system and its key remodelling principles and practices for international use. The purpose is to give a clear and inspiring overview of the Finnish education system to our international partners.

To develop Finnish education, students, teachers and schools need to actively participate in international collaboration. New ideas for education will actively be devised in different networks in collaboration with international partners.

In the new policy promoting the internationalisation of Finnish higher education and research, published in the end of March 2017, several recommendations of the Global Education Brand can already be seen. In the policy, Finland is promoted as the home of high-quality education. Also the momentum gained in the export of Finnish competence is emphasised. The welcome services provided for newcomers to Finland are seen as vital and they will be further strengthened in close cooperation with stakeholders at the national, regional and municipal level. We have also made a service pledge: in Finland you will be served in English. We will also establish a Team Finland Knowledge network to represent Finnish higher education and research in select countries and invite expatriate Finns with higher education background and alumni of Finnish higher education institutions to join our networks. The overall aim of the policy is to give all students the skills needed to succeed in an open, global world and to form genuinely international higher education and research communities.

In December 2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture appointed William Doyle as a rapporteur to draw up a report and an action plan on the development of the Global Education Brand Finland. In his work, the rapporteur was to take into account the education policy objectives set by the Finnish Government and the Ministry of Education and Culture, including the strengthening, renewing and improving Finland's own education system as well as the education export efforts of relevant actors.

The rapporteur submitted his report *'Action Plan Report for Global Education Brand Finland'* to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Helsinki on 15 March 2017. The Ministry of Education and Culture wishes to extend its thanks to William Doyle for his valuable work.



Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*

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About the Author



William Doyle is a 2015-2016 Fulbright Scholar, a 2017 Rockefeller Foundation Resident Fellow, a Scholar in Residence and Lecturer on Media and Education at the University of Eastern Finland, and an award-winning, bestselling author and TV producer (HBO, PBS, The History Channel) based in New York City.

His family co-founded the first ongoing Montessori School in New York City, which has educated thousands of children and continues to thrive to this day.

After earning his degree in international business at George Washington University in Washington DC, he began his career as an advertising executive and assistant to the CEO of the world's largest advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, and went on to manage \$250,000,000 marketing and programming budgets for network TV giant HBO.

He is winner of the Writers Guild of America Award for Best TV Documentary, the American Bar Association Award for the Best Book on the American Legal System, and the American Library Association Alex Award for Best Book for Young Readers.

From 2015 – 2017, he has periodically “embedded” at the UEF Normaalkoulu university teacher training school, observing the Finnish education system from the inside, while teaching university graduate courses on media and education as a member of the Philosophical Faculty.

Doyle has written articles on Finnish education in *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Hechinger Report*, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

When he is in Finland, his 9-year old son attends Finnish public school.

Report Objective

Taking into account the education policy objectives of Finland's Government and the Ministry of Education and Culture, including strengthening, renewing and improving Finland's own education system as well as the education export efforts of relevant actors, the objectives of this report are to:

- Present recommendations for Finnish exports and partnerships to benefit from potential leverage and entry points in the global education market.
- Develop recommendations for improving the impact of marketing, messaging, packaging and positioning of Finland as a global education brand.
- Explore the feasibility of Finland spearheading a public/private global education investment fund; a global educational leadership and futures institute; and a global teacher-training academy.
- Initiate a preliminary top-line evaluation of the United States as a potential market for export and exchange.

About this Report

This report is based on three years of consultations with Finnish and global educators, a comprehensive literature review, and original interviews for this report with panel of Finnish policy makers and 25 American and Canadian principals, administrators and teachers.

The granular details of the legislative and policy debates, history and current infrastructure of Finnish education export efforts are well known to this audience, and are not the focus of this report. Nor does the report focus primarily on discrete product silos in which Finnish education export is already highly active, such as the training of new teachers in the developing world and the gamification of learning.

This report proposes a package of seven mutually supporting action steps to help Finland achieve its full potential as the world's education superpower through education export and exchange.

This report proposes initiatives that are both for-profit and non-profit.

It is the opinion of this author that there is a key supporting role for business, for-profit entities and private capital in the delivery of education products and services to global audiences. But education policy, products and services should be based on evidence and steered by fully-qualified educators, and in the case of childhood education, should be designed to promote social equity, childhood health, authentic learning, well-being and whole-child development, and, in the words of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are geared to the "development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Important note: all recommendations and original remarks in this report are those of the author alone. The Ministry of Education and Culture is not responsible for them.

Action Step #1:

Expand the Vision: Improve the Schools of Finland and the World by Striving to Achieve Finland's Destiny as Education Superpower.

We live in a world where everything is changing at an ever faster pace. I believe that learning to learn, being able to acquire new skills, and thinking critically and creatively are some of the key factors for the education of tomorrow.¹
Sanni Grahn-Laasonen

We can be the co-developers of education with the world.²
Olli-Pekka Heinonen

So many developed countries are failing to renovate and revive their education systems, while so many children in poor countries are left out, and this contributes dramatically to our beautiful planet's critical state.

It would be a dream that each government open their eyes to the success of the Finnish model and be inspired by it!³

Diane Plessia, European Foundation Centre, Brussels

The Coming Global Education Superpower.

Finland today has one of the most respected and potentially powerful national education “brands” in the world.

In its 2016-2017 Global Competitiveness Report, The World Economic Forum ranked Finland's primary school system as #1 in the world out of 138 nations, and its higher education system as #1 in Europe.⁴

This is an extraordinary achievement for such a small, young nation. Finland's school system is not perfect, and faces a host of stresses and challenges, but the fact is that much of the education and policy world recognizes it as one of “the best,” even if its much-debated PISA scores have slipped. On the basis of efficiency, inputs and outputs, and impact on childhood, the Finnish-style model can easily be seen as the world's best. Similar policies are now being adopted by world-leader Singapore, and supported by an increasing host of educators in the U.S. and around the world.

Finland is, in effect, world's next great “education superpower,” and it is already

¹ Huffington Post, 8 February 2017.

² Interview with the author.

³ Interview with the author.

⁴ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2016-2017/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2016-2017_FINAL.pdf , p. 11.

making strides toward sharing its education leadership to the world. According to Ambassador for Education Export Marianne Huusko, “The Government Program sets a clear target of increasing education export from EUR 260 million to EUR 350 million by 2018.”⁵

No nation has a better educational reputation and foundation than Finland. Despite major social and economic challenges, Finland today has the most effective childhood education system in the world, and its higher education system holds both great strength and great potential.

The Finnish education system is strong across many areas. Many of these areas are of high interest to schools the world over, and can be considered extra-high-potential leverage points for Finland’s education export future in pre-K-12, through higher education and lifelong learning.

Finland has a unique culture, to be sure, but the lessons of Finland's schools can help inspire school systems in any nation. Finland is not a model that can be exported in a box, it is an inspiration. Finland can exchange what it has learned with the world, and co-create the future with the world’s teachers.

Many factors are rapidly converging to create a historic opportunity for Finland to lead and benefit from what the author of this report sees as the coming wave of global education reform – for the direct benefit of the Finnish economy, the children and teachers of Finland, and the world’s children.

With the leadership of Finnish educators, policymakers and partners, “Global Education Brand Finland” can serve as the spearhead of a positive new wave of global education reform; become a prime engine of economic prosperity and growth for Finland; serve as a vehicle for creativity, innovation, and world leadership for Finland; and provide great benefits for the children and teachers of Finland and the world.

Finland can, and should, inspire the world. In Finland's second century, it should not only export its education insights but it should achieve its potential of being **the global intellectual capital exchange of education, the global Ivy League of teacher training and professional development and the world capital of childhood education.**

Finland’s schools should be showcased even more widely and effectively around the world in the mass media, through online workshops and conferences and through in-person visits. They are Finland’s greatest achievement. Events, seminars and corporate partnerships should developed to promote Finland as the World Capital of Childhood Education.

By institutionalizing the power of Global Education Brand Finland, this nation can show the world a better way – an education path inspired by such core Finnish education values as equity, efficiency, play, childhood health and well-being, internationalization, collaboration, research, teacher professionalism, student-centered pedagogy, and continual system self-improvement.

