

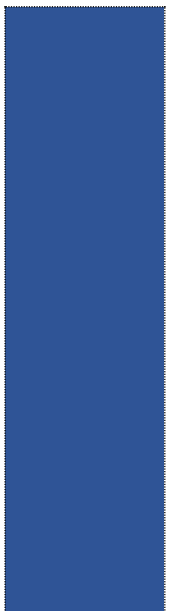
Experimental Program

PRIMARY SCHOOL AS A WHOLE-DAY SCHOOL

A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable
Education System

(a version refined according to comments and
suggestions from the public consultation)

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1. CONTEXT

The primary education system in the Republic of Croatia has gone through numerous changes in the past thirty years. Indicators from a number of areas bear witness to how the implemented reforms led to an increase in quality and improvement in overall efficiency. On the other hand, there are also indications that primary schools continue to face a number of challenges in their work that limit them from achieving the fundamental goals that are clearly set before them. Undesirable outcomes of unsatisfactory functioning of primary schools are visible through the average achievements of Croatian primary school students in relevant programs for measuring and comparing these achievements. Through waves of measurements, they have stagnated at a level below the average of comparable countries and represent an important challenge that requires an appropriate response. Since below-average student results are more often present in certain groups of students, usually in those who have a difficult upbringing, and given that other important outcomes of education are less favorable in these groups, it is necessary to consider these important issues at the level of the educational system. In primary schools today, there are systematic differences between individual groups of students, which follow their similarities and differences in permanent, family, and social characteristics, and the new program framework needs to respond effectively and permanently eliminate these differences.

In the current program framework and the total duration of primary school, it is extremely challenging for teachers, expert associates, and school principals to work on improving the average achievements of students, and it is even more challenging to reduce differences caused by social and other permanent students' characteristics. There are numerous reasons for this. Today's primary school, expressed through the total duration and, consequently, the total number of hours of direct teaching and learning, is at the bottom of the list of primary education systems in the European Union.¹ If we take a look at an interactive and multiplying effect of today's total duration of primary school, with the characteristics and working conditions of schools that have limited spatial, infrastructure, material, and other resources, it is clear that in the existing framework and work model, principals, teachers, and expert associates face the issue of reduced real opportunities for organization and implementation of the expected forms of educational work that would help them respond to the needs of increasing average achievements and reducing differences between groups of students.

School days are characterized by a rigid schedule. This is partly due to the fact that many schools operate in multiple shifts, which makes it impossible to organize educational work and activities in an optimal way. Numerous forms of work in small groups and individual work with students are not represented to the extent they should be because the shift ends for one part of the students and starts for other students, who use spatial and other capacities of the school. Today, a significant number of teachers cannot perform

¹ *European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021. Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe – 2020/21. Eurydice – Facts and Figures.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union (p. 12, Figure 1).

all their professional tasks at school but often do them at home because the school does not have adequate infrastructure conditions for teaching work.

The overall program framework within which educational work takes place is an essential challenge on the path of increasing quality, which is a consequence of unsatisfactory infrastructure conditions, as well as a consequence of numerous other influences that have shaped it over the years. The duration of educational activities during the school day, week, or school year, expressed in hours in which all students participate, is today the shortest among the countries of the European Union.² Today's primary school has a clear challenge of harmonizing with reference European education systems in the type, areas, and number of hours of teaching and learning for all students. The existing work model also creates differences among students within our primary school system in the total number of hours of participation in educational work during compulsory education, which is partly the result of insufficient systematization and balance between numerous forms of educational work carried out in primary schools. The said needs are accompanied by constant efforts to change aimed at a greater representation of modern, dynamic, and student-oriented forms of work within the teaching day, week, and year as a constant mechanism for improving the quality of education in all developed educational systems.

Changes and adjustments to the program are also necessary between educational levels and cycles. In the case of primary school, high-quality compliance with the system of early childhood and preschool education is extremely important in terms of monitoring and encouraging the child's development and access to the child's learning process. A different but equally important challenge is greater harmonization with the system of secondary education. The reform step of introducing the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools is accompanied by a strong step forward, which is aimed at the infrastructure construction of early childhood and preschool education institutions (RPOO) "in order to ensure quality education for every child in Croatia from early childhood, and to help families in the education of their children in an increasingly demanding living environment."³ The infrastructure construction of kindergartens is accompanied by program modernization of educational activities within the RPOO. Both through program modernization of the RPOO and through the transition of primary schools to the whole-day school model, their harmonization will be achieved and have a strong impact on a significantly better transition for the child. The total increase in the coverage of children in the RPOO, earlier and longer participation in the RPOO, and a later transition to primary school will facilitate the achievement of educational goals and learning outcomes for children and increase the overall quality of the educational system.

The social and professional status of teachers, expert associates, and primary school principals is a strategic priority that needs to be constantly and systematically improved. The work model of the primary school as a whole-day school, with a series of changes and activities that have been designed, represents a unique and significant step forward that

² *European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021. Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe – 2020/21. Eurydice – Facts and Figures.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union (p. 15, Figure 3).

³ *National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia by 2030, 5.2. Strategic Objective 2. "Educated and Employed People,"* https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/full/2021_02_13_230.html

answers a number of questions related to those employed in schools. At the center lies the challenge of modernizing the initial professional education system and its harmonization with the system of lifelong learning and professional development. The designed changes lead to the improvement of the social status of teachers in a clear and straightforward way as one of the goals of the whole-day primary school. The goal would be for society as a whole to recognize the work of teachers as content- and time-demanding and extremely demanding in terms of consequences and to value it financially as such through above-average monetary rewards. The whole-day school aims to provide additional professional freedom to teachers in their work, through which they will use numerous opportunities to increase their own autonomy and creativity. In the total time burden of direct educational work, which falls within the framework of the time burden of today's average European teacher, the whole-day school model is primarily focused on a clear conceptual determination of individual teacher activities. Consequently, it is accompanied by the issue of the possibility of replacing teaching and learning support, as central teacher activities, with some other teacher activities that they carry out. Thus, through the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools, harmonization with teacher policies in the countries of the European Union and developed countries of the world is ensured. With the introduction of the salary supplement model, individual teacher activities are additionally emphasized.

A whole-day primary school should lead to numerous other desired consequences in a clear and visible way. Among those, numerous desirable indirect consequences on parents/guardians and the quality of family life are expected. Higher quality and longer participation of students in the educational system provided numerous new opportunities to improve the quality of life for all parents. At the same time, the school work model as a whole-day school emphasizes precisely the responsibility of parents/guardians for the education of their children in all aspects. Schools are the central place of quality public service in the field of education, but they do not have the intention, nor can they take on the role of parents and/or, in terms of their functioning, turn into places of "safety and care," physical space, and time-focused care for children. With an even clearer emphasis on existing regular classes and more effective structuring of educational activities that have the task of providing professional help and support to students in learning during the school day and week, the concept of a whole-day school should indirectly lead to more availability in terms of time for parents/guardians and the family, but also to significantly more availability in terms of extracurricular time available to students for playing and socializing with their peers. The whole-day primary school sets increasing the quality of life for students and numerous other social groups as one of its extremely important objectives.

The national education policy-makers are interested in improving the education system at all levels. Through its experimental implementation, the work model of primary schools should also contribute to the testing of new opportunities for cooperation between central educational authorities and school founders. The expected outcome is the strengthening of the capacity of the founders of primary schools when it comes to the functioning of schools. All activities that lead to the improvement of operations of schools at the local level are simultaneously a significant form of the improvement of the quality

of life in local environments and often one of the fundamental prerequisites for the improvement of the conditions in certain environments.

