

# GERMANY<sup>a</sup>

Heike Wendt  
Anke Walzebug  
Wilfried Bos  
Daniel S. Smith

*TU Dortmund University*

Albert Bremerich-Vos  
*University of Duisburg-Essen*

## Language and Literacy

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the official language of administration and the judiciary is German. In accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe, languages of minority groups with a history of residence in Germany (e.g., Danish, Frisian, Sorbian, Romany, and Low German) are acknowledged regionally as official languages.<sup>1</sup> The demographic, cultural, and social heterogeneity in Germany differs among regions. Overall in 2014, 20.3 percent of the German population and 31 percent of students ages 6 to 20 had an immigrant background. Apart from German, Turkish and Russian were the most commonly spoken languages in families of fourth grade students in 2011.<sup>2,3</sup>

Although there are no legislative provisions on the language of instruction, German usually is the language of instruction in preprimary schools, general education and vocational schools, and institutions of higher education. Exceptions include some private schools, bilingual schools and classes, and extra classes offered in the mother tongue for students whose native language is not German.<sup>4</sup>

Many national and regional initiatives are in place to encourage students' enthusiasm for reading. Organizations such as the German Society for Reading and Writing (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Lesen und Schreiben*)—a department of the International Reading Association—advocate fostering literacy, and those efforts include its “Children’s Ten Rights to Reading and Writing.”<sup>5</sup> The Reading Foundation (*Stiftung Lesen*), in cooperation with nonprofit organizations and partners in various fields like

---

<sup>a</sup> This is an updated version of Tarelli, I., Bos, W., & Bremerich-Vos, A. (2012). Germany. In I.V.S. Mullis, M.O. Martin, C.A. Minnich, G.M. Stanco, A. Arora, V.A.S. Centurino, & C.E. Castle (Eds.), *PIRLS 2011 encyclopedia: Education policy and curriculum in reading* (pp. 313–340). Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College. Retrieved from [http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/TIMSS2011\\_Enc-v1.pdf](http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/TIMSS2011_Enc-v1.pdf). Relevant sections are reproduced or adapted from Wendt, H., Smith, D.S., & Bos, W. (2016). Germany. In I.V.S. Mullis, M.O. Martin, S. Goh, & K. Cotter (Eds.), *TIMSS 2015 encyclopedia: Education policy and curriculum in mathematics and science*. Retrieved from <http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2015/encyclopedia/>



childcare institutions, schools, and libraries as well as in the media, has projects that aim to encourage reading.<sup>6</sup> Further national initiatives, including those responding to the recent surge of migrants to Germany as well as those directed at teaching reading, are described in detail below.

## Overview of the Education System

Germany is a federal republic with 16 federal states. Each state has supreme legislative and administrative authority over all its cultural policy issues, including its education system. Each state regulates its own course curricula and schedules, professional requirements, teacher recruitment, and quality development in schools. Certain crucial aspects of the German school system, such as the definition of a grading scale, are standardized across the country through interstate agreements. In addition, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (abbreviated from this point as the Standing Conference) coordinates the activities of each of the 16 state Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in education, science, research, and culture.

In this chapter, North Rhine-Westphalia, the largest state in terms of population, serves as an example in cases where the specificity of particular topics makes it impossible to give a universal description for all states, given the federated nature of educational policy and practice in Germany.

The majority of students in Germany are enrolled in state-sponsored public schools. In 2014–2015, approximately 91.2 percent of all students were enrolled in public institutions offering general education.<sup>7</sup> In the case of primary school students, approximately 3.4 percent attended private schools.<sup>8</sup> Some private schools or boarding schools are tuition-based. The states accredit, supervise, and, to a certain extent, subsidize all private schools.<sup>9</sup>

In 2004, the Standing Conference established national educational standards (*Bildungsstandards*), which all 16 states have committed to implementing. These educational standards specify the curricular elements for core subjects and serve as binding objectives for all states. The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in each state manages the curricula. As a result, almost every state has its own curricula for specific secondary school tracks, subjects, and grade levels.

The national educational standards determine the curricular objectives for primary school German language, which include writing and reading, among other compulsory subjects. The respective Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in each state publish the compulsory curricula that are formulated in a general way, allowing teachers considerable freedom with regard to content and teaching methods. Teachers of a particular subject are encouraged to work together to reach a consensus on the instructional methods and assessment criteria used in subject-specific or generalized school curricula. The Institute for Educational Quality Improvement, established by the Standing Conference in 2003, monitors and evaluates progress toward meeting these standards with regular national and international assessments of student competencies.



Preprimary education in Germany primarily includes children ages 3 to 6. While not compulsory, preprimary education is a universal right in Germany. The child and youth welfare sector oversees preprimary education, which is provided mainly by childcare institutions (*Kindergarten*) caring for children up to age 6. In general, preprimary education is only partially state subsidized, although more states and communities have been fully subsidizing the final one or two years. Since 2009, cooperation between preprimary education institutions and primary schools has been compulsory. In 2004, the Standing Conference agreed on a binding framework for basic education in preprimary institutions, specifying language, reading and writing skills, mathematics, natural science, and informational technology, among others, as explicit educational areas.<sup>10</sup> For children with migration backgrounds—which means that at least one parent or the student was born abroad—special assessment and support programs are in place to enhance German language competencies.

In most states, compulsory schooling begins between June 30 and September 30 the year a child turns 6 years old, and lasts for nine years of full time schooling (10 years in Berlin, Brandenburg, and Bremen; in North Rhine-Westphalia, the duration of full time compulsory education is nine years for the *Gymnasium* and 10 years for other school types providing general education). In some states, children who have not reached an adequate developmental level to start school by age 6 are accommodated within kindergarten or preschool classes (*Vorklassen*). Since 1992, flexible school entry (*flexible Schuleingangsstufe*) has been increasingly implemented across the states. This system allows students to complete the first two class levels of primary school in one, two, or three years.

Primary school is the first level of the compulsory education system and generally covers Grades 1 to 4 (ages 6 to 10). In two states, Berlin and Brandenburg, primary school covers Grades 1 to 6 (ages 6 to 12). Students must, in principle, attend the local primary school. However, in some states, parents are granted the right to be involved in choosing the primary school.