A wide variety of Finnish organizations, both established and new, is working on many fruitful and promising ventures relating to global “education export,” including the Ministries, Team Finland, FLF, Finland University, HundrED, Fun Academy, HEI Schools, FinnEd Hub, EduCluster Finland, TEKES, Kontio Oy, Lappset Group and many others. In

⁵ Foreign Ministry Press Release, 3 October 2016.

recent months, as an example, Finland University has deployed digital marketing to help its member universities to attract a large number of applicants to their international masters programs from outside EU/ETA region; signed two major KiVa school program deals in Chile and Spain; and is planning to sign teacher education deals soon in Brazil and Saudi Arabia.

Finnish government officials including Minister Sanni Grahn-Laasonen, Minister Kai Myykanen and Ambassador Marianne Huusko have been highly visible on the world stage supporting these initiatives. The launch of the new Finnish National Agency for Education under the leadership of Olli-Pekka Heinonen is a powerful platform for growth and innovation. The work of Professor Pasi Sahlberg and many others have established a wide footprint of awareness of and interest in Finnish education around the world.

Finland's destiny on the world stage of education however, is far from being fully achieved.

Ideally, the world's education systems should be inspired *en masse* by Finnish-style practices, and international teachers, principals, system administrators and ministers, NGOs, foundations and investors should be flocking in greater numbers to enter large-scale, long-term, collaborative and contractual relationships with Finnish partners.

But Finnish "education export" has a long way to go.

Finland's education system is a world leader, but its education export can be considered to be only in the early takeoff phase. Finland occupies just a tiny sliver of the world's education marketplace, and its share of market should be significantly higher.

There are various reasons for Finland's relatively small scale of impact in education export to date, beyond the critical issues of Finland's limited size, resources and capacity.

One reason is Finland's cultural tradition of modesty and self-criticism, and its widely-confessed shortcomings in its ability to "market itself." Another reason is the naturally diffuse, fragmented nature of education itself. As Monica Schatz pointed out in her 2016 University of Helsinki doctoral dissertation, "The variety of Finnish educational export 'products' is large and incoherent, including educational tourism, training packages, educational technology, policy counseling, teacher exchanges, involvement in school projects and universities abroad, and joint programs. Some export activities are based on initiatives of individual actors; some are institutionally based, while some others are coordinated across institutions."⁶

Finland in the Global Education Marketplace.

Based on this author's observations of policy developments from an American perspective, and his discussions with educators around the U.S. in 2015-2017, it is apparent that certain key global education trends, some driven from the United States, have recently become popular in global policy circles, at least for the time being, and they are decidedly "non-Finnish."

They include standardized testing as a driver of education policy and school management; the de-professionalization, micro-management and scripted routinization of the teacher force; increased counter-productive competition between schools and students;

⁶ Monica Schatz, "Education as Finland's Hottest Export?: A Multi-Faceted Case Study on Finnish National Education Export Policies," doctoral dissertation, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Department of Teacher Education, 28 May, 2016.

decisions driven by system privatization and the incorrect use of data; and increased stress and developmentally-inappropriate academic demands and pressures on school children.

These trends are propelled by, according to one team of analysts, “economic globalization as a driving force of both an increasing educational demand and an intensification of cross-border supply of educational services; the commodification of schooling as a positional good for families; the financialization of the education sector (from both the demand and the supply sides); recent changes in the governance of education (including education decentralization and the adoption of global education policies such as accountability and curricular standards); the emergence of an evidence-based policy paradigm; and the intensification of the IT to learning relationship.”⁷

Much of the world does not understand this yet, but if mis-managed, many of these trends can exacerbate system inefficiencies and create barriers to democracy, governance, true accountability and authentic learning in the new global economy.

Finland’s ideas, products and services are competing in a global education landscape where giant transnational for-profit players like Pearson and Microsoft are increasingly providing e-learning, standardized testing and test prep services, curriculum programs, tutoring, teacher training and certification and school management services, a business complex some have dubbed the Global Education Industry. Philanthropic foundations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other public policy and advocacy groups lobby for practices that can intrinsically correspond with the philosophies and commercial interests of their private funders.

Investment firm GSV Advisors estimates that the value of the world education market was \$4.9 (USD) trillion in 2015, and that venture capital investment in education reached almost \$2 billion in 2014, after rising at a 45% rate over the past five years.⁸ Venture capital continues to flood in to global education, from pre-school to adult and professional education.

Chains of flexible- and low-fee private schools, such as GEMS, Bridge International Academies (BIA) and Omega Schools, are making inroads in a number of developed nations, though not without intense controversy in the case of BIA in Uganda and Kenya.

Current U.S. experience shows that, even by the dubious goal-metric of raising standardized test scores, many so-called education reform policies are not succeeding. As one of the founding fathers of U.S. education reform, Chester Finn of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, recently said: “If you look over the past 25 years at all the reforming we’ve been doing and all the spending we’ve been doing and still see flat and slow slog as the main outcome, it’s pretty discouraging.”⁹

The K-12 public education system in the United States, while fundamentally sound in important ways, is in a state of political turmoil. Chronic racial and economic achievement gaps and mediocre overall international test results have been blamed on children and teachers rather than wide system inefficiencies and societal inequities, like the effects of poverty.

As a result, for the past 25 years, American public education has been subject to

⁷ Antoni Verger, Christopher Lubienski, Gita Steiner-Khamsi, eds., *The World Yearbook of Education 2016: The Global Education Industry*, p. 5.

⁸ Education International, “The rise of the global education industry: Some concepts, facts and figures,” 14 March 2016.

⁹ Thomas B. Fordham Institute, *Education Gadfly* podcast, 7 December 2016.

huge bipartisan pressures toward increased high-stakes, standardized test-based micro-measurement and data collection-driven measurement and punishment of teachers and schools based on student standardized test scores, as well as school closings and restructurings, de-professionalization of the teacher force, union-bashing, over-privatization, academic stress on younger children, and the elimination of arts and recess.

Supporters argue that these pressures apply competition, standards and accountability necessary to improve schools and help students succeed in the future global economy. Opponents call them incorrect, neo-liberal, non-evidence-based ideas that will harm learning, and increase segregation and inequity.

Some of these trends are spreading to national education systems in the U.K., Australia and elsewhere. Pasi Sahlberg has compared it to a virus and called it “GERM,” the Global Education Reform Movement. Parent and teacher groups in the U.S., U.K., Australia and elsewhere are starting to strongly push back against these trends.

Recent political developments in the United States have the potential to affect education, tourism and student exchange, and the intellectual center of gravity on education may swing partially away from America, at least for a time. This creates an opportunity for Finland to take more of a leadership role on the world education stage, as well as an opportunity for the U.S. and other nations to learn from Finland.

It should be noted that, based on this author’s discussions with a wide range of American educators, many of them have a very high opinion of Finnish education, often without ever having been there.

Through education export and exchange, Finland should commit itself to spearheading a new wave of global education reform and collaboration.

Finland should act as a strong countervailing force to unproductive global education policies, by capturing the world’s imagination with an alternative vision of a global education community driven by collaboration, professionalism, childhood health and well-being, whole-child pedagogy, the correct use of data and technology, research, system efficiency, equity and human rights, and new global partnerships between educators, policymakers, NGOs and industry to share global best practices and develop creativity, innovation and “21st and 22nd Century skills.”

Action Step #1: Expand the Vision.

1. The benefits of Finnish education export and exchange can serve as an inspiring vision to the world, but only if the story is communicated clearly and forcefully by Finland as a thought leader. This effort, if correctly managed, supported and monetized over the long term, will pay rich dividends for the Finnish economy, Finnish children, and the children of the world.
2. Finland should realize that Global Education Brand Finland can only succeed if it is structured, packaged, marketed, partnered, managed and leveraged to its maximum potential.
3. Finland should clearly articulate and help lead the next wave of international education reform and collaboration, in partnership with the world’s educators and policymakers. This will lead Finland’s education exports to grow and flourish.

Action Step #2:

Tell the Marketing Story: Inspire the World by More Effectively Telling the Story of Global Education Brand Finland – Move from Product Exporter to Global Partner, Authority, Networker, Host, Co-Developer, Collaborator and Leader.