Today, education is an activity of exceptional importance, and primary school, as a mandatory part of the education system, is increasingly recognized as the most important part of the system, that plays a crucial role in academic, economic, and overall social development and life. Therefore, numerous social groups, institutions, entrepreneurs, associations, and active stakeholders in various spheres of economic, social, and cultural life, are extremely interested in the work and quality of primary schools. The introduction of the whole-day primary school model should be guided by new knowledge and skills of students that are formed in primary school, which will consequently change the labor market and contribute to innovation and economic policies.

Finally, the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools needs to be fundamentally viewed from the perspective of the education system and education policy. The whole-day primary school is a necessary and urgent step that represents the central reform program, which is needed in order to form a new educational framework in which, in addition to all the introduced changes, all of the previous reform processes that have been implemented or are still ongoing will take on their full meaning and effectiveness.

All tasks and objectives set in the Experimental Program are carried out within the primary school system, and it represents an exceptional and valuable national resource. In the school year 2022/2023, 309,418 students in a total of 19,063 classes attend primary school. There are 34,773 teachers, 3,031 expert associates, as well as 12,849 employees performing administrative-technical and auxiliary tasks, all of whom are actively dedicated to the achievement of educational goals. Students, teachers, expert associates, and school principals are connected with hundreds of thousands of parents/guardians of primary school students through their daily activities and life. They all together represent a quarter of the Croatian population, and they are all extremely dedicated and directly interested in making the school the best it can be.

The modern school has a mission to provide students with different learning experiences through numerous forms of educational work. The whole-day school is one of the most effective models for achieving the mission of a modern primary school. It is organized through dynamic school days that lead towards different knowledge and numerous desirable skills, as well as encourage interests, and build attitudes and values that contribute to the development of students and their personal and social responsibility. A modern school can and does put its student first. It is a school that provides students with a true environment for growing up in which they are encouraged, stimulated, supervised, supported, and guided. It is a school that is a part of the entire system of education within which each student has a real and optimal opportunity to build and form his or her personal, social, and future professional identity. It is a school where all students have the opportunity to form and reach their very best based on their abilities and work, independent of the family environment and independent of the influences arising from social circumstances in which they are growing up, and which they did not choose. These are the goals that a modern and contemporary school as a whole-day school should strive

towards. With the new work model, primary schools in Croatia will be able to effectively respond to the challenges arising from dynamic and constant changes in the world and society in which we live. At its very center is the student who grows, learns, and develops within a modern and effective school.

In the first step, the whole-day primary school in Croatia is introduced into the education system in the form of an Experimental Program, as required by the relevant legal provisions. It will be conducted in a limited number of schools that will be selected for the organization and implementation of the Experimental Program based on a public call. In the experimental implementation, systematic monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the organization, implementation, and outcomes of the whole-day school model will be organized. The implementation of the Experimental Program opens up the possibility of looking at all aspects and components of the model. There is a constant possibility and need for the participation of all of the interested persons and stakeholders in a continued and thorough discussion about all elements and aspects of the whole-day school.

The experimental implementation begins on the basis of the created model entitled "Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System." The proposed model was created as a result of systemic analyses and consideration of existing shortcomings and needs, set goals, and a comparative review of best practices. In order for the experimental implementation to achieve its goal and have its purpose, the proposed model is permanently – through the Experimental Program – open for critical observation and fact-based improvement. Only by comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the organization, implementation, and fact-based outcomes of the whole-day primary school, is it possible to observe all the elements. This will improve the practice of programming and introduce changes in the Croatian educational system, precisely by making fact-based decisions about changes and the application of the whole-day school model in all primary schools in Croatia after a longer period of consideration and depending on the evaluation results.

During the Experimental Program, in a selected and limited number of schools in the entire system, a comprehensive infrastructure improvement of all primary schools will begin, which is the only way to implement the proposed model.

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” is organized and implemented with the fundamental goal of verifying the value of the framework, model, and organization of work of the primary school as a whole-day school. In terms of programs, the whole-day school model consists of the following four educational programs:

- (i) National primary school curriculum program, which is realized primarily through regular (mandatory and elective) classes (A1)
- (ii) Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2)
- (iii) Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1)
- (iv) Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2).

The stated concrete objectives of the Experimental Program, which are connected to the fundamental objective, while not excluding other related objectives of the verification, refer to the verification of:

- a) the value of new forms and methods of work, which is implied by the organization of the primary school as a whole-day school through the planned educational programs
- b) the value of new forms and methods of work that are carried out in whole-day primary school through the planned educational programs in the new schedule of the school day, school week, and school year
- c) the value of the new educational content introduced in each of the four educational programs
- d) the value of new educational programs and new content, new forms and methods of work that are carried out within the framework of the whole-day school in the new infrastructure, personnel, and organizational conditions of the work of primary schools.

3. PROGRAM TASKS

The Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” should respond to a larger number of set tasks with its overall organization and implementation. The tasks of the Experimental Program are to provide fact-based information on the extent to which the new framework and work model, new program content, a new organization of work, and the implementation of new forms and methods of work in the new working conditions of primary schools impact the following:

- *the prevalence of existing restrictions resulting from multi-shift work and the elimination of shortcomings, difficulties, and negative consequences resulting from the shift work of schools*
- *the increase in the students’ achievements in the curriculum areas of primary school with special emphasis on language and reading as well as mathematical and science literacy*
- *the reduction of differences in academic achievements, educational outcomes, and educational outcomes of different groups of students and the increase in educational equality, equity, and fairness in primary schools*
- *the inclusion of all students in equal amounts of teaching and learning in all primary schools through the participation of all students in the same number of hours of structured educational work during primary school*
- *the enabling and promotion of the full implementation and success of all previously initiated reform processes in the new primary school framework*
- *the harmonization of the educational system of compulsory education in the Republic of Croatia with reference educational systems in terms of the number of hours of structured educational work in which all students participate*
- *the improvement of the professional, social, and financial status of teachers, expert associates, and school principals*
- *the improvement of the system of initial training and professional development and the creation of a framework for professional development and social affirmation of teachers, expert associates, and school principals*
- *the improvement of the organization of work, cooperation, and teamwork of all teachers, expert associates, and school principals within the school in the organization and implementation of educational programs*
- *the harmonization of different levels and cycles within the educational system and the increase of the quality of educational transitions*
- *the ability to systematize the system of professional counseling and professional guidance of students*
- *the ability to systematize the system of professional work with gifted students within and outside of the academic environment*
- *the provision of a widely available quality public education service for parents/guardians*
- *the increase in the well-being of students in all aspects and the quality of student, peer, parental, and family life*

- *the strengthening of the capacity of school founders to organize and implement educational programs within primary schools*
- *the reduction of undesirable forms of student behavior and health and psychosocial challenges and difficulties*
- *the modernization of the primary school system in various areas, aspects, and domains*
- *the increase in the social relevance of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire during and demonstrate at the end of primary school*
- *the increase in the quality of the primary school system as part of the educational system and the overall quality of the entire education in Croatia.*

By addressing the above tasks, the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System,” carried out in a limited number of schools and for the duration of four school years, will provide a fact-based foundation and arguments about the justification and possibility of implementing the envisaged framework and work model of primary schools as whole-day schools in all primary schools in Croatia.

4. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM

Educational outcomes for primary school are prescribed pursuant to the National Framework Curriculum (2011) and subject curricula, and expectations are set by the curricula of cross-curricular topics, which together form the national curriculum. All the educational outcomes of the national curriculum, the outcomes of the subject curricula, and the expectations of the curriculum of cross-curricular topics also represent the set educational goals within the framework of the implementation of the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” (throughout the text referred to as: “national curriculum”).

Achieving the set educational goals and outcomes of the national curriculum within the Experimental Program is directly realized through (i) the National Curriculum Program of Regular Classes (mandatory and elective) (A1) and the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2). It is indirectly achieved and supplemented through the educational activities of the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2).

The program of the national curriculum A1 is a comprehensive and balanced educational approach that assumes the essential connection of educational areas, subject curricula, and curricula of cross-curricular topics into a single, harmonious, and coherent whole. In the Experimental Program, clear expectations are set about overcoming all known limitations related to the current fragmentation of the national curriculum through teaching subjects, organization of the school’s weekly and daily schedule in accordance with the “subject-hour” principle, and teachers and schools are given expectations, as well as freedom for the organization of educational activities, which, through the organization of the schedule, reduce and eliminate recognized limitations. These requirements are particularly expressed when it comes to classroom teaching, in which classroom teachers have at their disposal numerous opportunities and the freedom to integrate teaching and learning within individual educational areas, as well as between individual educational areas. The whole-day school should be guided towards a clear adaptation to the needs and progress of the students, and use the newly available time for more flexible and student-friendly work, which should not follow the strict frameworks and principles of frontal teaching.

Through the numerous and important activities of the A2 Program, the integration requirements will be further strengthened, and their implementation will be facilitated. By gathering knowledge through expert monitoring and external evaluation at the end of the implementation of the Experimental Program, it will be possible to make a fact-based proposal and undertake activities for the formal integration of educational areas, if such knowledge provides arguments for such a decision. In classroom teaching, all activities related to the creation of new curriculum documents related to the system of early childhood and preschool education will additionally contribute to this.

In order for the organization to be as optimal as possible, the Experimental Program proposed changes in the national curriculum, the overall value of which will be observed

through the implementation and evaluation of the Experimental Program. The changes are aimed at the structure of the primary school curriculum and are reflected in the mandatory disclosure of the educational areas of individual subjects, the increase in the number of hours for individual subjects within certain educational areas, and the introduction of new teaching subjects. The above changes will be accompanied by new requirements of the methodical organization of teaching in the Experimental Program, with a clear expectation of greater integration of teaching subjects within educational areas, as well as integration of teaching between educational areas. From the administrative point of view, this will be followed by structuring the reporting on the work of the educational system and through comparative statistics related to educational areas.

In the Experimental Program, the existing educational outcomes, which are achieved in the newly available time, are retained for the subjects for which the weekly teaching hours are increased. The newly available time is not intended to increase the responsibilities of teachers and students, but to improve the achievement of educational goals and learning outcomes.

With regard to the need to systematize the curriculum, greater integration of educational activities within individual educational areas, to solve the open issues of electivity, and to improve the overall curriculum of the primary school, experimental implementation introduces new subjects into the curriculum (Natural History, Society and Community, Practical Skills, Information and Digital Competences, and The World and I). Experimental curricula and associated educational outcomes will be used for new teaching subjects. They were created as a result of the systematization of the existing curricula, their substantial updates, coordination within and between educational areas within the classroom and subject classes, as well as throughout the entire primary school, and analysis of the achievement of the set goals of the whole-day school. Along with the new curricula, all other didactic and methodical conditions necessary for experimental implementation will be provided. The overall value of the new curriculum will be verified by monitoring and evaluating the Experimental Program.

In the experimental implementation, recommendations will be made for the realization of cross-curricular topics in order better to connect them with the subject curricula and educational areas. In the new subjects introduced into the curriculum, there is room for significantly greater integration of the educational expectations of existing cross-curricular topics, especially when it comes to the teaching subject of Society and Community.

The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) is primarily focused on methodically structured, independent, and joint learning of students. The program provides students with concrete, adapted, and effective support, i.e., enrichment of learning by teachers and expert associates. It is a methodical form of direct educational work, which is centered on the principles of differentiation of teaching and learning, in forms and methods that clearly follow the progress of students and the dynamics of the realization of educational outcomes of students. The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) has no new educational outcomes (the outcomes are those

already expressed within the framework of the A1 Program of the national curriculum, which is realized through regular classes). All the activities of the A2 Program cannot lead to the quantitative expansion of students' duties; they expand the existing types of work duties of teachers (which primarily refers to work duties that teachers perform, e.g., when it comes to supplementary and additional classes and some forms of extracurricular activities).

The support and enrichment that teachers provide within the A2 Program can be methodically organized in different ways using of all forms of differentiation, which leads to exceptional work flexibility. They do not include regular classroom teaching, nor an extension of regular teaching (nor is it a substitute for regular teaching, which is the center of the educational process, but it is also not a time during which teachers and students go through regular teaching that was not completed for some reason).

The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning is introduced with clear goals: to improve the (set) educational outcomes of all students and to focus on reducing differences in academic achievements and outcomes of individual groups of students. The additional time in whole-day school will thus lead to a better meeting of the needs and realization of the potential of each student. Every student must get new opportunities to achieve better educational outcomes based on their abilities, interests, and the effort involved. The A2 Program provides many new and different opportunities for students, teachers, and schools. Activities within the A2 Program can also be aimed at improving learning skills and techniques, adopting effective approaches and work styles, eliminating identified difficulties, strengthening the capacity for independent work, and identifying and developing the interests and abilities of each individual student. In addition to teachers as creators and holders of activities, the Experimental Program clearly defines the participation of expert associates in the implementation of the A2 Program, as well as the joint work and teamwork of teachers and expert associates.

The educational activities of the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2) primarily serve numerous needs and interests of students. Further roles and purposes of all of these programs are a stronger integration of academic and extra-academic forms of educational work and greater opportunities to supplement and enrich the activities within the A1 and A2 Programs. The B1 and B2 Programs are educational programs that also strengthen the cooperation within the community in which the school operates. Indirectly, by their consequences, the programs also offer significant support for students and parents in better organization of daily and extra-academic life. One of the goals of the Experimental Program is also to observe how the whole-day school contributes to increasing the degree of student participation in numerous extra-academic activities (which they are currently not a part of due to the need to pay in order to participate, unavailability of organized activities, difficulties in organizing transport, etc.).

The B1 and B2 Programs are carried out predominantly on the school premises. This eliminates the difficulty in organizing the transport of students. In terms of schedule, the activities always come after the A1 and A2 Programs. Students participate in the activities voluntarily, and the financing of the participation costs is ensured (for all the B1 activities

in full, and the B2 activities to a large extent). Guaranteed financing of the participation costs in the B2 activities is provided when the B2 Program serves to directly satisfy the needs of parents for the school's public service, which is realized through the whole-day school. Teachers' participation in the B1 activities is partly voluntary and partly mandatory and is subject to meeting the requirements set at the school level to ensure the availability of the B1 Program. Participation of teachers in the B2 Program is not envisaged. Through both B1 and B2 Programs, there are no new educational outcomes that would increase the demands, duties, or workload of students in relation to the national curriculum.