Throughout primary education, German (comprising instruction in reading, spelling, writing, and literature), mathematics, and integrated science (*Sachunterricht*, an integrated subject of natural and social sciences) are considered main subjects and are mandatory in all states. Art, music, physical education, foreign language instruction, and (in most states) religious education also are taught throughout primary school.<sup>11,12</sup> The total instructional time, as well as subject-specific instructional time, differs among grades and across states. In North Rhine-Westphalia, German, mathematics, integrated science, and remediation courses are allocated roughly 60 percent (15 to 16 hours out of 25 to 26) of weekly instruction, with specific subject emphases largely depending on the individual teacher.<sup>13</sup>

Traditionally in Germany, instruction in primary schools is organized for half-day attendance. However, following a rather large federal initiative (€4 billion), 51.6 percent of all primary schools offered all-day schooling in 2013, which extends care and supervision for children outside lesson time and involves activities educationally related to morning lessons.<sup>14</sup> Variations of all-day schooling include the following: fully binding, in which all students are required to attend; partially binding, in which only some groups of students must attend; or nonbinding, in which individual students may

attend, based on parental discretion. In 2011, about 45.4 percent of all primary schools in Germany offered all-day schooling in a partially binding form, while 1.8 percent of all primary schools offered it in fully binding form.<sup>15</sup>

After completion of primary school, children are assigned to secondary school tracks (*Bildungsgaenge*) according to their ability level, based on prior achievement and predicted academic aptitude. Secondary education is divided into lower and upper secondary education. Lower secondary education starts at Grade 5 in 14 states (Grade 7 in Berlin and Brandenburg) and ends at Grade 9 or 10 (i.e., beginning at ages 10 to 12 and ending at age 15 or 16). While secondary school track options are diversifying, these are the three traditional, most assigned tracks:

- Basic general education (*Hauptschulbildungsgang*)—Covers Grades 5 (or 7) to 9 or 10, and its completion allows students to proceed to vocational training or higher types of secondary school
- Extensive general education (*Realschulbildungsgang*)—Covers Grades 5 (or 7) to 10, and its completion allows students to proceed to vocationally oriented upper secondary school (*Fachoberschule*), which may qualify students for universities of applied sciences
- In-depth general education (*Gymnasialer Bildungsgang*)—Covers Grades 5 (or 7) to 12 or 13, and its completion leads to acquisition of the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife, Abitur*), which qualifies students for university and other tertiary education

The three above mentioned secondary school tracks are taught separately at specific types of secondary schools (*Hauptschule, Realschule, or Gymnasium*) or in parallel within schools that offer two or three of the tracks. In the 2012–2013 academic year, about 14 percent of German students in Grade 8 attended a *Hauptschule*, about 23 percent attended a *Realschule*, and about 36 percent attended a *Gymnasium*.<sup>16</sup>

Although these school types are the most common in secondary education, several others are available in the various states and may vary considerably from this structure. For example, some states offer comprehensive schools (*Gesamtschule*) that can substitute for at least two of the previously described school types. In 2012–2013, about 13 percent of German Grade 8 students attended such a comprehensive school.<sup>17</sup>

After completing lower secondary schooling, most students continue their education and follow different pathways for upper secondary schooling (ages 15 or 16 until 18 or 19). Assignment to the various types of upper secondary schooling depends on the qualifications obtained at the end of lower secondary education. One pathway for students is full time general education, comprising Grades 11 to 12 or 13, leading to a higher education entrance qualification. Another pathway includes full time vocational schooling, combined with vocational apprenticeship training at the workplace. Within this dual system, businesses providing apprenticeships contribute financially.<sup>18</sup>

## Language/Reading Curriculum in the Fourth Grade

### *Reading Policy*

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs agreed on national educational standards (*Bildungsstandards*) beginning with primary school. All 16 states committed to implementing these standards by establishing core curricula.

Introduction to reading starts at age 6 with compulsory schooling. Reading instruction usually is divided into two stages. During the first stage, children learn the alphabetic principle (i.e., that words are composed of letters that correspond to sounds); after Grade 2 (at the end of the school entry phase), children should be able to read short, unfamiliar texts fluently and draw information from and rephrase texts. Furthermore, all states emphasize the development of interest and motivation in reading as an objective for the first phase. The most frequent recommendation for motivating children is to choose a wide variety of texts that are adapted to children's interests and individual development.

At the end of the second stage (i.e., end of Grade 4), students should be able to read age-appropriate texts (narrations, poetry and plays, nonfiction books, children's magazines, and easy discontinuous texts) fluently. Students are expected to be able to research on their own in dictionaries, specialized books, and online search engines for children.

Mixed analytical-synthetic methods are compulsory. With these methods, children first become acquainted with simple, regular words that are analyzed into elements of letters, syllables, and sounds; they differentiate between letters visually and between syllables and sounds by hearing and speaking, and copying and writing letters and words. In all states, the goal is to achieve a balanced approach to learning reading and writing.

In most curricula, there is a special section on differentiated teaching that takes into account individual differences among children caused by a variety of factors (e.g., initial range in abilities before entering compulsory schooling, linguistic ability, motivation, interest in learning, and learning ability). Some curricula include special consideration of children whose first language is not German. See below for specifics on accommodation policies for children with special education needs.

### *Summary of National Curriculum*

The curricula in each state are published as regulations by the respective Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs. The curricula are formulated in a general way, allowing teachers considerable freedom with regard to content and teaching methods. To reach a degree of consensus on methods and assessment criteria at schools, teachers of a particular subject are encouraged to reach agreement on subject-specific or generalized school curricula.

Exhibit 1 gives an overview of the content of the curriculum taught at the primary school level in North Rhine-Westphalia, which is fairly representative of the curricula of the 16 states.

**Exhibit 1: Example of German Language Curriculum Guidelines for the Primary School Level (Expected Competencies at the End of the School Entry Phase and at the End of Grade 4) in North Rhine-Westphalia. Reading—Management of Texts and Media**