Education export is ultimately about improving the level of education through interaction with others.¹⁰

Ambassador Marianne Huusko

Finland education export faces a major marketing challenge.

The net overall effect of Finland's overall education export marketing communications efforts, coming from a variety of sources with limited budgets, is not as clear, coherent and high-impact as it should be.

To put it bluntly, Finland is not yet telling its story right.

The story is not being told in a way that captures, inspires and motivates the target audience of global educators and policymakers to engage with Finland's education brand on a scale in line with its quality and its potential. Story-telling, case histories, personalities, testimonials and bodies of evidence are not being presented in powerful enough way.

If target audiences were to consider Finland's education export messaging today, they might conclude: "Finland seems to have some interesting education products and services. I seem to remember they had good PISA scores awhile back." In a world of infinite choices and time pressures, this "takeaway" elevator pitch is not enough to connect with the target audience.

The world will not flock to Finland on its own. It needs to issue a compelling invitation, with a powerful marketing story -- based on imagination and evidence. In one glaring case of missed opportunity, the World Economic Forum's #1 rankings for Finland's education system came and went in late 2016 with very little impact. Finland should make such news a cause for global attention, celebration and brand publicity.

The good news is, as the author of this report and many other "education pilgrims" can attest, Finland delivers on the dream once you connect with it.

A critical positioning insight on Finnish education export – from an American educator.

On 6 December 2016, Rick Huizinga of Emory University gave an address to the Finnish-American Chamber of Commerce in Atlanta, Georgia. It includes critical insights for how to promote Finnish education:

¹⁰ Foreign Ministry Press Release, 3 October 2016.

I don't think, and my Finnish professors would back me up on this, that an educational system can be exported as a whole to a new place. Too many political and cultural structures exist that play a role in educating children. But I do know how important it is for individual teachers and principals to *see different practices, to reflect, to be inspired, and to advocate for real change in their schools*. Yes, some policies can be exported...but real change takes place when individual teachers are able to learn from others of a different culture and adjust those practices to their own classrooms.

There is another important point here as well—that it needs to be on educational EXCHANGE. The buzzword in Finland these days is the term “educational export” and whole consulting firms have popped up with the mission of being educational experts that “export” knowledge... I'm afraid it is in danger of being a one-way stream of learning.

We have to be sure that the learning is two-way. For a true exchange in educators is sustainable, and a one-way stream is not. When it comes to what teachers can learn from each other, we are all experts in our own systems.

I believe the Finnish system can learn a lot from American teachers. Our ability to try new things such as flipped classrooms, project-based learning and other innovations are what we sometimes do best. I believe American teachers have deep knowledge of issues of diversity that areas of Helsinki are just starting to experience as neighborhoods there have in increase in immigrant populations....

Because right now, school systems around the world are looking for this magic pill to improve educational systems and they are hoping it is in Finland.

I think, that what needs to be understood, is that as more and more people look to Finland for the answers in education, the answers are there but maybe not in the way we might think. For they are there as we grow together, they are there as we truly interact with each other.

And the answers to real education reform are in the new and innovative ideas that come out of culturally different people simply learning from one another.¹¹

Finland should think of itself, and position itself, as the world's intellectual capital exchange of education – the host, partner, broker, exchanger, collaborator, networker, destination, retreat, co-developer, thought-leader, and trusted authority on all things having to do with education.

Finland should be the world's teachers lounge.

Finland should be the place where the educators of the world gather to drink coffee, share insights, go to the sauna, discover new approaches and products, and build and innovate the “schools of tomorrow” together. When they can't come to Finland, Finland should come to them, in person and virtually.

Finland has much to teach the world and much to learn from the world, and system-

¹¹ Rick Huizinga, Emory University, “Improving Education through Cross-Cultural Exchanges of Educators: Reflections of Living and Learning in Finland,” address to the Finnish-American Chamber of Commerce in Atlanta, Georgia, 6 December 2016.

wide global education exchange will lift the quality of Finland's schools and provide great insights for its own future as well as the schools of the world.

The key to marketing Finnish education export is not to consider it primarily as education export, but exchange -- the collaborative discovery and sharing of global education best practices, inspired and hosted by Finland.

Action Step #2 – Tell the Marketing Story.

“How to” - Next Steps for Concrete Action:

1. Expand all Finnish education marketing and communications messaging from education export positioning to global education authority, innovator, collaborator and co-developer positioning. The “takeaway message” should be that Finland is the world's education leader and partner.
2. Use developments like the World Economic Forum's #1 rankings for Finland's education as prime opportunities for promotion to cut through the clutter to the target audience.
3. Put a powerful spotlight on Finnish education stories, personalities, testimonials, evidence, debates, solutions and case histories across marketing platforms.
4. Invite a blue-chip industry panel of Finnish and non-Finnish business marketing and communications specialists to review education export marketing messages and offer suggestions for maximizing effectiveness.

Action Step #3:

Launch an Education Futures Institute – for Collaboration, Exchange, Research, Innovation, School Operations, Leadership and 21st Century Skills.

Finland should be the CERN of global education.

In a sense, with the research and innovation work being done by the Finnish Ministry of Education, the National Agency for Education, and the teacher education departments at the universities and schools of vocational teacher education, Finland already is.

It is time to share that work with the world.

The number of world educators, students, policy makers and buyers who think about Finland every day can be assumed to be quite small.

But the number of them who think every day about the future of education is virtually unlimited.

This presents Finland with a major opportunity for thought and market leadership, since it has already found a visionary path in education and is taking concrete steps to improve its education future.

Finland should establish an Education Futures Institute that features both a revenue-generating, fee-based management and consulting arm, and a non-profit research and development arm.

The Institute would be a global-facing institution to host and collaborate on the world's best educational practices.

The management and consulting arm would advise and assist national school systems on education planning, architecture, school operations, innovation, certification and re-certification, proprietary systems (like IB and 6 Sigma), efficiency, assessment, quality leadership and re-engineering, and 21st Century skill development.

The non-profit research and development arm would gather, "curate" and circulate the world's best research on those subjects, plus high-interest topics that, in this author's estimation, Finland either has special expertise on, or great interest in, including:

1. New teacher training
2. Professional development of existing teachers and principals
3. Learning and classroom atmospheres and environments
4. Early education, pre-school
5. Vocational training
6. Early intervention
7. School building and playground design and construction
8. Assessments for learning beyond standardized testing
9. Curriculum development and design with multiple inputs – teachers, parents, students
10. ICT, digitalization, efficient use of educational technology by teachers, students and parents
11. Teacher collaboration
12. Childhood social-emotional health, whole child learning, nutrition
13. Efficient time and schedule management

14. Textbooks
15. Play and physical activity as engines of learning and health
16. Principal leadership and school management
17. Critical thinking, creativity, communications and future skills
18. Experimental and hands-on learning
19. System engineering, innovation, quality control and continual improvement
20. Thinking and learning-to-learn, interaction and expression skills, transversal competences including managing daily life and taking care of oneself, entrepreneurship, social participation and influence, cultural understanding, interaction and self-expression
21. English instruction
22. Arts and music instruction
23. Supporting special strengths and needs of girls and boys
24. Improving student voice and the joy of learning
25. Students with special learning, economic, physical, academic, emotional and language needs, including refugees, immigrants, non-Finnish speakers and ethnic minorities
26. Project-based learning

The Institute would help build Finland's reputation as the world's intellectual capital exchange of education, and the world's sharer and networker of best education research and practices, not only from Finland but from Europe, the Nordics, the U.S., Singapore, Japan, Canada, China, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The initiative would support existing programs by the OECD, the UN and other organizations, would analyze global educational best practices in a real-world context, and examine the interplay between education and other social policies. New York and London are home to stock exchanges that made them the financial capitals of the world. Chicago's Mercantile Exchange helped it become a global mega-city. Belgium's diamond exchanges helped that nation become a financial powerhouse. Finland should become the Global Intellectual Capital Exchange of Education.

Through a new Education Futures Institute, international intellectual capital and education knowledge would be spread by Finland across borders and cultures to stimulate reform, innovation and best practices in schools and teacher training programs around the developed and developing worlds. Significantly, Finland's own students and teachers would directly benefit from this global networking and sharing of best practices.