5. CONTENT OF THE PROGRAM

The Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” is structured and organized into four integrated educational program units. They are labeled as follows:

A1 – NATIONAL CURRICULUM PROGRAM (implemented through regular classes)

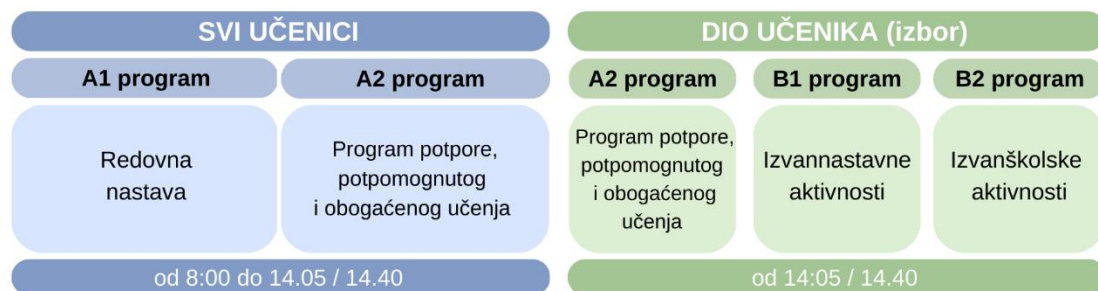
A2 – PROGRAM OF SUPPORTED, ASSISTED, AND ENRICHED LEARNING

B1 – PROGRAM OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (as part of the school curriculum)

B2 – PROGRAM OF EXTRA-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES (as part of the school curriculum)

In order to facilitate the labeling and administration of individual activities and groups of activities, technical labels A1, A2, B1, and B2 are attached to educational programs, which will be systematically used within the experimental implementation.

The educational program framework of the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools within the Experimental Program is structured as follows:



The general program framework of the whole-day primary school in terms of mandatory and elective time is provided. During the A1 and A2 Programs, the students, as well as the teachers involved in them, must only be at school until the activities of those two programs are completed. Each school creates its own schedule for the needs of its students. Depending on the schedule, the duration of the activities of the A1 and A2 Programs may be shorter or longer. Classroom teaching students are involved in the A1 and A2 Programs until 2 p.m. on average, and subject classes students until 3 p.m. on average. Free school lunch, other forms of nutrition, breaks, and well-thought-out free time are included in the above schedule. Depending on the schedule that each school specifically prepares for the needs of its students, it is possible that on certain days the mandatory duration of the activities of the A1 and A2 Programs may be shorter or longer.

After the mandatory time for all students, the activities of the elective A2, B1, and B2 Programs are organized for part of the students who decide to voluntarily participate and which meet the needs and interests of these students.

The whole-day primary school promotes diversity and balance through its four educational programs (A1, A2, B1, and B2). Diversity means that the whole-day school nurtures the individual talents and potentials of each student. Balance means that the whole-day school promotes the holistic development and well-being of students – intellectual, emotional, physical, artistic, and social. Optimal achievement of the planned educational goals is achieved through various forms of curricular, extracurricular, and leisure activities, as well as a proper balance between work, play, and rest, as well as students' nutrition. Students, their development, and well-being are at the center of the whole-day school, and schools organize their work by combining classes, as only one part of educational activities, with other forms of work, which acknowledge the needs and possibilities of students. In the organization of the whole-day school, everyone is given significant flexibility and freedom to achieve the set educational goals.

In the experimental implementation, the educational work carried out as part of the A1 and A2 Programs implies direct educational work in which all students participate. It represents an obligation for the student and is expressed in terms of time as an indicator of the student's daily, weekly, and annual school time. In the A1 Program, there are predominantly familiar forms of teaching, while in the A2 Program, there are predominantly forms of support and enrichment of the students' learning process.

The Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2) form part of the school curriculum, it is elective, and the participation of only a part of the students is envisaged. The B1 and B2 Programs are organized and implemented in order to meet the additional needs and interests of students. The holder of the B1 Program activities is the school, and the program is organized and implemented with the participation of part of the school's students and teachers. When it comes to the schedule, it is always organized following the implementation of the A1 and A2 Programs. The B2 Program is organized and carried out through the cooperation of schools, school founders, and other holders of educational activities, whereby the school is not the holder of the B2 Program activities. Student participation in the B1 and B2 Program activities is elective. When it comes to teachers, the school and the teachers within the B1 Program must provide the number of hours of activities that would satisfy the interests of the majority of the school's students. In general, participation in the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) is not mandatory for teachers. Teachers' participation in the B1 Program is carried out in such a way as to determine the needs and interests of students for extracurricular activities. In the first step and on a voluntary basis, interested teachers are offered the organization and performance of extracurricular activities that meet the needs and interests of students. If it is not possible to satisfy the needs and interests of the students in this way, i.e., the school's need for the organization of the B1 Program, the school principal has the authority to engage the teachers whom the school and students need for the organization and performance of extracurricular activities up to the number of hours required for the B1 Program. Teachers participating in the B1 Program are paid a supplement to their basic salary. Participation of teachers in the B2 Program is not envisaged.

Each of the educational programs within the Experimental Program is described in more detail below.

A1 – National Curriculum Program, which is implemented through regular classes

The national curriculum implemented through regular classes is a complex system of curricular and cross-curricular areas and topics, and is the central educational program of primary schools. It is common to all schools participating in the Experimental Program and is realized as a form of a regular program, which allows the necessary adjustments according to established regulations. It is determined and amended by formal decisions at the national level. Primary schools as whole-day schools within the framework of the Experimental Program implement the national curriculum through regular classes, which is a direct indicator of the hours of direct classroom teaching. All students are required to participate in regular classes. For students who are subject to the applicable regulations on the principles, methods, and forms of participation or possible adjustments for certain groups of students, they are applied through the Experimental Program as well.

Within the Experimental Program, adjustments were made to the curriculum with the aim of the optimal achievement of the general and specific goals of primary schools, and with the aim of the fact-based improvement and reforming of primary school education in Croatia. Changes and adjustments were made by considering the goals set for the development of the primary school system through the National Development Strategy by 2030, and by responding to the need to eliminate the systematic causes of the falling behind of Croatian students in terms of important forms of literacy (language and reading, mathematics, and science). As part of the Experimental Program, the number of hours for regular classes of the Croatian Language and Mathematics has been increased by one hour for all primary school grades. In the new timetable for these subjects, no new educational outcomes are introduced, starting from the fact that the earlier reforms that were focused on modernizing the curriculum of teaching subjects have correctly set the overall and individual educational outcomes that the student should achieve by the end of primary school education. Future changes are possible depending on the extent to which the experimental implementation will indicate the necessity and justification of changes in the existing curriculum, as a consequence, that should lead to an increase in the quality of the system. Having in mind all the available empirical knowledge, clear expectations were expressed within the Experimental Program – by extending the time available for students and teachers, the academic achievements of all students, and especially of certain groups of students, will increase. However, only through experimental implementation and monitoring of all the available information and experiences will an empirical basis for possible changes in the curricula of these educational areas and teaching subjects be acquired.

The school subjects of Science and Social Studies and Science are proposed for implementation within the Experimental Program in such a way that they are systematized and formed through two school subjects entitled Natural History and Society and Community. The whole-day primary school should lead to a clear and more

pronounced integration of educational activities within and between individual educational areas. Furthermore, there are clear expectations concerning significantly greater integration of cross-curricular topics. The new organization of teaching subjects within the natural history and the social and humanistic educational areas should contribute to a greater, stronger, and higher-quality integration of educational outcomes within the natural history and the social and humanistic educational areas, through classroom and subject classes, as well as through the primary school as a whole.