By the End of Grade 2	By the End of Grade 4
<b>Reading Proficiency—Students...</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand short written instructions (e.g., arts and crafts instructions, recipes) and act accordingly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand and act independently according to written instructions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read and answer questions about short texts suitable for their age group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Find specific information in texts and summarize the texts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose texts for independent reading from classroom or school libraries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose texts for independent reading according to their interests and give reasons for their selections</li> </ul>
<b>Reading Experience—Students...</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose books and other text-based media from classroom, school, and public libraries according to their interests</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read various texts (e.g., poems, stories, nonfiction)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Differentiate stories from poems and plays</li> <li>▪ Understand nonfiction and informative texts (e.g., encyclopedias) and informational visuals (e.g., tables and diagrams)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read children’s books suitable for their age group and talk about their impressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name works of writing, authors, characters, and plots from children’s literature</li> <li>▪ Describe personal reading experiences (e.g., by introducing a children’s book or keeping a reading diary)</li> </ul>
<b>Exploit Texts/Make Use of Reading Strategies—Students...</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formulate reading expectations (e.g., by using illustrations, signal words, and headings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use strategies for orientation within texts (e.g., by using detailed, selective, and scanning techniques)</li> <li>▪ Comprehend the central message of texts and summarize the texts (e.g., by using keyword cards, sketches, or diagrams)</li> <li>▪ Use passages within texts to verify statements</li> <li>▪ Solve comprehension problems (e.g., by asking questions, looking up words, or splitting texts)</li> <li>▪ Formulate personal thoughts on, perceptions of, or inferences from texts and discuss findings with other students</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Express thoughts and feelings about texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State personal positions on arguments, plots, and characters in texts</li> <li>▪ Find differences and similarities among texts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rearrange simple texts (e.g., by changing the end of a story)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Process texts (e.g., by creating a collage or illustration)</li> </ul>
<b>Presenting Texts—Students...</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Memorize and orally present short texts (e.g., poems)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Memorize and orally present texts (e.g., stories, dialogues, poems, plays)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read short, familiar texts aloud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose and introduce children’s books and give reasons for their selections</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to performances (e.g., by participating in puppet theaters)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to readings and performances</li> </ul>

**Exhibit 1: Example of German Language Curriculum Guidelines for the Primary School Level (Expected Competencies at the End of the School Entry Phase and at the End of Grade 4) in North Rhine-Westphalia. Reading—Management of Texts and Media (Continued)**

By the End of Grade 2	By the End of Grade 4
<b>Media Competence—Students...</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Search under instruction for information within print and/or electronic media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct research in print and electronic media (e.g., children’s encyclopedias, books, search engines for children)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use print and/or electronic media as an incentive to talk, write, and read</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Select offerings in newspapers, magazines, on the radio, on television, on sound and picture carriers, as well as on the Internet and give reasons for their choice</li> <li>▪ Use print and electronic media to create media reports</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss reading motives, choices, and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compare text, film, and/or audio versions of the same work</li> <li>▪ Assess media reports critically (e.g., by differentiating between informative and advertising contributions)</li> </ul>

## Teachers, Teacher Education, and Professional Development

The individual states in Germany regulate teacher education, and a resolution agreed on by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs guarantees recognition of university examinations for the teaching profession in each state. Teacher education in Germany has recently been restructured from a course of study ending with state examinations into a course of study generally comprising 10 semesters (five years) and culminating in a master’s degree in education. The Standing Conference in 2004 also issued national teacher education standards specifying key requirements and competencies of all teachers with regard to teaching and learning within schools generally (teaching, education, assessment, and innovation) and, in 2008, to teaching specific subjects.<sup>19,20</sup>

Teachers are employed by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the federal states. Teachers may be employed on a full or part time basis. According to the Federal Bureau of Statistics, in the 2014–2015 school year, 192,000 teachers were employed full or part time at elementary schools, with 88 percent being women.<sup>21</sup> Teachers in Germany tend to be older than those in other countries; in 2014–2015, 43 percent of teachers in general education were age 50 or older. In primary schools, 8 percent of teachers were younger than 30.<sup>22</sup>

### *Teacher Education Specific to Reading*

In most states, prospective primary teachers are required to study the subject areas German for Primary Schools (i.e., basic education in linguistics, *Lernbereich Sprachliche Grundbildung*) and mathematics (i.e., basic education in mathematics, *Lernbereich Mathematische Grundbildung*). Across all states, students who study German for Primary Schools are acquainted with models of reading instruction and concepts for supporting children with learning and reading disabilities, learning to diagnose reading problems and support processes of learning to read. Further, the national standards for teacher education specify that German teachers are to develop pedagogical skills geared toward multilingual

German classrooms and second language acquisition.<sup>23</sup> In some states, the amount of study time devoted to reading instruction is minimal and often related only to initial reading instruction. Teachers in primary schools are expected to teach in all major subject areas (German, mathematics, and integrated science), even if they were not trained for these subjects in particular. There are no specific reading teachers, since reading is embedded in the teaching of the German language.

### *Requirements for Ongoing Professional Development in Reading for Teachers*

To ensure ongoing professional development, teachers are required to participate regularly in training and development, depending on their state's legislation or directives. For example, in North Rhine-Westphalia, teachers are required to develop their professional knowledge and competencies themselves within official training programs during and outside of the school year.<sup>24</sup> In-service training for teachers is located in the state where they are tenured and can occur at the local, regional, and central levels. At the local level, for example, supervisory authorities (*Schulämter*) are responsible for teacher in-service training.<sup>25</sup> The purpose of this training is to keep teachers up to date in the subjects they teach and the teaching methods used within their subjects, and to help teachers meet the missions of their respective schools. Participation rates in in-service training vary widely across the states.<sup>26</sup>

## Reading Instruction in the Primary Grades

### *Instructional Materials*

Textbooks are provided by independent publishers and are designed to correspond to the curriculum of the respective state. Publishing houses produce a range of textbooks, and each school's teachers' conference selects textbooks from a regularly updated list. The majority of first grade teachers use a basic reader (*Fibel*). In later classes, most of the teachers use textbooks containing exercises for German lessons. Teachers can choose from a list of approved textbooks that are consistent with the chosen teaching methods. Also, many teachers use worksheets from published materials or create their own.