Action Step #3: Launch an Education Futures Institute.

"How to" - Next Steps for Concrete Action:

1. Open up Finland's current work to the world. Much of the Education Futures Institute's R&D function can be cycled and branded through ongoing work now being performed at Finland's university teacher training schools, and through initiatives already launched by the Ministry of Education and the Finnish National Agency for Education, for example through the 2017-2018 programs of the Finnish

- National Agency for Education's Centre for Innovations and the MOE's Finnish Teacher Education Forum and Teacher Education Development Program (TEDP).
2. Investigate the option of partnering the Institute with world education leaders such as Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, Netherlands, South Korea and select U.S. and institutions.
 3. Investigate feasibility and structure options for the consulting arm of the Institute.

Action Step #4:**Establish a Global Education Infrastructure Fund for Impact Investment.**

With 260 million children not in school worldwide, education needs more champions to match the enthusiasm of advocates in, say, the global-health and environmental movements. There is more room for innovation in education than in any other international-development sector, especially as digital technologies and the Internet become more accessible even in the world's poorest regions.

In recent years, private-sector funding options – such as venture capital, targeted-investment funds, and new asset classes – have opened up countless new opportunities for education-sector social entrepreneurs. However, as with technology, the public and nonprofit sectors have been slow to keep up; both still need to recognize the value of social enterprises focused on education.¹²

Gordon Brown

UN Special Envoy for Global Education
Project Syndicate, 14 October, 2016

Education is the ultimate infrastructure.

And Finland can be the world's great incubator, seed-financer, architect, engineer, systems designer, builder, quality leader, partner and co-developer of education infrastructure.

Finland is already achieving strong social impact through its bilateral and multilateral education development work in places like Ethiopia, Nepal, Mozambique, Myanmar, Palestine and Afghanistan; through its work with NGOs like UNESCO, and with Syrian refugee children in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and inside Syria through UNICEF.

Capitalizing on its expertise and vision, Finland can expand this work to achieve even greater impact for the world's children and students, especially those in developing and fragile nations and the 1 billion people who live in extreme poverty.

Right now, beyond the Global Partnership for Education (GPE, which brings together developing countries, donors, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector and foundations) there are no high-profile multilateral or national funding and investment funding mechanisms devoted primarily to education infrastructure, and none spearheaded by the world's #1 education nation, Finland.

Finland should create a new high-profile, high-social-impact Global Education Infrastructure Fund, with a blended finance model of public and private capital, to support all phases of the education infrastructure chain – from school building design to teacher training and student assessments.

The Fund can be built on two platforms:

¹² Project Syndicate, 14 October, 2016.

- 1.) **A Development Fund** to partner with existing organizations and financing platforms to support the sustainable development of durable, high-quality education infrastructure in fragile and developing nations through grants, aid and technical assistance. The Fund would build on the international development work of Finnfund, Finnvera, Finnpartnership, the planned Public Sector Investment Facility, and the new Business with Impact (BEAM) Program of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and TEKES. Join with Finnish, Nordic, EU, U.S and global funding partners from the public, private, NGO, multilateral development and foundation sectors.
- 2.) **An Impact Investing Fund** to help incubate, support and grow education infrastructure-related ventures, in partnership with global public, private, NGO, multilateral development and foundation sectors. For profit, growth and re-investment. The Fund would invest in start-ups, interventions, technologies and products with the highest potential to positively affect the learning, health and well-being of children throughout the developed and developing worlds, to support Finnish national development objectives and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Can be structured as a joint investment company, where Finnish government capital joins with private capital and NGO and foundation partners for maximum impact.

The Global Education Infrastructure Fund can help strengthen Finland's position as the world's education infrastructure leader and partner for decades to come.

Action Step #4: Establish a Global Education Infrastructure Fund.

"How to" - Next Steps for Concrete Action:

1. Discuss feasibility among relevant Finnish government ministries.
2. Immediate step: hold feasibility and structure consultations with the Rockefeller Foundation, the world pioneer in social impact investing.
3. Hold feasibility consultations with potential advisors and partners, such as the World Bank/IFC, the EU, the UN Development Program (UNDP), the Nordic Development Fund, the OECD, various multilateral development and investment banks, Norwegian and Gulf sovereign wealth funds, Kone, LEGO and IKEA Foundations, global foundations and venture philanthropies and family offices, the Global Partnership for Education, the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (supported by Norway and UN), and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (U.S.).

Action Step #5:

Fully Marketize Finland's Higher Education System Globally.

We need to boldly tell people what a great place Finland is, and make Finland the best place to study in the world.¹³

Peter Vesterbacka

At the moment, the United States is the leading destination for international students, but we are losing market share. Increasingly, students are recognizing they do have choices — some students may choose to go to Australia or Canada or other countries that also have excellent institutions. We may be losing them for years.¹⁴

Esther Brimmer

Executive Director, Association of International Educators

Finland is ranked as the #1 higher education system in Europe.

Finland's higher education institutions (HEIs) are world-class, with high-quality faculties and facilities and a wide range of courses and degree programs that are, in this author's estimation, of high interest to the world, many of them offered in English, including:

- Healthcare education
- Environmental sciences
- Law
- Forestry, green and environmental, climate change.
- Agricultural sciences
- STEM
- ICT and digitalization
- Digital learning environments, learning games
- Education and teacher training
- Vocational training – training the world's vocational teachers
- English-language instruction – training the world's English teachers

Significantly, these are all areas that can be marketed as critical future skills for labor force and career success.

Finland's colleges and universities are located in and around Europe's largest national forest, in a young, sophisticated country with a high standard of living that is ranked as the safest, most stable, most literate, freest, greenest country on Earth, with a

¹³ YLE, 21 February 2017.

¹⁴ National Public Radio, 5 March 2017.

rich tradition of international student exchange and respect for human rights and women's rights. (Yes, Finland has severe winters, but no worse than the Princeton-to-Harvard corridor in the U.S., one of the most elite education destinations in the world.)

The long-range impact of the recent introduction of Finnish HEI tuition fees for non-EU students is uncertain. But for many foreign students, Finland should be a destination well worth paying for, especially in the perception era of Brexit and Donald Trump. Historically, Finland's share of foreign degree students has been below the OECD average, but recent government initiatives have succeeded in increasing the number of foreign students in Finland to 20,000 by 2015.

Over the next quarter century, the global demand for higher education should grow in pace with world economic growth, rising middle classes and modernizing economies in previously less developed nations such as India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Vietnam and Bangladesh. Demand for higher education can be expected to dovetail with projected economic growth in each nation.

Projected GDPs by 2050 ¹⁵

1. China — \$58.499 trillion.
2. India — \$44.128 trillion.
3. United States — \$34.102 trillion.
4. Indonesia — \$10.502 trillion.
5. Brazil — \$7.540 trillion.
6. Russia — \$7.131 trillion.
7. Mexico — \$6.863 trillion.
8. Japan — \$6.779 trillion.
9. Germany — \$6.138 trillion.
10. United Kingdom — \$5.369 trillion.
11. Turkey — \$5.184 trillion.
12. France — \$4.705 trillion.
13. Saudi Arabia — \$4.694 trillion.
14. Nigeria — \$4.348 trillion.
15. Egypt — \$4.333 trillion.
16. Pakistan — \$4.236 trillion.
17. Iran — \$3.900 trillion.
18. South Korea — \$3.539 trillion.
19. Philippines — \$3.334 trillion.
20. Vietnam — \$3.176 trillion.
21. Italy — \$3.115 trillion.
22. Canada — \$3.1 trillion.
23. Bangladesh — \$3.064 trillion.

¹⁵ "The long view: how will the global economic order change by 2050?" PwC, February 2017. Projected rankings of economies based on GDP at PPPs (in constant 2016 \$). PPP (purchasing power parity) estimates of GDP adjust for price level differences across countries, providing a better measure of the volume of goods and services produced by an economy as compared to GDP at current market exchange rates, which is a measure of value.