There is an additional emphasis on significantly greater integration of activities within the classroom and subject classes, which is one of the prerequisites for a successful transition of students from the classroom cycle to the subject cycle. Therefore, in the experimental implementation, the expectations of significantly greater integration of these areas between the cycle of classroom and subject classes are very clearly laid out. By adding an additional teaching hour dedicated to natural history, the natural history education area, and students' science literacy are further emphasized within the Experimental Program, and teachers and students are given more time to achieve the expected educational outcomes. When it comes to the area of natural history, there are also clear expectations within the Experimental Program that a common subject throughout most of primary school will be a good framework for a more successful achievement and integration of the set educational outcomes within the subject classes in certain scientific fields of natural history in the future.

When it comes to the Experimental Program within the social and humanistic teaching area, clear expectations in the field of natural history are presented. Greater integration of the classroom and subject cycles is expected, as well as significantly greater integration of the social and humanistic educational area and cross-curricular topics. Numerous cross-curricular topics, that exist in the Primary School Curriculum and for which there are developed curricula, will be more strongly articulated through the subject of Society and Community, and their educational expectations will be realized. This will certainly contribute to the new weekly timetable for the subject of Geography, which has an increased timetable on the subject level, and which, in terms of its educational outcomes, mostly falls under the umbrella of the social and humanistic, but also of the natural history educational area.

In the Experimental Program, particular expectations are set for classroom teaching, which will be operationally expressed to a considerable extent through the Guidelines for the Organization and Implementation of the A2 Program. Classroom teachers have complete freedom to organize a weekly schedule through which they will realize the principles of integration of educational content and activities, both within and between educational areas. For the above, all of the intended activities of the A2 Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning, which are focused on educational areas and students' literacy, will serve as an effective methodical tool. It is precisely this approach that emphasizes the shift in the focus of activities from individual teaching subjects to educational areas.

By monitoring and evaluating the experimental implementation, empirical knowledge about the level of realization of these expectations will be gathered. Together with the

parallel activities of modernization and program adaptation of the curriculum of early childhood and preschool education, they should lead to new reform activities within the system of mandatory education, which would primarily emphasize educational areas in the cycle of classroom teaching as the only nominal and formal framework for the implementation of educational work.

With the Experimental Program, more school time and teaching hours for regular classes within the artistic area are envisaged. Expectations about the need for the highest-quality education of all students at an early age in the artistic area are clearly stated. This area provides students with numerous important skills and knowledge, and an extremely important educational component of primary school as a real area for the formation and development of creative capacities of all students, which are accompanied by the formation of numerous desirable attitudes as a basis for success in educational levels in the future, but also in life. When it comes to the classroom cycle, the Experimental Program sets out clear expectations that classroom teachers, wherever possible, integrate fine arts and music and implement them as classes within the artistic area, e.g., in the form of a block schedule. There is also a valid option to present art and music classes as artistic area classes within the school timetable, and the methodological expectation is that they be conducted as a combination of art and music classes wherever the classroom teachers deem it necessary. Classroom teachers within the Experimental Program have considerable flexibility and freedom in the organization and other aspects of teaching in the artistic area in the total scheduled weekly timetable of three teaching hours.

The mandatory timetable for physical and health education of students has also been increased. Within the Experimental Program, the organization of educational work will be tested, in which the holder of educational activities is the subject teacher and not the classroom teacher. Only through the implementation of the Experimental Program and the review of all the outcomes and the level of achievement of expectations will it be possible to make a decision about the implementation of such a decision and the manner of conducting of this teaching subject in the compulsory education system. Through the whole-day school model, the issue of students' health and physical well-being has been emphasized through several introduced changes. The new proposed schedule of classes and breaks must also with the classroom teacher carries out its central activity tribute to the improvement of students' health and physical well-being. During the school day, a mandatory recreation break is introduced for all students, and its central activity is carried out by the classroom teacher. Important requirements and expectations are set out as part of the A2 Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning since teachers are required to methodically perform all forms of teaching through which it is possible to include physical activity and movement, i.e., all of the methodical forms of activity that contribute to physical health and overall well-being of students. In order to put an even clearer and stronger emphasis on students' health and physical well-being within the framework of the whole-day school, clear expectations were also set when it comes to the organization of the B1 Program of Extracurricular Activities. As part of the B1 Program, each school within the experimental implementation must implement at least 20% of the activities in the physical, health, and sports areas within classroom

teaching. In the subject teaching, the above requirement amounts to 30% of the activities when it comes to the activities of the B1 Program. Finally, within the whole-day school, each student will be guaranteed at least one school hour of physical activity per day within the school.

The Experimental Program introduces a new subject – Practical Skills – which should help achieve numerous goals. At the beginning of primary school, its activities are age-appropriate, which encourages independent work through manual activities and psychomotor development of school-age children. The content and curriculum of the new subject represent a school area in which numerous skills and capacities of students are developed, primarily through workshops, practical work, and peer cooperation within the teaching subject, but even more so through integration with other teaching subjects and areas. Finally, the new subject represents a curricular area in the final grades of classroom teaching, which improves the quality and appropriate transition for the following subject teaching area, especially when it comes to STEM and technical areas.

Practical Skills is a teaching subject that is methodically focused on the concepts of learning through activities, experience, the “do it yourself” principle, creativity in all aspects, as well as movement and engagement of the muscular, skeletal, and oculomotor systems. The new subject within classroom teaching should significantly change a part of primary school that is dominantly reflected in students’ passivity and lack of participation in classes. From a methodical point of view, it presents a set of educational activities that integrate artistic and technical educational areas in classroom teaching. In addition to the key emphasis on improving psychomotor development and the acquisition and development of a number of fundamental life skills necessary for successful functioning in numerous environments, an important goal of the subject is the development of aesthetic, as well as other skills, such as skills related to the entire process of the design and creation of products, individual work, and cooperation, decision-making related to appearance, form, materials, production process, costs, and necessary resources in real-life situations.

At the beginning of classroom teaching, Practical Skills should be a set of educational activities that achieve the required mechanism of effective transition from preschool to primary school. It is based on skills whose development begins in preschool education and continues in the first grades of primary school. The subject of Practical Skills is taught within classroom teaching and, in addition to the increase in the timetable in the technical area in the fifth and sixth grades, it also sets out clear expectations about the increase in students’ literacy related to the mathematical, technical, and engineering areas, i.e., in a broader sense, to the overall STEM area.

One of the key goals of primary school is the personal and holistic development of each student. Therefore, in the curriculum within the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools during the Experimental Program, changes were made in the acquisition of basic competences of today’s students, future active citizens, for the safe use of information and communication technology and deployment of critical thinking. The subject of Information and Digital Competences, which systematizes the area, should provide the necessary knowledge and skills to students from the first to the eighth grade

of primary school. Additionally, this subject will contribute to the development of key areas of student literacy, especially those related to STEM. The new school subject, which is taught one school hour per week, is organized as a mandatory subject in all grades of primary school and integrated with the educational expectations of the existing cross-curricular topic (Use of Information and Communication Technology) within the national curriculum. In the experimental implementation, schools have set expectations and significant time-related opportunities within the B1 Program to organize and implement the number of extracurricular activities and the teaching hours that correspond to the needs and interests of the part of students who want to acquire additional competences in this area. If there are significant interests and needs of students in a given school, the school can additionally, within the framework of the Experimental Program, organize and implement a much larger number of educational activities related to Information and Digital Competences, as well as all related areas, and significantly extend their duration, which can be much longer than it is today. As before, the organization of such elective educational activities is carried out on a voluntary basis.