Mostly, teachers use basic readers for reading instruction, embracing analytical and synthetic approaches. Words are broken down into syllables and phonemes, the phonemes are attached to characters, and the characters are rejoined into words. In addition to this clearly structured and teacher-focused way of instruction using basic readers, there are more open and learner-focused approaches. According to the concept of reading through writing, for example, children are encouraged from the beginning to write words that are important to them—more or less correctly—using a special phonetic table, the *Anlauttabelle* (initial sound table).<sup>b</sup> Defenders of this concept oppose an explicit reading instruction, as they assume that reading skills are acquired by writing activities. Teachers are

---

<sup>b</sup> For a brief introduction of the historical use of the basic reader in Germany, a brief summary of the approaches to reading instruction, as well as an extended list of the criteria used in one federal state to select basic readers, see IQ—Institut fuer Qualitätsentwicklung. (2006). *Für einen guten Start: Kriterien zur Auswahl von Fibeln und Materialien zum Schulanfang* [For a good start: Selection criteria for basic readers and materials at the start of schooling]. Retrieved from [https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/sites/default/files/media/kriterien\\_zur\\_auswahl\\_von\\_fibeln\\_und\\_materialien\\_zum\\_schulanfang.pdf](https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/sites/default/files/media/kriterien_zur_auswahl_von_fibeln_und_materialien_zum_schulanfang.pdf)

supposed to wait for students to start reading by themselves as a consequence of their writing. Findings indicate that children from families with lower socioeconomic status or with an immigrant background are less successful with a learner-focused approach such as this. However, some longitudinal studies comparing course-oriented to more open ways of instruction showed only small effects of instructional methods on students' reading performance.<sup>27</sup>

### *Use of Technology*

In primary schools in Germany, 15 percent of schools have on average 1 computer for every 4 students available for instructional purposes, which is significantly below the international average. Nearly 60 percent of computers are located in a central computer room, which could reduce accessibility. In 2011, 12 percent of fourth grade students in Germany used computers for German lessons several times a week, about 13 percent used them once a week, and 10 percent once a month—but 40 percent do not use computers for German lessons. The most frequently reported use of computers for lessons was to look up information and to get aid from learning programs in reading comprehension.<sup>28</sup>

The national education standards include broad statements regarding information technology and media literacy. Policy documents increasingly emphasize multimedia as a teaching aid, a subject, and a student skill objective. Some states, such as North Rhine-Westphalia, have introduced Media as Sources of Information as a separate content area in the integrated science curriculum at the primary school level.<sup>29</sup>

### *Role of Reading Specialists*

Principally, classroom teachers are responsible for teaching the initial stages of reading. In some schools, special teachers are available for remedial education, teaching groups of children with difficulties in reading and/or spelling. In Germany, 58 percent of students had teachers who reported having no access to a reading specialist (compared to an international average of 41 percent).<sup>30</sup>

### *Second Language Instruction*

In Germany, almost 25 percent of fourth grade students have a migration background, which means that at least one parent or the student was born abroad. The difference between states in the proportion of students with a migration background is large: for example, 44 percent in Hamburg but 5 percent in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.<sup>31</sup> In 2010–2011, 32 percent of primary school students had migration backgrounds.<sup>32</sup>

In school, some students have difficulties not only with learning German but also their mother tongue and, as a result, struggle with reading and writing in both languages. All children learn to read and write in German and attend the same schools regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and whether they have a migration background. If there are 15 or more students of the same non-German language background, schools generally are required to offer instruction in reading and writing of their native language as well. If there are fewer than 15 students, schools can allow for language classes. Newly arrived students with little or no ability in German language are offered preparation courses, which last about two years at most.



### *Accommodation Policies for Instruction and Testing*

Generally speaking, parents of children with disabilities can petition to have their children attend the local school, which will be granted if the particular institution is capable of the necessary special educational and material support and if the premises are suitable. In 2011, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs proposed several recommendations for inclusive education, defining it as the integrated learning opportunities of students with and without disabilities.<sup>33</sup> In October 2013, North Rhine-Westphalia passed the first law in Germany implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which, as of April 2014, gave students with disabilities the right to attend public schools with their peers, with effects of the new legislation expected to be observable starting with the 2014–2015 cohorts.<sup>34,35</sup> Parents of children with disabilities still have the option to send their children to any schools geared to offer additional and more specific support (*Foerderschulen*). However, in North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of primary school students with disabilities participating in inclusive education classrooms at the local primary school, mirrored by a decrease in enrollment at special needs schools.<sup>36,37</sup>

### *Integration*

In Germany, victims of political persecution have a constitutional right to asylum.<sup>38</sup> In light of recent global and regional political upheaval, as well as the entry of new member states into the European Union, Germany has been the destination of a substantial number of refugees, migrants, and other displaced persons. For example, in 2014 Germany received the most asylum applications in all of Europe (four times as many as in 2011 with 203,000 applications compared to 81,000 in Sweden, the EU state with the second-most applications) and granted asylum to the largest number of applicants (48,000).<sup>39</sup> An estimated 33,000 children ages 6 to 11 are newly arrived in Germany.

As an ongoing response, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Reading Foundation have developed a countrywide program called Reading for Refugee Children (*Lesestart für Flüchtlingskinder*). This program introduces children and their parents to and familiarizes them with reading in German. Further, each child up to 12 years old receives a reading and media kit with books, comics, and games. The Reading Foundation also offers seminars for adults on the topic of reading to refugee children.<sup>40</sup>

In North Rhine-Westphalia, where school-age children with asylum are required to attend school, specialized educational programs are increasingly being offered. These include services not only to help children and youth enter the German education system, such as more than 3,000 integration centers (*Integrationstellen*) as well as preparation and international courses (*Vorbereitungsklassen*, *Auffangklassen*), but also to help teachers and school leaders create pedagogically welcoming spaces.<sup>41</sup>

## Students with Reading Difficulties

### *Diagnostic Testing*

The identification of students with reading difficulties is considered the responsibility of the school. In general, reading instruction focuses on the early detection of possible difficulties in reading, such as dyslexia. The detecting of reading difficulties is based on observations by the teacher. According to recommendations by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the observation should include the student's level of linguistic development, as well as social-emotional and motor abilities.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the student's motivation to learn reading and writing, as well as his or her abilities of perception, should be considered. In addition to the general recommendations, all states have special regulations for the diagnosis and remedial education of children with specific reading and spelling difficulties.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, specific attention is given to students with reading and writing difficulties. These students fail to meet the basic goals of reading and writing instruction in Grades 1 and 2, or their performance in higher grades of primary school does not comply with the requirements over a period of more than three months. The decision is based on the teachers' observations.

In Bavaria, another large state, students with dyslexia, which is viewed as difficult to treat, and students who have a temporary reading and writing difficulty are differentiated. Dyslexia usually is diagnosed only by a pediatrician together with an adolescent or school psychologist.<sup>43</sup>

There are no mandatory comprehensive screening tests in use to identify students with reading difficulties. In some states, such as Hamburg, Bremen, and Berlin, however, standardized tests frequently are administered to screen for students' language needs. This occurs in approximately 80 percent of schools, whereas in other states less than 30 percent of students are screened.<sup>44</sup>

### *Instruction for Children with Reading Difficulties*

All states provide directives according to which students with reading difficulties are supported within their classes. This includes the adaptation of teaching methods and workload to the needs and capacities of these students (internal differentiation). To provide individual assistance to students with difficulties in reading and spelling, individualized remedial programs or plans are developed by the teacher in cooperation with other teachers and the student's family. The remedial measures also can include small group and individual teaching (external differentiation).