24. Malaysia — \$2.815 trillion.
25. Thailand — \$2.782 trillion.
26. Spain — \$2.732 trillion.
27. South Africa — \$2.570 trillion.
28. Australia — \$2.564 trillion.
29. Argentina — \$2.365 trillion.
30. Poland — \$2.103 trillion.
31. Colombia — \$2.074 trillion.
32. Netherlands — \$1.496 trillion.

Trends fueling the growth of higher education include increasing secondary school graduation rates, the rising middle class, the increase in financial assistance available for students, rising internet penetration rates enabling e-learning models and giving students the power to gather more information about and apply to colleges, and the move to the “Common Application” among over 500 schools worldwide enabling students to easily apply to multiple institutions. Another recent trend is Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) like edX, Coursera, and Udacity in the United States, Future Learn in the UK, and Iversity in the EU, but MOOC completion rates are generally low and their path to true scale with profitability is uncertain.

By 2025, the OECD projects that 8,000,000 students will be globally mobile.¹⁶ That figure is up from only 2.1 million students in 2000. Overall, the competition for these students will be intense-to-severe.

The current market leader is the United States, with other strong players being the U.K., Australia (where the education business has become the nation’s biggest service export), New Zealand (smaller than Finland but very aggressive and successful in education export), Canada, and in Europe, Germany, France, Netherlands and Spain. “The dominant form internationally is education leading to a university degree. It is the field of education with the highest revenues, but also the one where competition is the most intense,” noted Ambassador for Education Export Marianne Huusko.¹⁷

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. hosted almost a million international students in 2015, a 10 percent rise over the prior year. These students contributed \$31 billion to the U.S. economy. The report states, “Although the United States continues to be the top destination for globally mobile students, the percentage of these students coming to the United States has declined over the past 14 years. In other words, the United States has a smaller share of a growing pie. The erosion is due to the fact that global competition for international students is rising quickly, especially among English-speaking countries and foreign institutions that are increasing their English-language course offerings.”¹⁸

¹⁶ ICEF Monitor: <http://monitor.icef.com/2016/11/four-megatrends-changing-competitive-landscape-international-education/>

¹⁷ Ministry for Foreign Affairs press release, 3 October, 2016.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, *2016 Top Markets Report: Education*.

It should be noted that although Finland does not have the brand-name power of American Ivy League Institutions, it has, in this author's opinion, strengths in higher education that reflect several of the reputational strengths of American institutions, including: high-quality education, English-language instruction, strong curricula in attractive areas (science, technology, engineering mathematics and business), teaching and training opportunities, and world-class research facilities. American and UK advantages like globally mobile credentials are partially offset by perceived visa challenges and concerns about high tuition, and possibly the Trump and Brexit effects, the impact of which are hard to predict.

It should also be noted that Finland's HEIs can deliver on many of the motivations that international students cite as their motivations to study abroad:

International Student Motivations¹⁹	
Scale from 1 = "very important" to 5 = not important at all"	
<i>Reasons</i>	<i>World Aggregate Ranking</i>
Limited places available to study at (highly prestigious) universities in the home country	3.5
Specialize in an area which is not offered in the home country	3
Have access to specific laboratories/libraries not available/accessible in the home country	3
Learn or improve knowledge of a foreign language	2.7
Interest in foreign culture, history and landscape	2.6
Get more practice-oriented education than offered in home country	2.6
Possibility to build up networks/friendships in an intercultural context	2.3
Improve career prospects/chances of getting a job in the home country	2.2
Opportunity to develop the personality/become more independent	2.1
Get a broader/more flexible education than offered in home country	2.1
Experience new ways of thinking and acting in the field of study	1.8
Improve chances for an international career	1.8

One case history of a small Nordic nation that is especially aggressive in attracting educational business is Denmark, through marketing by government, HEIs and the DIS "Study Abroad in Scandinavia" non-profit study organization venture in Copenhagen and Stockholm, aimed at the North American market and offering semester, academic year, and summer programs taught in English:

<https://disabroad.org/copenhagen/>

<https://www.studyabroad.com/in-denmark>

<http://studyindenmark.dk/why-denmark>

And a case history of aggressive HEI online marketing is INTO University Partnerships Ltd., which in 2006 launched its first two joint ventures in 2006 with the University of Exeter and the University of East Anglia and to attract international students. As of 2015, it had

¹⁹ Source: IIE International Students in United States Report Survey Question: *How important were the following reasons for your decision to study abroad?*; U.S. Department of Commerce 2016 Top Markets Report: Education.

grown to 22 ventures, helping universities in the U.S., U.K. and China to recruit international students. In 2013 it sold a 25 percent stake of its business for over \$100 million.

Finland's HEI export should be strengthened and expanded with the support of Finnish government, industry and foundations, and new initiatives and partnerships should be explored to support them.

Finland should establish, as a national priority, the goal of making Finland a must-visit, once-in-a-lifetime destination for the world's higher education students.

Action Step #5: Fully Marketize Finland's HEIs Globally.

"How to" - Next Steps for Concrete Action:

- 1.) Investigate possible U.S. and U.K. market entry options for in-Finland semester or degree programs, with Finland University, FinnEdFund and other partners, in high-potential segments like healthcare, green-environmental and agricultural sciences, forestry, climate change.
- 2.) Investigate the feasibility of partnering with U.S. HEIs such as state university networks to set up off-shore Finnish campuses and virtual campuses and joint programs.
- 3.) In marketing and messaging, give students compelling reasons to study in Finland, through testimonials and vivid evidence-and-story-telling.
- 4.) Continue building the Finnish HEI brand in other top high-scale and/or high-growth national markets of the future, including China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Japan, Germany, Turkey, France, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, South Korea, Philippines, Egypt, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand.
- 5.) Investigate feasibility of packaging short semesters in Finland and other European universities together, so, for example, a foreign student could spend a summer or fall semester in Finland -- and then Italy, France, the UK, Netherlands or Spain. Don't rule out a period in the depths of winter at the University of Lapland for example. The winter sports for students are great, and if marketed effectively, could be a popular option when connected to a period in Southern Europe.
- 6.) Package and promote distance and e-learning models, where, for example, a course is delivered in English for a short period on site in Finland, then delivered digitally for the remainder of the semester period.
- 7.) Capitalize on Finland's skill in teaching the English language -- investigate the possibilities of training in Finland and online in English-language instruction for the world's English-Language trainers, including the China and Asia markets.

Action Step #6:

Build a Network of Global Lab Schools for the World's Children, in Partnership with Governments, NGOs and Civil Society.

Every child in the world should have a school like this.²⁰

8 year-old child boy from New York
attending UEF university teacher training school

Our growth prospects are fuelled by a remarkable socio-economic trend: in this decade, the global middle class will almost double in size to more than three billion people. Nearly all of that growth will be in the developing world. That's important to many industries but especially to ours, because as consumers join the middle class and earn higher incomes, they tend to invest more in education – either to advance their careers or give their children a good start in life.

Pearson CEO John Fallon²¹

The world's primary and secondary school educators, parents, students, policy makers, and education ministers are on a perpetual quest to conceptualize and build the "schools of tomorrow."

In its own schools, Finland has already started making that dream a reality.

Finland should share its school model with the world, but not primarily as "Finnish education in a box." The Finnish model is excellent, but much of its system performance probably depends on special and cultural foundations that are unique to Finland and other Nordic nations. Much of the world knows or suspects this.

However, many aspects of Finland's schools can inspire and be adapted by schools in other nations. The reverse is also true – many lessons being learned by school systems around the world can benefit Finland. And the brand power of Finland's reputation can be leveraged effectively to support an even stronger positioning of a world school brand.

Using its own university teacher training school "lab schools" as inspiration, Finland can create both a great new global collaboration and a powerful new education brand, by launching a network of Global Lab Schools, beginning in developing nations.

With the backing of the Finnish government and universities, and backed by public and private venture, NGO and foundation capital (including from the U.S.), the venture can partner with foreign governments and universities to create a branded, continually improving and innovating showcase network of schools, inspired in part by Finnish and Nordic themes, yet fully adapted to reflect both local cultures and global best practices.

The Global Lab Schools would have their management and coordination "hub" in Finland. Among the network's prime missions would be global citizenship and mastery of 21st and 22nd Century skills.

²⁰ Conversation with the author.