In order to harmonize educational standards for all primary school students, it is necessary to standardize the workload as well, which is in accordance with the provisions of Article 27, paragraph 3 of the Primary and High School Education Act, which stipulates that the educational standard of students consists of mandatory and elective subjects. In accordance with the above, the subject of The World and I is introduced for those students who are not part of the Confessional Religious Education. This subject is not a substantive, but primarily an organizational alternative to Religious Education. The subject is aimed at the individual (student) who critically reflects on themselves and the world. Its purpose is to provide a bridge between these two worlds – external (a fact-based world) and internal (a value-based world). The subject is predominantly focused on the development of students' critical thinking competence – competence of the future, the 21st century competence, lifelong learning competence, quality learning, and good teaching.⁴ In addition to the development of critical thinking, this subject enables the acquisition of the fundamental social, ethical, and moral knowledge and skills, as well as the formation of attitudes that contribute to the holistic and balanced development of the student and their personal and social responsibility and ethical behavior. By introducing this subject, while emphasizing the importance of learning outcomes focused on critical thinking in all subjects, Croatia is following the recommendations arising from relevant scientific research in the area of critical thinking.⁵ In relation to the subject of The World and I, the Experimental Program will test different forms of organization of educational work in which the holders of educational activities can be classroom teachers, subject teachers, as well as school's expert associates (on a voluntary basis).

⁴ '4K skills of the 21st century' – 4C skills' are Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration.

⁵ Research shows (e.g., Davies, 2006; Ikuenobe, 2001) that students' critical thinking competences are best developed by teaching critical thinking by applying the so-called mixed approach, which includes the following: (a) that learning outcomes oriented towards critical thinking are contained in other teaching subjects, the so-called infusion approach and the immersion approach, and (b) that critical thinking is taught as a separate subject in which critical thinking – its strategies and principles – is taught through the so-called general approach.

Numerous European documents, i.e., recommendations, indicate the importance of learning foreign languages. In Croatia, the first foreign language is taught from the first grade and is mandatory, while the second foreign language is elective and is offered to students from the fourth grade. The number of students who are learning a second foreign language is currently not at a satisfactory level, which is certainly due to unfavorable infrastructure conditions in schools. Therefore, one of the goals of the whole-day school is to create the prerequisites for learning two foreign languages. During the Experimental Program, all students from the fourth grade will be learning a second foreign language, and it is the school that will choose which language it will offer to its students.

With the aim of providing a clearer connection between cross-curricular topics, subject curricula, and educational areas, as part of the Experimental Program, recommendations for possible forms of realization of cross-curricular topics will be created.

In the A1 Program of the national curriculum, the changes and adaptations that are tested under the Experimental Program include the following:

A1.1. From the first to the eighth grade, the timetable for the Croatian Language has been increased by 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.2. From the first to the eighth grade, the timetable for Mathematics has been increased by 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.3. From the first to the fourth grade, Nature and Society is divided into two subjects – Natural History and Society and Community. The subject of Natural History is taught through 2 teaching hours per week, and Society and Community through 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.4. In the fifth and sixth grades, Science is renamed to Natural History, and the timetable in the fifth grade is increased by 0.5 teaching hours per week, from 1.5 teaching hours to 2 teaching hours per week.

A1.5. In the fifth grade, the timetable for Geography was increased by 0.5 teaching hours per week, i.e., from 1.5 teaching hours to 2 teaching hours per week.

A1.6. In the fourth grade, the timetable for Physical and Health Education is increased by 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.7. From the first to the fourth grade, Practical Skills is introduced as a subject, and its duration is 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.8. From the first to the fourth grade, the timetable for Fine Arts is increased by 0.5 teaching hours per week.

A1.9. From the first to the fourth grade, the timetable for Music is increased by 0.5 teaching hours per week.

A1.10. From the first to the eighth grade, a mandatory subject of Information and Digital Competences is introduced, and its duration is 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.11. In the fifth and sixth grades, the timetable for Technical Education has been increased by 1 teaching hour per week.

A1.12. From the first to the eighth grade, The World and I is introduced as a subject, as an alternative to Confessional Religious Education.

A1.13. From the fourth to the eighth grade, a second foreign language will be included as an elective subject for all students.

Within the framework of the experimental implementation of the whole-day school model, the national curriculum structure (NOK, subject and cross-curricular topic curricula) is the basis for the organization and implementation of educational work. Through formal decisions and administrative adjustments, the Experimental Program will use the modified curriculum as an experimental one and will be implemented with the envisaged changes and adjustments. All the elements and described expectations related to the A1 Program that are presented in the text of the Experimental Program require teachers and schools to carry out the organization and implementation during the Experimental Program.

In the structure of the Curriculum within the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System”, the changes shown in the following Table were made.

The curriculum for the implementation of the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System”

A1 PROGRAM										
EDUCATIONAL AREA	SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF WEEKS	NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK BY GRADES							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION	CROATIAN LANGUAGE	35	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5
	FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE	35	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
	SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE (elective)	35				2	2	2	2	2
MATHEMATICS	MATHEMATICS	35	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
NATURAL HISTORY	NATURAL HISTORY	35	2	2	2	2	2	2		
	BIOLOGY	35							2	2
	CHEMISTRY	35							2	2
SOCIAL AND HUMANISTIC	PHYSICS	35							2	2
	SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY	35	1	1	1	1				
	GEOGRAPHY ⁶	35					2	2	2	2
ARTISTIC	HISTORY	35					2	2	2	2
	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION / THE WORLD AND I (elective)	35	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	FINE ARTS	35	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	1	1	1
ARTISTIC	MUSIC	35	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	1	1	1
	PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION	35	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
TECHNICAL AND INFORMATION EDUCATION	PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION	35								
	PRACTICAL SKILLS	35	1	1	1	1				
	TECHNICAL EDUCATION	35					2	2	1	1
	INFORMATION AND DIGITAL COMPETENCES	35	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPICS⁷

ALL EDUCATIONAL AREAS	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	35								
	CIVIL EDUCATION									
	HEALTH									
	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT									
	LEARNING TO LEARN									
	ENTREPRENEURSHIP									
	USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY									

A2 PROGRAM

	FORMS OF WORK AND EDUCATIONAL/LITERACY AREAS	NUMBER OF WEEKS	NUMBER OF HOURS AND THE PROPORTION OF TIME PER WEEK BY GRADES							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SUPPORTED, ASSISTED, AND ENRICHED LEARNING		35	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	A2 ALL STUDENTS		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	A2 PART OF THE STUDENTS		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Homeroom class	35	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Language and reading literacy	35	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%

⁶ Geography in part falls under the umbrella of the natural history educational area.

⁷ The curricula of cross-curricular topics are carried out in a cross-curricular manner within the framework of all teaching subjects and homeroom classes. The realization of the educational expectations of all cross-curricular topics is mandatory in all classes, and for this purpose, the hours planned for individual teaching subjects and homeroom classes are used.