In the case of external differentiation, remedial courses or additional support courses are offered. While such courses are frequently offered, special support programs for reading, reading comprehension, reading fluency, and phonological awareness are not common. Based on survey data of school principals, 30 percent of primary schools in Germany have such programs for students with reading difficulties. Measures to support more frequent reading by students are widely used.<sup>45</sup>

## Monitoring Student Progress in Reading

### *National Assessments*

In June 2006, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs adopted a comprehensive strategy for educational monitoring that was extended in June 2015. This strategy consists of four interconnected areas: participation in international comparative studies of educational achievement; conducting sample-based studies for a central review of the achievement of the German national educational standards in a comparison between the federal states; conducting cross-state comparative studies to review the efficiency of individual schools within the states; and the joint education reporting of the Federation and the states.<sup>46</sup>

In response, since 2007 all states have administered the following cross-state comparative studies (*Vergleichsarbeiten*): in mathematics and German in Grade 3; and in mathematics, German, and the first foreign language (English or French) in Grade 8.<sup>47</sup> The test items are developed by the independent Institute for Educational Quality Improvement. These cross-state comparative studies are administered like regular classroom tests, though they also serve as standardized school achievement tests based on the national educational standards (*Bildungsstandards*). The test results provide teachers with information about the strengths and weaknesses of their students, as well as subject-specific pedagogical and educational psychology recommendations to improve their instruction.

### *Use of Grades, Marks, and Report Cards*

In state-run schools, teachers monitor individual student progress continuously throughout the academic year. The evaluation of a given student's performance in a particular class is based on all the work the student has done in that class—specifically, written, oral, and practical work and tests. Oral work refers to a student's verbal contributions and is evaluated in class. In subjects such as sports, music, or arts and crafts, practical demonstrations serve as the basis of evaluation. In Grades 1 to 2, the focus is on direct observation of students; written tests gradually are introduced beginning in Grade 2 in certain subjects (especially German, mathematics, and integrated science). In addition, teachers can make use of the feedback they receive in the context of the cross-state comparative studies.

In general, individual student progress and development are documented and defined within performance standards for each subject in report cards given to students and their parents twice a year (in the middle and at the end of the school year). The structure and content of these report cards vary across the states. In some states, report cards contain feedback concerning in-class participation and social conduct within the school, in addition to the grades earned in individual subjects. Teachers in most schools also discuss the child's progress and behavior with parents on Parent-Teacher Day.

According to a resolution agreed on by the Standing Conference in 2010, teachers are asked to develop special monitoring and feedback methods for low-performing students. These methods comprise individualized learning plans, as well as intensified and individualized monitoring activities, such as the documentation of progress in learning diaries or language portfolios.<sup>48</sup>

### Classroom Tests

Generally speaking, primary and secondary schools in all states conduct oral and written examinations at regular intervals throughout the school year. Examinations always are based on curriculum requirements, as well as on the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills students should have acquired in class. These examinations are used as one basis for report cards, which have consequences for individual students, such as for promotion to the next grade or entry to upper secondary school or university. In all states, students are automatically promoted from Grade 1 to Grade 2. From Grade 2 onward, students may need to repeat a year if their progress is insufficient, although promotion policies after Grade 2 differ among the states. Overall, in 2014–2015, only 0.9 percent of all students in primary education repeated a year.<sup>49</sup>

### Special Reading Initiatives

Germany has many resources and initiatives at the national and state levels to support the teaching of reading, and participates in Europe-wide initiatives such as the European Literacy Policy Network's Declaration of European Citizens' Right to Literacy.<sup>50</sup> Some of the national initiatives include: the German Society for Reading and Writing, which supports the establishment of teacher training and professional development programs as well as research in reading and writing;<sup>51</sup> the German education server, a nationwide online platform that collects and disseminates practical pedagogical tools, information, and programs, as well as other resources on the German education system;<sup>52</sup> and the initiative for language support, language diagnostics, and reading support (*Bildung durch Sprache und Schrift*, or BiSS), which pools, evaluates, and develops further the many diverse provisions and resources for language education in Germany.<sup>53</sup> The main objective of BiSS is to ensure that, from the start of school, children across Germany's federal states get even better individual language and reading support in kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools by facilitating cooperation among individual schools across the levels of the school system, as well as by fostering support among schools and universities and libraries. Individual federal states also have in place many initiatives aimed at supporting language and reading, including advanced teacher education and professional development in reading instruction.<sup>54</sup>

In North Rhine-Westphalia, there are several initiatives directed at reducing the achievement gap in reading. For example, there is “gender-sensitive” programming to increase boys' interest in reading, which includes cooperation between libraries and schools, programs where fathers read to their sons, and activities such as “Kick and Read,” which combines reading and sports training.<sup>55</sup> North Rhine-Westphalia has additional initiatives to reduce the gap in reading and language achievement among pupils with and without migration backgrounds, including increasing kindergarten teachers' abilities to diagnose language difficulties and develop language skills within polylingual classrooms.<sup>56</sup>

## Use and Impact of PIRLS

Germany's participation in PIRLS and other large scale assessments has provided the empirical context to drive policies and initiatives aimed at increasing equity in educational opportunity among all students. When mapping and contextualizing PIRLS and other large scale studies within Germany's major policy discussions and changes, four areas of influence can be identified: the introduction of system monitoring;<sup>57</sup> the introduction of nationwide educational standards;<sup>58</sup> the increase in empirical educational research;<sup>59,60</sup> and the launch of programs for the evaluation and development of the curricula. In addition to the above mentioned reading initiatives promoted in Germany—as indirect results of greater data availability from these monitoring and evaluation efforts within Germany and in an international comparative context—PIRLS has provided much of the data used in the recent country report of literacy in Germany as part of the European Literacy Policy Network. This report is intended to enable member states of the EU to improve literacy policies with valid and reliable data from international studies, helping children, young adults, and adults to be completely literate.<sup>61</sup>