²¹ 2012 annual report, Pearson.

New Global Lab Schools would open in world capitals as joint public/private ventures or social benefit corporations between Finland and the local governments and teacher training entities. Local ministries of education and teacher unions and associations would have full partnership in planning, adapting, operating and quality-controlling the schools.

The Global Lab Schools could be structured, at least in part, as Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Education (MSPEs), which Education International has described as involving civil society organizations, UN agencies and multinational corporations in arrangements that are non-contractual and non-commercial, but based rather on the concept of corporate social responsibility and based on the condition that the MSPE does not initiate or legitimize privatization or commercialization of education, or erode public responsibility for governance and for curriculum development. A large socially-conscious global education brand like LEGO could provide key foundation support. (Their play-based LEGO Foundation-supported International School of Billund could easily be welcomed as a showcase Global Lab School.)

A single new demonstration school could be opened in each nation's capital, and initial growth would be measured and slow. Teachers would be highly trained, Finnish-style, facilities would be sustainable and comfortable, class sizes would be correct, children would receive play breaks and social services, and curriculum would be world class, inspired in part by Finland's new curriculum.

As the network carefully expands over time in "inkblot" fashion through nations and regions including the U.S. and U.K., Global Lab Schools around the world would be digitally linked together to share real-time research, lessons, best practices and collaborations between students and teachers. New, more sensitive and human-scale data systems, assessments and metrics would be piloted, along with new pedagogies, products and curricula.

For all but high-income students, tuition would be free and provided by national education budgets supplemented when necessary by other public and NGO sources. Over time the network would develop proprietary products, construction and design protocols, systems and curriculum to license and "bolt on" to other schools and to help the network self-sustain and grow. High-income families would be encouraged to support with voluntary payments.

The ultimate goal is to establish a thriving worldwide network of Global Lab Schools, and to have it become a gold standard of K-12 education and an aspirational goal for parents and students the world over.

Action Step #6 –

"How to" - Next Steps for Concrete Action:

1. Hold feasibility talks with key Finnish players.
2. Write plan for B Corporation-style entity and non-profit.
3. Present to NGO, foundation and private funders, including players based in the Nordic nations, EU and the United States.
4. For this and other Action Steps, consider partnering with education institutions in strong education nations like the Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore.

Action Step #7:

Establish a Global Teacher Development Academy – to Professionally Co-Develop the World’s Teachers, Principals and Schools of Tomorrow, including the U.S.

Finland should host professional development for the world’s teachers, in person and remotely. It is a great idea.²²

Diane Ravitch

Research Professor of Education, New York University
America’s leading education historian

American teachers would jump at the chance to get professional development in Finland.²³

Carol Burris, Founder of the Network for Public Education
And former principal of Long Island public school

There is a major new opportunity for Finland to add value and generate revenue from the enormous U.S. education market – by entering the \$20 billion market for professional development [PD] of existing teachers and principals.

More than anything else, when it comes to professional development, American teachers and principals want to learn from each other. They want to collaborate, share opinions, experiences and best practices, build new ideas together and gain insights they can put into action in their schools. New U.S. federal guidelines in the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) define effective PD as learning that is sustained, research-based, classroom-focused, and job-embedded.

The professional development market in the U.S. is nearly \$20 billion, consumes 10% of district budgets, and “has long been a source of both teacher and administrator frustration for being costly and unfocused.”²⁴

According to Heather C. Hill, a professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, “We’ve known for a long time that a lot of PD is not actually effective at helping teachers improve their craft [it is often scattershot, one-off, no follow-up, fad-driven] but there have not been changes in this sector of the marketplace.” An American teacher once said, “When I die I hope it is during a professional development session because the transition from life to death will be so seamless.”²⁵

One high school English teacher said “professional development” in most public schools in the United States consists of about five days a year—usually only loosely connected—of guest lectures, activities, and some new (or old) ideas. The administrators and presenters behind these “PD days” may have the best intentions, and teachers may sometimes be convinced and motivated by what they see and hear, but with no real follow-

²² Interview with the author.

²³ Interview with the author.

²⁴ *Education Week*, 19 August 2015.

²⁵ *Education Week*, 12 June 2016.

through, significant change remains elusive—even structurally impossible.”²⁶

This presents a major revenue opportunity for Finland to step up and “own” a leading global position in this market – by launching a Global Teacher Development Academy based at its teacher education departments at the universities and schools of vocational teacher education.

As indicated in the appendix to this report that follows, American school leaders have a high opinion of the Finnish education system and its potential to offer professional development.

Finland can host groups of American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Asian and global teachers, principals and education officials for tailored, high-end “boutique” short-or-medium-term professional development experiences, both in-person and ongoing over the web.

The professional development programs can include university teacher training school “embeds”; lectures and workshops on the latest research from Finnish education professors; walkthroughs and dialogues in the hallways, teachers lounges, play yards and classrooms; sandbox simulations; conferences; webinars; seminars; coaching; EdCamps; retreats; virtual PD for learning; networked global collaboration and sharing of research; classroom and systems management; and explorations of best Finnish and global practices, include studying the interaction between all stakeholders and systems to enhance everybody's agency, learning and development.

Significantly, American district and state-wide education officials should also be invited.

Critical piece: the professional development programs should be structured as ongoing, sustained and year-round professional learning communities, linked on the web, so everyone shares insights on implementation, continual learning and follow-up contact and dissemination of best practices back at home.

“How to” - Next Steps for Concrete Action:

- 1.) Perform feasibility-capacity survey of Finnish university teacher training schools. (Pilot program at UEF with Finland University is currently being explored.)
- 2.) Consult on feasibility with potential U.S. association and non-profit partners: National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, National Association of Elementary School Principals, School Superintendents Association, National Association of Independent Schools (private schools), plus foundations and think tanks.
- 3.) Consult on feasibility of partnering with potential U.S. education institution partners, including state universities and the top 8 teacher training schools: NYU, Bank Street, Columbia, Stanford, Harvard, Penn State, UCLA and Michigan State.
- 4.) Consult on feasibility with education officials of top education states and districts, including most in-need states like Mississippi and Nevada, and most potentially “Finland-friendly” states²⁷ top states for valuing public education and top states for

²⁶ *The Atlantic*, November 2014.

²⁷ Network for Public Education, “Valuing Public Education, a 50 State Report Card,” 2016: <https://networkforpubliceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/NPE-Report-Card-Smaller.pdf>

- teacher professionalism) like Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, California, Nevada, Wyoming, Maine, Vermont, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Rhode Island.
- 5.) Based on consultations, personalize PD offerings and packages, promote through above organizations.
 - 6.) Goal: long-term, ongoing contracts for professional development services between Finnish universities and companies and the global PD market, starting with the U.S.
-

APPENDIX

Virtual Summit Meeting with America's Best Educators: Finland and the Professional Development Opportunity

In early 2017, the author held a series of interviews with leading U.S. and Canadian pre-K-12 principals and other education figures, focusing on the opportunity for Finland to offer professional development to the world's teachers and principals.

They were asked, "What are the most important professional development and training needs of American teachers that could be met by a program hosted by Finland?"

Their answers offer valuable insight for Finland education export and exchange, and particularly in subjects that can be addressed in the professional development market, both on-site and remotely.

The views of pre-K-12 school principals are especially informative, as they control or influence much of the professional development budget planning and spending in the U.S. They are directly plugged into school management both at the classroom level; and at the local and state levels, which is where over 80% of the budget decisions are made.

Note: U.S. National Distinguished Principals of the Year are chosen by state by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Executive Summary: What American Educators Want to Learn from Finland

Overall, while respondents acknowledged the differences in the two countries, opinions were very high on Finland as a source of education knowledge and professional development. The number one area of interest is in the opportunity to collaborate on and co-develop best practices with Finnish educators.