	Mathematical literacy	35							
	Natural history literacy	35							
	Flexibility in terms of the area	35	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%

The subject curricula and the cross-curricular topic curricula for the implementation of the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System”

Teaching subjects that are taught through an increased weekly timetable are taught according to the curricula published in the *Official Gazette* so that the existing educational outcomes related to primary school are achieved in the newly available time.

1. Croatian Language

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the Croatian Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

2. Mathematics

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Mathematics for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

3. Fine Arts

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Fine Arts for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

4. Music

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Music for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

5. Physical and Health Education

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Physical and Health Education for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

6. Technical Education

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Technical Education for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

7. Geography

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Geography for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

The teaching subjects with no increase in a weekly timetable are carried out according to the curricula published in the *Official Gazette*.

8. Biology

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Biology for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

9. Chemistry

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Chemistry for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

10. Physics

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Physics for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

11. History

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for History for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

12. English Language

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the English Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

13. French Language

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the French Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

14. German Language

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the German Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

15. Italian Language

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the Italian Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

16. Spanish Language

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the Spanish Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

17. Catholic Religious Education

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Catholic Religious Education for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

18. Orthodox Religious Education

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Orthodox Religious Education for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

19. Islamic Religious Education

Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Islamic Religious Education for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia

The new teaching subjects for which new curricula and the associated educational outcomes will be used, the introduction of which will take place gradually.

20. Society and Community

Experimental Curriculum for the Subject of Society and Community

21. Natural History

Experimental Curriculum for the Subject of Natural History

22. Information and Digital Competences

Experimental curriculum for the subject of Information and Digital Competences

23. Practical Skills

Experimental Curriculum for the Subject of Practical Skills

The new teaching subject for which the new curricula and associated educational outcomes will be used, and which will be taught through frontal teaching in all grades in the first year of the experiment.

24. The World and I

Experimental Curriculum for the Subject of The World and I

The teaching subjects that, in connection with the gradual, i.e., the full application of the experimental curricula of new teaching subjects, are conducted according to the curricula are published in the *Official Gazette*.

25. Science and Social Studies

[Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Science and Social Studies for Primary Schools in the Republic of Croatia](#)

26. Science

[Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Science for Primary Schools in the Republic of Croatia](#)

27. Information Technology

[Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for Information Technology for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia](#)

In experimental schools that have special programs of standard languages, classes are conducted according to the curricula published in the *Official Gazette*.

28. Latin Language

[Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the Latin Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia](#)

29. Greek Language

[Decision on the Adoption of the Curriculum for the Greek Language for Primary Schools and Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia](#)

Cross-curricular topics are carried out according to the curricula published in the *Official Gazette*, and as part of the Experimental Program, in order to connect them more clearly with the subject curricula, recommendations for their implementation will be made.

30. Cross-Curricular Topic – Personal and Social Development

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Personal and Social Development for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

31. Cross-Curricular Topic – Health

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Health for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

32. Cross-Curricular Topic – Civil Education

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Civil Education for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

33. Cross-Curricular Topic – Sustainable Development

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Sustainable Development for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

34. Cross-Curricular Topic – Entrepreneurship

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Entrepreneurship for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

35. Cross-Curricular Topic – Learning to Learn

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Learning to Learn for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

36. Cross-Curricular Topic – Use of Information and Communication Technology

Decision on the Adoption of the Cross-Curricular Topic of Use of Information and Communication Technology for Primary Schools and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia

A2 – Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning

The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) in the Experimental Program of the whole-day school is (in addition to regular classes that essentially represent the A1 Program of the national curriculum) a mandatory part of the direct educational work of the school. The A2 Program is implemented in all eight grades of primary school. It is structured so that part of the program is mandatory for all students, and part of the program activities are organized according to the needs of students and parents, on a voluntary basis. In terms of the number of available hours, the largest part of the total A2 Program (mandatory and elective) is also flexible in terms of educational areas, i.e., literacy aspects. This ensures that all students within the educational system have available support, that students, together with their parents, can voluntarily decide whether to participate in the elective part of the A2 Program, and that schools, teachers, and expert associates can adapt the program activities to the differences in students' needs.

It was designed and structured with the aim of providing concrete, adapted, and effective support for the independent and joint learning of students, i.e., enrichment from teachers

and expert associates. In the newly available time, students and teachers are given real opportunities for supplementary and additional work that will lead to the better and higher-quality achievement of the set learning outcomes. In the proposed work model within the school, there are significantly greater opportunities for educational work adapted to the abilities, capabilities, and needs of students. Activities within the program focus on the learning of the individual student, group of students, as well as all students. With the mandatory time and participation of all students, the program objective is to enable all students to learn more and to achieve the set educational goals (support and assistance), i.e., to enrich the learning activities of all students as part of regular classes, especially of certain groups of students in accordance with their needs and capabilities (enrichment) for the purpose of reaching higher levels of learning outcomes. The activities of the A2 Program are methodically based on the differentiation of teaching and learning through numerous forms and methods.

The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) does not introduce new educational outcomes compared to the existing ones (expressed in the A1 Program of Regular Classes). Through the Experimental Program, all previously known forms of direct educational work (e.g., supplementary and additional classes and part of extracurricular activities) are systematized, harmonized, expanded, and modernized methodically and in terms of content, and broadened in scope to accommodate all students. This will achieve a clear objective – the support for all students is the fundamentally effective, recognizable, and modern A2 primary school educational Program, which aids all students in learning in primary schools in the Republic of Croatia.

Numerous other elements of activities within the A2 Program will be monitored, reviewed, and evaluated through the Experimental Program as a significant form of modernization of primary schools as part of the educational system. It will also look at the extent to which the A2 Program responds to the expectations which provide teachers and expert associates with significantly greater autonomy and flexibility in the use of educational forms of work with different groups of students and enable them to apply innovative work methods that increase the motivation and involvement of students. Through the Experimental Program, all organizational aspects of the A2 Program will be monitored and reviewed and will be evaluated prior to their application to the overall educational system.

In terms of the concept, the A2 Program is not predominantly aimed directly at individual teaching subjects, but rather at individual educational areas, i.e., students' literacy. In such a way, the emphasis is placed on improving the knowledge and skills at the basis of important forms of literacy – language and reading, mathematical, and natural history literacy, and the integration of all forms of literacy. One of the outcomes of the Experimental Program is the extent to which the whole-day primary school increases students' opportunities to use and apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas. In order to achieve the above, very clear expectations were set concerning the necessary structure of the A2 Program.

An important goal of the A2 Program is also reflected in the development of students' independence and their empowerment in fulfilling set tasks, which is also reflected

through the development of effective work habits and work-related attitudes, and the focus of students on lifelong learning. By designing, assigning, and supporting activities that require independent work of the students, they will have the opportunity to develop important skills, attitudes, and approaches to work that represent the basis of success within the educational system, but also in the world of work in the future, both through classroom and subject teaching. Students' independent work, with teacher support through explanations, additional opportunities for reviews, with formatively valuable teacher feedback, must contribute to the development of important skills and attitudes related to learning. Independent and individual work of students, followed by other forms of work in pairs, joint work, conducting small-scale research, writing and presenting reports, as well as complementary forms of work suitable for individual educational areas, will contribute to the development of more complex skills. Teacher support, critical assessments, and information about the expected directions of improvement and development for students represent a direct, clear, and high-quality set of usable information for learning and development.