## Suggested Readings

- Bos, W., Tarelli, I., Bremerich-Vos, A., & Schwippert, K. (2012). IGLU 2011: Lesekompetenzen von Grundschulkindern in Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich [PIRLS 2011: International comparison of reading competencies of primary school students in Germany]. Münster: Waxmann.
- European Commission (Ed.). (2010). *Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.eures.eu/public/documents/0/Hariduss%C3%BCsteem%20Saksamaal%20inglise%20keeles.pdf>
- Lohmar, B., & Eckhardt, T. (2015). The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014: A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe. Retrieved from [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)
- Wendt, H., Stubbe, T.C., Schwippert, K., & Bos, W. (Eds.). (2015). 10 Jahre international vergleichende Schulleistungsforschung in der Grundschule. Vertiefende Analysen zu IGLU und TIMSS 2001 bis 2011 [PIRLS & TIMSS. 10 years of international comparative school effectiveness research in primary school. Further secondary analyses from PIRLS and TIMSS 2001 to 2011]. Münster: Waxmann.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> European Commission (Ed.). (2010). *Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.eures.eu/public/documents/0/Hariduss%C3%BCsteem%20Saksamaal%20inglise%20keeles.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. (2015). *Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund—Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus —2014* [Population and employment. Population with a migrant background—results of micro-census—2014]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund2010220147004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund2010220147004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

- <sup>3</sup> Malecki, A. (2016). *Schulen auf einen Blick: Ausgabe 2016* [Schools at a glance: Issue 2016]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>4</sup> European Commission (Ed.). (2010). *Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.eures.ee/public/documents/0/Hariduss%C3%BCsteem%20Saksamaal%20inglise%20keeles.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> DGLS. (2016). *DGLS—Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Lesen und Schreiben* [German Society for Reading and Writing]. Retrieved from <http://dgl.de/zehn-rechte-der-kinder-auf-lesen-und-schreiben/>
- <sup>6</sup> Stiftung Lesen. (2012). *Stiftung Lesen* [Reading Foundation]. Retrieved from <http://www.stiftunglesen.de/>
- <sup>7</sup> Malecki, A. (2016). *Schulen auf einen Blick: Ausgabe 2016* [Schools at a Glance: Issue 2016]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>8</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. (2015). *Bildung und Kultur. Private Schulen: Schuljahr 2014/2015*. [Education and culture. Private schools: School year 2014/2015]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/PrivateSchulen2110110157004.pdf;jsessionid=B1E5959FDD8584CCC63183DFE50ABA3B.cae3?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/PrivateSchulen2110110157004.pdf;jsessionid=B1E5959FDD8584CCC63183DFE50ABA3B.cae3?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>9</sup> Lohmar, B., & Eckhardt, T. (2015). *The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014: A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe*. Retrieved from [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> Jugendministerkonferenz & Kultusministerkonferenz. (2004). *Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen: (Beschluss der Jugendministerkonferenz vom 13./14.05.2004/Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 03./04.06.2004)* [Common framework of the states for early education in day-care centers. Decision of the conference of ministers responsible for youth of 13./14.05.2004; Decision of the standing conference of 03./04.06.2004]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2004/2004\\_06\\_03-Fruhe-Bildung-Kindertageseinrichtungen.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2004/2004_06_03-Fruhe-Bildung-Kindertageseinrichtungen.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> Lohmar, B., & Eckhardt, T. (2015). *The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014: A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe*. Retrieved from [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> European Commission (Ed.). (2010). *Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.eures.ee/public/documents/0/Hariduss%C3%BCsteem%20Saksamaal%20inglise%20keeles.pdf>
- <sup>13</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2006). *Studentafel für die Grundschule. Zuletzt geändert durch Verordnung vom 5. Juli 2006 nach der neuen Ausbildungsordnung für die Grundschule: [Schedules for primary schools, last amended by directive of 5 July 2006 according to new education directive for primary schools]*. Retrieved from [https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/Recht/Schulrecht/APOen/GS-Primarstufe/AO\\_GS.PDF](https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/Recht/Schulrecht/APOen/GS-Primarstufe/AO_GS.PDF)
- <sup>14</sup> Lohmar, B., & Eckhardt, T. (2015). *The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014: A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe*. Retrieved from [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)

- <sup>15</sup> vbw—Vereinigung der Bayerischen Wirtschaft e.V. (Ed.). (2013). *Zwischenbilanz Ganztagsgrundschulen: Betreuung oder Rhythmisierung?* [Balancing care and rhythimization: All-day primary schools]. Retrieved from [https://www.vbw-bayern.de/Redaktion/Frei-zugaengliche-Medien/Abteilungen-GS/Bildung/2013/Downloads/Gutachten\\_Zwischenbilanz-Ganztagsgrundschulen.pdf](https://www.vbw-bayern.de/Redaktion/Frei-zugaengliche-Medien/Abteilungen-GS/Bildung/2013/Downloads/Gutachten_Zwischenbilanz-Ganztagsgrundschulen.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. (2014). *Bildung und Kultur. Private Schulen: Schuljahr 2013/2014* [Education and culture. Private schools: School year 2013/2014]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/PrivateSchulen2110110147004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/PrivateSchulen2110110147004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>17</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. (2014). *Bildung und Kultur. Private Schulen: Schuljahr 2013/2014* [Education and culture. Private schools: School year 2013/2014]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/PrivateSchulen2110110147004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/PrivateSchulen2110110147004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>18</sup> Lohmar, B., & Eckhardt, T. (2015). The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014: A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe. Retrieved from [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)
- <sup>19</sup> KMK—Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2004). *Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften* [Standards for teacher education: Educational sciences]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2004/2004\\_12\\_16-Standards-Lehrerbildung.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2004/2004_12_16-Standards-Lehrerbildung.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> KMK—Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2008). *Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung* [Joint-state content requirements for subject-specific studies and didactics in teacher education]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2008/2008\\_10\\_16-Fachprofile-Lehrerbildung.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2008/2008_10_16-Fachprofile-Lehrerbildung.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt. (2016). *Lehrkräfte nach Schularten und Beschäftigungsumfang* [Teachers by school type and contract type]. Retrieved from <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/Tabellen/AllgemeinBildendeBeruflicheSchulenLehrkraefte.html;jsessionid=61045D5C3291285E73FB3BB923E6A239.cae1>
- <sup>22</sup> Malecki, A. (2016). *Schulen auf einen Blick: Ausgabe 2016* [Schools at a Glance: Issue 2016]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>23</sup> KMK—Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2008). *Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung* [Joint-state content requirements for subject-specific studies and didactics in teacher education]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2008/2008\\_10\\_16-Fachprofile-Lehrerbildung.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2008/2008_10_16-Fachprofile-Lehrerbildung.pdf)
- <sup>24</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2015). *Schulgesetz für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen* [School Law for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia]. Retrieved from <https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/Recht/Schulrecht/Schulgesetz/Schulgesetz.pdf>
- <sup>25</sup> Lohmar, B., & Eckhardt, T. (2015). The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014: A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe. Retrieved from [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)