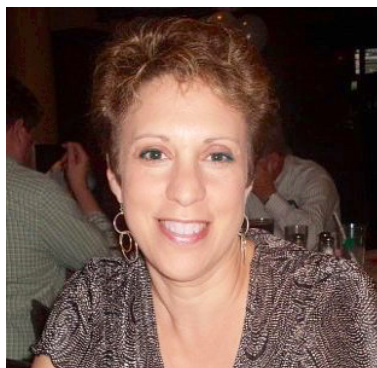
Detailed comments appear on the following pages. To summarize specific areas of interest in learning from Finland:

- Professional development "immersion" experience
- Culturally-responsive pedagogy, teaching diversity of students
- Correct developmental timing of academics
- Teacher collaboration and mentoring, including new teachers
- Managing/minimizing student stress
- Project-based and concept-based learning
- Curriculum choices and structure
- Better assessments
- Time and schedule management
- Professional rejuvenation and self-reflection
- Differentiation-personalization of instruction
- Quality control of new teacher training
- Whole child education
- Literacy and reading instruction, especially for second-language learners
- Providing and receiving feedback from students
- Technology integration to support student learning
- Helping children in poverty and trauma
- Short-term intensive residential programs at Finnish university



Jamaal Bowman
Principal, Cornerstone Academy Middle School
The Bronx, New York

- **Culturally responsive pedagogy:** As Finland is currently globally recognized for its education system, I would like to see Finland become a model and voice for the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy and the impact of bias on our practice as educators. Bias, xenophobia, and what I consider the myth of scarcity, continues to infect our politics which leads to a downtrodden humanity -- at least for the masses. Professional development in these areas can help Finland become a leader in shifting this paradigm.



Barbara Darrigo
Former Principal, Sojourner Truth School- PS/MS 149
One of the largest public schools in Harlem, NYC Dept. of Education

- **Professional development immersion:** The bulk of professional development sessions are typically ones which involve power-point presentations, hand-outs chart paper and the occasional group work. I see great value in offering a more "organic" experience. Offering educators the opportunity to experience Finland's highly regarded educational system, first-hand, would be an opportunity like no other. What an amazing experience it would be for educators from around the world to learn from and observe the finely crafted work of Finnish educators. If Finnish educators were to share best practices in a lab-type setting, it would be a powerful and impactful experience for all. Professional development would truly come "alive."



Sandra Mountain
U.S. National 2015 Distinguished Principal of the Year
Random Lake Elementary School, Wisconsin

- **Developmental timing:** I believe that while students are capable of learning in the US system, they are, however, pushed too fast making the learning they do harder to connect to life experiences. Without this connection, it is forgotten/not mastered/temporary. In the Finnish system, students start later (in my school we offer a 4K program with wrap around child care on site). They have more time to develop physically and mentally and get more background knowledge building experiences so when they come to school, they have places to make connections.
- **Teacher collaboration:** Finnish students are taught by master teachers who collaboratively work (planning, reflecting, etc.) to meet the needs of learners where they are and move them forward with mastery, not coverage as the goal. I do see this growing in US schools, but not everywhere. My thought is that the diverse assortment of needs in public school classrooms (special ed through gifted and talented often in one room) make the task more difficult for many teachers and learners.
- **Student stress:** Education is high stakes in the US with test scores, rankings, funding, PR among the distractions. Students, teachers, administrators are all stressed. Who learns well in a continuous state of stress? I feel the system itself in Finland is far less stressful. Learning is expected, not demanded. Teachers are respected, not the enemy. Education is a societal priority, not a constant fiscal battle pitting education against other societal wants/needs. This means that PD should focus on formative data and strive to attach new learning to prior experiences. And, collaboration needs to be more than a time in the day to chat with colleagues, we need to learn to make it more purposeful and be less fearful of the input of colleagues as instructional coaches for teachers.



Frances R. Finney
Principal
Fultondale Elementary School, Birmingham, Alabama
U.S. National 2014 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Standards-based teaching:** The most important Professional Development that would assist us are building capacity within our teachers with strong beliefs of standards-based teaching, progression of teaching those standards, and what students need to know academically, mentally, and collaboratively to be successful in life. The problem is that we are not making the connections between those standards and the activities we ask students to do. We are not being intentional. There has to be an imaginary thread running through everything we do to help the students know what we want them to learn. Helping teachers better understand the intentionality of everything we do is so important.
- **Curriculum structure:** the second most important PD needed is structures of lessons, intentional activities, which in a lot of cases is a pre-planning issue. Once teachers learn how to teach a standard or skill, they think, "I know how to teach fractions, and never look for specific ways to help the group of student they have this school year. I was a late bloomer who received my degree when I was in my 30's, and in taking my education classes, I often wondered why we weren't developing IEPs (Individual Education Plans). Luckily as our students are moving into middle school years, we are helping them choose a career path with their parents that could possibly help them receive the certifications needed as they graduate high school. I have found that teachers have wonderful intentions, but do not work smart. Thus working themselves to death, and accomplishing little. Learning how to better collaborate, acceptance of others and their ideas with the student's best interests at heart is so important. More of a growth mindset of what our students can accomplish!
- **Assessments:** My last thought is a better way to grade, to test, to show true learning of each student to connect the above.



Principal Melissa Herek
Lawson Elementary School Area District, Sparta, Wisconsin
U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Change management:** Finland, oh Finland! You do have such distinguished educational programming. After attending a conference with Pasi Sahlberg from Finland last Spring my team of teachers came back and made a few changes to our daily schedule, instruction, etc. Changes we were able to make without board approval. I actually was a recipient of a Kohl Scholarship for \$3,000 and was hoping to someday visit Finland. I would love to learn more about your educational best practices first hand:
 - Brain-based learning
 - Professional rejuvenation. Staff are working many hours, supporting the emotional needs of their students, etc.
 - Curricular approach to learning in Finland



Phil Weinberg
Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning
New York City Department of Education

**#2 Official at America's Largest and Most Influential School System –
 \$27,000,000,000 Total Budget, 1,800 Schools, 1,200,000 students**

- **Mutual collaboration:** Ultimately I think the most important thing we can learn [from Finland] is how to create systems via which we learn from each other:
 - Where is the time and what is the best structure for teacher-to-teacher learning?
 - How do teachers find time to regularly mentor each other? What are the best practices around so doing?
 - How do teachers become accountable for the growth and development of their colleagues?
 - Also, I believe there is a strong need to understand the most effective early literacy strategies and practices.



Principal Denise Missry
Asa Messer Elementary School, Providence, Rhode Island
U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Developmentally appropriate expectations:** We begin a rigorous academic program in Kindergarten (5 years old).
- **Curricular choices and expectations** along with assessment tools and criteria
Do you use a common, national curriculum and assessment?
- **Research strategies** used to teach diverse learners and supports provided in the schools to help various learners.



**Deputy Superintendent Mark Secaur
Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools
Woodmere, New York**

Thank you for reaching out to me. I'm flattered. I have been intrigued by the "Finland Model" myself and have had the good fortune to help plan a forum here on Long Island that included Pasi Sahlberg. I was particularly struck by his comments regarding teacher preparation and "quality control". He highlighted the sheer number of prep programs here and the resultant disparity in quality, philosophical approach, and requirements. He drew a stark contrast with Finland's more cohesive approach. While an argument can certainly be made that we are comparing apples and oranges given the differences in cultures, demographics between the two preparation programs. My brief recommendations:

- Greater emphasis on **Whole Child Education** (aka longview vs. myopic attention to upcoming assessments)
- Mandated **Social-Emotional Literacy/Behavior Management** training for teachers
- **Collegial Sharing Opportunities** between teachers



Principal Bruce Naguwa
Kapolei Middle School, Leeward School District, Kapolei, Hawaii
U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year

Here are my three PD recommendations:

- Assist teacher in providing and receiving "**feedback**" from their students.
- **Teacher clarity** - train teachers to clearly communicate their learning intentions, and articulating the importance of the lesson.
- **Response to Intervention** - provide teachers the "tools" to assist students who require remediation in given subject areas.



Principal Ron Robert
Principal, North Berwick Elementary School, Augusta, Maine
U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year

The most important training needs for teachers in my view are:

- High quality instructional strategies in the area of **K-12 literacy** across the disciplines.
- Teachers also need research based professional development in creating strong, responsive, and **actionable formative assessments** in their respective grade level and or content area.
- **Teacher reflection** on their own practice is also an area for much needed improvement.



**Principal Brad Gustafson
Greenwood Elementary School, Wayzata Public School District
Plymouth, Minnesota
U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year**

I'm happy to help.

