

# BILDUNGSWENDE JETZ!

## 4 demands for a fair and inclusive education system that prepares for the future!



Dear Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz,  
Dear Members of the Federal Government and the German Bundestag,  
Dear Heads of Government of the Federal States,  
Dear Members of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs:

Our society is currently experiencing **one of the most serious educational crises since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany**. An enormous and growing shortage of teachers and educators is being met by an outdated, underfunded and segregated education system that is socially unjust. Children and young people are too often not adequately prepared for the future, and necessary tasks such as digitization and inclusion have been neglected for far too long.

The decisions you make in the coming weeks and months will have a significant impact on the educational biographies, future opportunities, and learning and working conditions of hundreds of thousands of students and employees, as well as on the question of whether the social divide will grow wider.

**As teachers, educators, pupils, parents, students and academics, as well as trade unions, educational organizations and initiatives, we appeal to you to set the course now for a fair and inclusive education system that prepares for the future!**

Education begins before school, and so does the crisis: nationwide, there is a shortage of hundreds of thousands of daycare places and over 300,000 educators to ensure the sufficient personnel and an appropriate childcare ratio. Schools will be short of nearly 160,000 teachers by 2035.

### **The education crisis has consequences**

Many daycare centers and schools complain that they are no longer able to fulfill their educational mission due to inadequate staffing and overload. Nearly 50,000 young people leave school each year without a diploma. Poor learning conditions lead to poor performance. Pupils' reading, writing and arithmetic skills are getting worse, as the latest IQB education trend shows.

Educational success in our society still depends to a large extent on social background. Educational opportunities are extremely unevenly distributed, and the growing shortage of teachers and educators further exacerbates this already existing inequality.

The education crisis robs children and young people of future opportunities, blocks their paths in life and makes it difficult for them to participate in society. It puts a strain on entire families and on the health of educators and teachers. The social consequences of the spreading educational crisis are enormous. A high degree of dependence of educational success on social background perpetuates the division of our society and damages trust in democracy. The shortage of skilled workers is worsening and poverty is being reproduced.

In addition to the social and economic consequential costs, there is also the question of the ecological challenges. After all, in addition to the education crisis, we are also experiencing a climate crisis that poses existential challenges for our entire society. The education system must promote future competencies and be adapted to the major challenges of the 21st century, first and foremost the climate and biodiversity crises, but also the changed approach to knowledge and media.

But how can an outdated and overburdened education system prepare young people for the future in a meaningful way and make a substantial and necessary contribution to combating climate change if there is hardly any time for this in everyday life in daycare centers and schools?

## **A real “Bildungswende” instead of continuing to plug holes**

It is therefore all the more fatal that the numerous warnings and interventions from civil society have so far not led you, the key political decision-makers at federal and state levels, to change direction. We have even had to ask ourselves: do you even take the educational goals that have already been formulated seriously? In 2008, the federal government decided at the Dresden Education Summit to spend 10% of GDP (gross domestic product) on education (7%) & research (3%) in the future. Almost 15 years later, this goal has not been achieved and has been forgotten again.

The latest recommendations of the Standing Scientific Commission of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) of January 2023 are largely dysfunctional: more work, restrictions on part-time work and a little yoga to compensate for stress. We are opposed to the idea that the shortage of teaching staff should be borne on the backs of the employees. It is all the more frightening that some of these proposals are now becoming reality in some federal states.

The so-called "education summit" of March 2023 also did little to solve the education crisis, but rather revealed the dysfunctional cooperation between the federal government and the states in the education sector and the poor understanding of participation on the part of the political leaders. At this summit, which lasted just three hours, virtually no one who is currently learning or working in a school or daycare center had a chance to speak.

**If you want to solve the education crisis, you have to take pressure off the overburdened system and involve the people who are directly in touch with kitsas and schools on a daily basis.**

We demand a real change in education, towards a fair, inclusive and sustainable education system. An education system that adapts to the needs of students and employees, instead of carrying out the crisis on the backs of employees, students and families. An education system that combats social division instead of promoting it.

We are convinced that our society can only take this path if you make timely and courageous political decisions.

### **Our demands:**

#### **1. SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND and adequate funding**

- a. A **special education fund** of at least €100 billion for the necessary investments in daycare centers and schools.
- b. At least **10% of GDP** annually for education and research, as agreed at the Dresden Education Summit 2008



## 2. TRAINING OFFENSIVE for teachers and educators

- a. **A state treaty on teacher training** that obligates all federal states to train sufficient teachers and to mutually recognize each other's degrees
- b. The revision and **closer integration of teacher training with practice** and new routes into the teaching profession.
- c. A plan to ensure **the training of sufficient and well-qualified educators** with attractive training and working conditions, and its implementation.

## 3. Make schools FUTURE-PROOF and INCLUSIVE

- a. **Effectively anchor Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** as mandatory learning content so that students can prepare themselves for the major challenges of the 21st century.
- b. **To revise curricula and learning content in a student-oriented and anti-discriminatory manner in order to create scope for the intellectual, emotional and social development of students and to increase educational quality.**
- c. Allow for **alternative performance assessments** instead of having too many comparative tests
- d. Shape **school development** together, focus on sustainability, and support it with appropriate training and continuing education.
- e. Establish and fund **multiprofessional teams** as a permanent fixture in all schools.

## 4. A real EDUCATION SUMMIT at eye-level

- a. An **education summit** convened by the Federal Chancellor in consultation with the heads of government of the federal states to discuss ways out of the education crisis and the development of a fair, inclusive and sustainable education system, together with representatives from civil society and education practice.