- <sup>26</sup> Richter, D., Kuhl, P., Reimers, H., & Pant, H.A. (2012). Aspekte der Aus- und Fortbildung von Lehrkräften in der Primarstufe [Aspects of initial and continuing education for primary school teachers]. In P. Stanat, H.A. Pant, K. Böhme, & D. Richter (Eds.), *Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern am Ende der vierten Jahrgangsstufe in den Fächern Deutsch und Mathematik—Ergebnisse des IQB-Ländervergleichs 2011* [Competencies of Grade 4 students in German and mathematics—Results of the national assessment study 2011] (pp. 237–250). Münster: Waxmann.
- <sup>27</sup> Funke, R. (2014). Erstunterricht nach der Methode *Lesen durch Schreiben* und Ergebnisse schriftsprachlichen Lernens—Eine metaanalytische Bestandsaufnahme [First formal instruction in reading and writing using the method of *Lesen durch Schreiben* and results of written language: A meta-analytical survey]. *Didaktik Deutsch*, 36, 21–41.
- <sup>28</sup> Eickelmann, B., Lorenz, R., Vennemann, M., Gerick, J., & Bos, W. (Eds.). (2014). *Grundschule in der digitalen Gesellschaft. Befunde aus den Schulleistungstudien IGLU und TIMSS 2011*. [Primary school in digital society. Findings from the school performance studies PIRLS and TIMSS 2011]. Münster: Waxmann.
- <sup>29</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2008). *Richtlinien und Lehrpläne für die Grundschule in Nordrhein-Westfalen: Deutsch, Sachunterricht, Mathematik, Englisch, Musik, Kunst, Sport, Evangelische Religionslehre, Katholische Religionslehre*. [Guidelines and curricula for the primary school in North Rhine-Westphalia: German, integrated sciences, mathematics, English, music, arts, sports, Protestant religious education, Catholic religious education]. Retrieved from [http://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/lehrplaene/upload/klp\\_gs/LP\\_GS\\_2008.pdf](http://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/lehrplaene/upload/klp_gs/LP_GS_2008.pdf)
- <sup>30</sup> Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Kennedy, A.M., & Foy, P. (2007). *PIRLS 2006 international report: IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study in primary school in 40 countries*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.
- <sup>31</sup> Haag, N., Böhme, K., & Stanat, P. (2012). Zuwanderungsbezogene Disparitäten [Immigration-related disparities]. In P. Stanat, H.A. Pant, K. Böhme, & D. Richter (Eds.), *Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern am Ende der vierten Jahrgangsstufe in den Fächern Deutsch und Mathematik—Ergebnisse des IQB-Ländervergleichs 2011* [Competencies of pupils at the end of the fourth year in the subjects German and mathematics results of the IQB-Ländervergleich 2011] (pp. 209–235). Münster: Waxmann.
- <sup>32</sup> Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2012). *Bildungsbeteiligung von Schülerinnen und Schülern mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte* [Participation in Education of Students with Migration Histories]. Retrieved from <https://webshop.it.nrw.de/gratis/Z259%20201253.pdf>
- <sup>33</sup> KMK—Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2011). *Inklusive Bildung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Behinderungen in Schulen: Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 20.10.2011* [Inclusive education of children and adolescents with disabilities in schools: Resolution of the standing conference of 20.10.2011]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2011/2011\\_10\\_20-Inklusive-Bildung.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2011/2011_10_20-Inklusive-Bildung.pdf)
- <sup>34</sup> United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>
- <sup>35</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (n.d.). *Fragen und Antworten zum "Ersten Gesetz zur Umsetzung der VN-Behindertenrechtskonvention in den Schulen": Wann tritt das neue Schulgesetz in Kraft?* [Questions and answers concerning the first law implementing the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in schools. When does the law come into effect?]. Retrieved from <https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/Schulsystem/Inklusion/FAQ/FAQ-Konvention/index.html>

- <sup>36</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2015). *Auf dem Weg zur inklusiven Schule in NRW* [On the way toward inclusive schools in NRW]. Retrieved from <https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/Schulsystem/Inklusion/Praesentation-Auf-dem-Weg-zur-inkluisiven-Schule-in-NRW-August-2015.pdf>
- <sup>37</sup> Kloth, A. (2015). Die neuen Förderschüler. Inklusion an Grundschulen in Nordrhein-Westfalen [The new special needs schools. Inclusion at primary schools in North Rhine-Westphalia]. *Zeitschrift Für Inklusion*, 0(1). Retrieved from <http://www.inklusion-online.net/index.php/inklusion-online/article/view/263/249>
- <sup>38</sup> Federal Ministry of the Interior. (2015). *Asylum and refugee policy in Germany*. Retrieved from [http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/Topics/Migration-Integration/Asylum-Refugee-Protection/Asylum-Refugee-Protection\\_Germany/asylum-refugee-policy-germany\\_node.html](http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/Topics/Migration-Integration/Asylum-Refugee-Protection/Asylum-Refugee-Protection_Germany/asylum-refugee-policy-germany_node.html)
- <sup>39</sup> Bitoulas, A. (2015). Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2014. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4168041/6742650/KS-QA-15-003-EN-N.pdf/b7786ec9-1ad6-4720-8a1d-430fcfc55018>
- <sup>40</sup> Stiftung Lesen. (2016). Lesestart für Flüchtlingskinder [Reading for Refugee Children]. Retrieved from <http://www.lesestart-fuer-fluechtlingskinder.de/>
- <sup>41</sup> Bitoulas, A. (2015). Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2014. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4168041/6742650/KS-QA-15-003-EN-N.pdf/b7786ec9-1ad6-4720-8a1d-430fcfc55018>
- <sup>42</sup> Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2003). Grundsätze zur Förderung von Schülerinnen und Schülern mit besonderen Schwierigkeiten im Lesen und Rechtschreiben oder im Rechnen [Principles on fostering students with special difficulties in reading, spelling or calculating]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2003/2003\\_12\\_04-Lese-Rechtschreibschwaeche.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2003/2003_12_04-Lese-Rechtschreibschwaeche.pdf)
- <sup>43</sup> IFLW—Institut für integrative Lerntherapie und Weiterbildung. (2016). Legasthenie-Erlass Bayern [Directive on Dyslexia in Bavaria]. Retrieved from [https://www.iflw.de/service/legasthenieerlass\\_bayern.htm](https://www.iflw.de/service/legasthenieerlass_bayern.htm)
- <sup>44</sup> Stanat, P., Weirich, S., & Radmann, S. (2012). Sprach- und Leseförderung [Language and reading support]. In P. Stanat, H.A. Pant, K. Böhme, & D. Richter (Eds.), *Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern am Ende der vierten Jahrgangsstufe in den Fächern Deutsch und Mathematik—Ergebnisse des IQB-Ländervergleichs 2011* [Competencies of pupils at the end of the fourth year in the subjects German and mathematics results of the IQB-Ländervergleich 2011] (pp. 251–276). Münster: Waxmann.
- <sup>45</sup> Stanat, P., Weirich, S., & Radmann, S. (2012). Sprach- und Leseförderung [Language and reading support]. In P. Stanat, H.A. Pant, K. Böhme & D. Richter (Hrsg.), *Kompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern am Ende der vierten Jahrgangsstufe in den Fächern Deutsch und Mathematik—Ergebnisse des IQB-Ländervergleichs 2011* [Competencies of Grade 4 students in German and mathematics—Results of the national assessment study 2011]. (pp. 251–276). Münster: Waxmann.
- <sup>46</sup> KMK - Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2015). *Gesamtstrategie der Kultusministerkonferenz zum Bildungsmonitoring* [Overall strategy of the Cultural Conference of the Ministers for Educational Monitoring]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2015/2015\\_06\\_11-Gesamtstrategie-Bildungsmonitoring.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2015/2015_06_11-Gesamtstrategie-Bildungsmonitoring.pdf)
- <sup>47</sup> Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen. (n.d.). *VERA—Ein Überblick*. [VERA—An overview]. Retrieved from <http://www.iqb.hu-berlin.de/vera>