The areas that we need additional support/energy are:

- **Connected Pedagogy**
- **Transformational technology integration** (to support student creativity, innovation, learning, communication, creation, etc.).
- **Creating meaningful change** (supporting a new learning paradigm and questioning the status quo).



Principal Steve Carlson
Judy Nelson Elementary School, Central Consolidated School District
Kirtland, New Mexico

U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Educators need to stay as current as possible with technological trends.** Technology is widespread in our daily lives. Many of our newer teachers are able to integrate any technological platform with relative ease. Most of our more "seasoned" teachers have just been expected to learn as they go. So many of these teachers balk at some of the possible uses of technology. In my building, I have asked PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to devote some time to the sharing of best practices in regards to technology. This has not been sufficient.
- With the advent of the Common Core adoption, many teachers have struggled with **integrating the speaking and listening standards**. We have focused on rolling out the Reading and Math standards, so we have neglected other important areas. In our 21st century world, teachers who rely on lecture and individualized instruction, or any instruction that does not involve conversations, are not addressing standards such as this fourth grade one: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.



Stephanie Hirsh
Executive Director, Learning Forward
Leading Education Nonprofit

I thought you might be interested in learning that Pasi Sahlberg is one of our keynoters this year.

In my view Americans are interested in the practices that define teachers on-the-job learning that are transportable to American context.

They are also interested how Finnish educators create a culture of learning and improvement in their schools.

They are interested in how you successfully transfer excellent educational pedagogy to all teachers.

Finally they are interested in how you demonstrate which professional learning is most helpful and how you know.

In terms of American teachers "content" needs the following are needed:

- **Effective instruction for English Language Learners**
- **Formative and summative assessments** to drive continuous improvement and more effective instruction
- How do you help all students meet **world standards for English and Math**



Principal Michelle Sumner
Jenks West Intermediate School, Jenks Public School District
Jenks, Oklahoma
U.S. National 2016 Distinguished Principal of the Year

We have had great changes in the demographics of students over the years which have brought different challenges over time.

The practices we continue to refine and revisit seem to cycle around these topics: Continued efforts to reach and teach our bottom quartile students. Often these students represent students affected by poverty or significant learning or behavioral challenges. Others are learning English for the first time.

So our essential questions remain:

How might we better equip our staff to assist students who are dramatically affected by **poverty**?

How might we change our practices when dealing with significant **behaviorally challenged** students?

What strategies and techniques are best practice when reaching and teaching students for whom English is their **second language**?

How might we continue to **differentiate instruction** so that all students are successful?



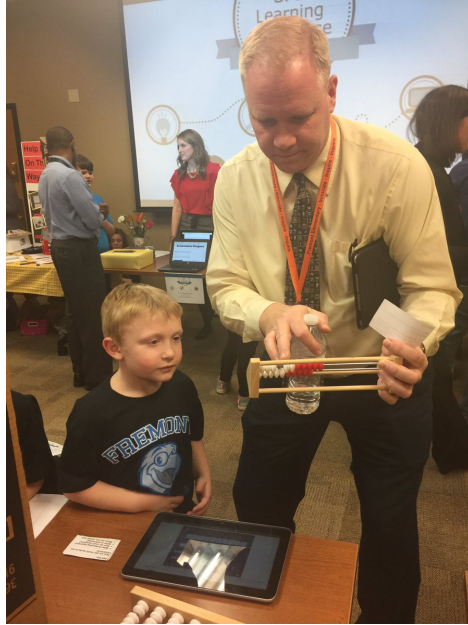
Bonnie Worrall
Principal, Geary Elementary Community School, New Brunswick
2015 Outstanding Canadian Principal of the Year
 (second from right)

- **Managing change:** We need to find a way to keep politics out of education and plan to stay the course with educational best practices. Universities could better plan teacher training if they could anticipate programming needs.
- **Literacy training:** Teacher training needs include training for new teachers that focuses on Literacy best practices. Teachers need to know the science behind teaching children to read. Reading is pivotal to any learning and crosses the curriculum. New teachers need to be taught how to do Reading Records and how to look beyond the numbers. They need to look at the children's behaviors and determine next steps to help all readers become successful. This will include many, many factors and could be a course unto itself. This piece is often missed in teacher training. We often get student interns that have no knowledge of running records, phonological awareness, accuracy, fluency and comprehension to name a few. They can judge a book based on who is being marginalized or stereotyped in a book, but often have no sense of direct instruction and scaffolded learning practices. I believe teachers would be better able to understand differentiation for children if they had a strong background in literacy. These are two big areas of concern I see in our bilingual province. With fully inclusive classrooms we are also faced with emotional and behavioral challenges.



Melanie Ellsworth
Principal, Agnes Gray Elementary School, Hebron Station School
Maine School Administrative District #17
West Paris, Maine
U.S. National 2014 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Teacher preparation:** I do believe that good teaching is good teaching, and children are children, and we can all learn from one another. One of the struggles I'm seeing of late is that our new teachers are coming from college vastly underprepared, and our current school systems are not equipped to support them with adequate mentoring to bridge that gap. There is very little coordination between the University and the school districts. This would be an area that would be helpful. How does Finland's teacher preparatory program help pre-service teachers to gain control of the early learning needed to get off to a good start. And, how does that support continue into the early years of teaching? What structures are in place to support a strong transition and what content is taught when/ how are teaching skills developed?
- **Help children in poverty:** A second area that we have recently come to understand a bit better is the impact of trauma on children's learning. We've long understood what poverty does, but more of our children are coming with extreme life events that we are ill equipped to help them manage. This severely impacts their ability to function, and creates havoc in what should be a safe learning environment for all.



James Grandon
Fremont Elementary
Springfield, Missouri
U.S. National 2014 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Concept-based curriculum:** I believe a shift from content area silos (as defined by seat time Carnegie units) to concept-based curriculum is a significant area of growth needed in the American K-12 system. I see this shift being reported as happening in Finland and would very much value the influence this change could have on the rest of the world. Teacher preparation programs and professional development models will have to be generated to support this pedagogy.



Sam Abrams

**Director of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education
Teachers College, Columbia University**

- **Professional development programs:** Short-term intensive residential programs on the campus of a Finnish university--akin to the Harvard Business School mid-career executive programs, and running for a range of durations depending on interests, could bring that university significant revenue and thus subsidize a substantial amount of research and teaching. That is precisely how the HBS model works.



John Merrow
founding President, Learning Matters, Inc.
former Education Correspondent PBS NewsHour
The leading education journalist in the United States

- **Implementation Plan:** We should eliminate professional development in all its current forms, because it's been shown to be trivial and ineffective, even demoralizing...So, sending American teachers and other educators to learn from their peers in Finland makes sense, with some caveats or stipulations: that those attending have the support of their colleagues back home and that they have the equivalent of an environmental impact statement, an actual PLAN for implementing, at least on an experimental basis, what they learn in Finland.



Bobby Riley
Principal, Integrated Arts Academy, Burlington, Vermont
U.S. National 2014 Distinguished Principal of the Year

- **Collaborative Practices.** It is vital that teachers have deep reflective discussions about their practice with colleagues. It takes time to build the trust necessary to open one's practice in this way. The collaborative process and critical friendship needed to function in this deeply collaborative way, is not taught in teacher preparation programs. As a result, teaching can still be a very isolating field. The doors get closed and the teacher feels that their classroom is their island. If we can teach and nurture the collaborative process, and teachers share and learn from one another, that is the most powerful professional development in the field.

Recap of “7 Big Takeaways”:

Action Step #1

Expand the Vision of Finland’s as Education Superpower.

Action Step #2

Tell the Marketing Story: Move from Product Exporter to Global Exchanger, Leader and Partner.

Action Step #3

Launch a Global Education Futures Institute.

Action Step #4

Establish a Global Education Infrastructure Fund.

Action Step #5

Fully Marketize Finland’s HEIs.

Action Step #6

Build a Network of Global Lab Schools for the World’s Children.

Action Step #7

Establish a Global Professional Development Academy to Co-Develop the World’s Teachers, Starting With the U.S.



Kitos!

William Doyle