- <sup>48</sup> KMK—Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2010). *Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und Schüler. Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 04.03.2010* [Strategies for fostering lower performing students. Decision of the Standing Conference of 04.03.2010]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2010/2010\\_03\\_04-Foerderstrategie-Leistungsschwaechere.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2010/2010_03_04-Foerderstrategie-Leistungsschwaechere.pdf)
- <sup>49</sup> Malecki, A. (2016). *Schulen auf einen Blick: Ausgabe 2016* [Schools at a Glance: Issue 2016]. Retrieved from [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Schulen/BroschuereSchulenBlick0110018169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)
- <sup>50</sup> ELINET—European Literacy Policy Network. (2016). *A Declaration of European Citizens' Right to Literacy*. Retrieved from [http://www.elinet.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/European\\_Declaration\\_of\\_the\\_Right\\_to\\_Literacy2.pdf](http://www.elinet.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/European_Declaration_of_the_Right_to_Literacy2.pdf)
- <sup>51</sup> DGLS—Deutsche Gesellschaft für Lesen und Schreiben. (n.d.) *Satzung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Lesen und Schreibe* [Bylaws of the German Society of Reading and Writing]. Retrieved from <http://dgl.de/dgl/satzung/>
- <sup>52</sup> Deutscher Bildungsserver. (2016). *Leitbild* [General principles]. Retrieved from [http://www.bildungsserver.de/pdf/Leitbild\\_DBS\\_gueltig.pdf](http://www.bildungsserver.de/pdf/Leitbild_DBS_gueltig.pdf)
- <sup>53</sup> BiSS—Bildung durch Sprache und Schrift. (2016). *Handlungsfelder des BiSS-Programms* [Areas of activity of the BiSS program]. Retrieved from <http://www.biss-sprachbildung.de/biss.html?seite=6>
- <sup>54</sup> BMBF—Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung. (2007). *Förderung von Lesekompetenz—Expertise*/Federal Ministry of Education and Research [Supporting language competence—Expertise]. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242468303\\_Bildungsforschung\\_Band\\_17\\_Forderung\\_von\\_Lesekompetenz\\_-\\_Expertise](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242468303_Bildungsforschung_Band_17_Forderung_von_Lesekompetenz_-_Expertise)
- <sup>55</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2016). *Förderung der Lesekompetenz bei Jungen* [Support of boys' language competence]. Retrieved from [http://www.zukunftsschulen-nrw.de/cms/front\\_content.php?idart=1031](http://www.zukunftsschulen-nrw.de/cms/front_content.php?idart=1031)
- <sup>56</sup> Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. (2016). *Sprachförderung* [Language support]. Retrieved from [http://www.zukunftsschulen-nrw.de/cms/front\\_content.php?idcat=274](http://www.zukunftsschulen-nrw.de/cms/front_content.php?idcat=274)
- <sup>57</sup> KMK—Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (2006). *Gesamtstrategie der Kultusministerkonferenz zum Bildungsmonitoring* [Comprehensive strategy by the Standing Conference for educational monitoring]. Retrieved from [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2015/2015\\_06\\_11-Gesamtstrategie-Bildungsmonitoring.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2015/2015_06_11-Gesamtstrategie-Bildungsmonitoring.pdf)
- <sup>58</sup> Klieme, E., Avenarius, H., Blum, W., Döbrich, P., Gruber, H., Prenzel, M., Reiss, K., Riquarts, K., Rost, J., Tenorth, H.-E., & Vollmer, H.J. (2004). *The development of national educational standards: An expertise*. Berlin: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).
- <sup>59</sup> European Commission (Ed.). (2010). *Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.eures.eu/public/documents/0/Hariduss%C3%BCsteem%20Saksamaal%20inglise%20keeles.pdf>
- <sup>60</sup> BMBF—Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung/Federal Ministry of Education and Research. (2008). *Rahmenprogramm zur Förderung der empirischen Bildungsforschung* [Framework for the promotion of educational research]. Retrieved from [http://www.literatur-rahmenprogramm-ebf.de/ebf\\_lit.html?id=471](http://www.literatur-rahmenprogramm-ebf.de/ebf_lit.html?id=471)
- <sup>61</sup> Garbe, C., Grotluschen, A., Lofontaine, D., Shiel, G., Tröster, M., & Valtin, R. (2015). *Country report: Literacy in Germany. Children, adolescents and adults*. European Literacy Policy Network. Retrieved from: [http://www.elinet.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/Germany\\_Long\\_Report\\_0116.pdf](http://www.elinet.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Germany_Long_Report_0116.pdf)