In the Experimental Program of the whole-day school, multiple requirements related to the organizational aspects of the A2 Program are set. A general time frame has been set within which the activities of the A2 Program follow regular classes (the A1 Program). However, in the experimental implementation, different organizations of the schedule, the school day, and the school week are allowed, which may include various forms of modifications to the A1 and A2 Programs. This will primarily depend on the organizational peculiarities and the work of individual schools, which program their work to take into account specificities, needs, and capabilities. However, it should be noted that the replacement of the activities of the A1 and A2 Programs in the daily or weekly school schedule with the activities of the Programs of Extracurricular and Extra-Academic Activities (B1, B2) within the framework of the Experimental Program is not allowed.

The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) is implemented through the classroom and subject level of the whole-day primary school. Detailed information about the A2 Program in classroom and subject teaching is described below.

Classroom teaching

<i>MANDATORY PART (all students)</i>		<i>VOLUNTARY AND ELECTIVE PART (part of the students)</i>
<i>A total of 4 teaching hours per week</i>		<i>A total of 4 teaching hours per week</i>
<i>Language communication</i>	<i>and 1 teaching hour</i>	<i>Needs and interests of the students</i>
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>1 teaching hour</i>	
<i>Natural History</i>	<i>1 teaching hour</i>	
<i>Other areas</i>	<i>1 teaching hour</i>	

+ 1 homeroom class per week

Subject classes

MANDATORY PART (all students)		VOLUNTARY AND ELECTIVE PART (part of the students)
A total of 4 teaching hours per week		A total of 4 teaching hours per week
<i>Language communication</i>	<i>and 1 teaching hour</i>	Needs and interests of the students
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>1 teaching hour</i>	
<i>Natural History</i>	<i>1 teaching hour</i>	
<i>Other areas</i>	<i>1 teaching hour</i>	

+ 1 homeroom class per week

Classroom teaching

In *classroom teaching*, the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) covers a total of eight teaching hours per week and consists of a mandatory and an elective part. Four teaching hours are mandatory for all students, and four teaching hours are elective for students who decide to participate.

Mandatory teaching hours of the A2 Program are structured according to educational areas, i.e., literacy – one teaching hour refers to language and reading literacy, one teaching hour to mathematics literacy, one teaching hour to students’ natural history literacy, and one teaching hour to other educational areas.

Elective teaching hours of the A2 Program are organized according to the determined needs of the students. The representation of individual educational areas in the structure of the optional part of the A2 Program at the level of any given school is determined by each school individually, after reviewing and analyzing the needs of the students. This provides significant flexibility for schools to adapt their educational work to their own students in the best possible way. The minimum size of the educational group for which the elective part of the A2 Program is organized implies eight students.

The mandatory and elective parts of the A2 Program are carried out at the level of the homeroom class and/or at the class level, by forming educational groups. Teachers and schools have complete flexibility in the decision-making process concerning the optimal way of organization, taking into account the needs, characteristics, and capabilities of students and of the school. They do not have flexibility and autonomy only when it comes to changing the number of mandatory teaching hours of the A2 Program and educational areas, i.e., literacy, which are the main focus of support and enrichment.

The classroom teacher conducts three teaching hours of the mandatory part of the A2 Program, which relate to three areas of literacy (language and reading, mathematics, and science). Teachers who teach the subjects of Foreign Languages, Physical and Health Education, and Information and Digital Competences in their classroom teaching conduct the remaining one teaching hour as mandatory support. The classroom teacher must conduct one elective teaching hour of the A2 Program, which, from the educational point, should relate to the artistic education area, physical and health area, psychomotor development, and practical skills of students and/or their integration. The remaining three elective teaching hours of the A2 Program can be taught by all school teachers as well as expert associates of the school.

The A2 Program includes, in addition to mandatory and elective teaching hours aimed at support and enrichment, one homeroom class. It refers to all activities of the homeroom class, dynamics, and processes of student, class, and school life within the homeroom class. The homeroom class is also available for work on certain cross-curricular topics and content, which is educationally suitable to include in the homeroom class hour within that program. The homeroom class hours within classroom teaching are obligatory for the homeroom class teacher.

The organization and implementation of the A2 Program within the experimental implementation provides schools and teachers with additional forms of flexibility compared to previous work through the possibility of weekly or annual planning of program activities. In the organization and implementation of activities, as well as in assigning teachers to the A2 Program activities, schools have the possibility to use all mechanisms of horizontal flexibility. Depending on the dynamics of the teaching process in regular classes, the progress and needs of the students, teachers and schools can, in a given week, devote a greater number of study hours, or even all of them, within the framework of the A2 Program to one educational area, while the study hours in another area will be covered during another week. In a total of 35 teaching weeks, they must organize 140 mandatory teaching hours of the A2 Program for each student. The number of elective hours of support and enrichment that will be organized and implemented depends on the expressed needs of the students.

For the implementation of the A2 Program, the guidelines describing the general methodical and organizational information necessary for the educational program of the whole-day school will also be beneficial.

The structure of the A2 Program in classroom teaching is shown in Figure 1.

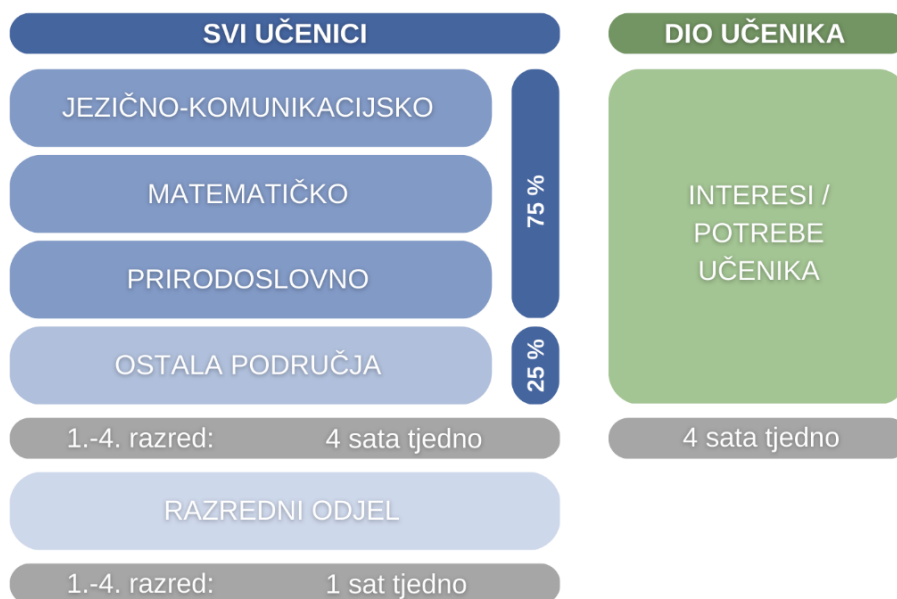


Figure 1 Structure of the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) in classroom teaching

Subject classes

In *subject teaching*, the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) covers a total of eight teaching hours per week and consists of a mandatory and an elective part. Four teaching hours are mandatory for all students, and four teaching hours are elective for students who decide to participate.

Mandatory teaching hours of the A2 Program are structured according to educational areas, i.e., literacy – one teaching hour refers to language and reading literacy, one teaching hour to mathematics literacy, one teaching hour to students' natural history literacy, and one teaching hour to other educational areas.

Elective teaching hours of the A2 Program are organized according to the determined needs of the students and on an elective and voluntary basis. The representation of individual educational areas in the structure of the optional part of the A2 Program at the level of any given school is determined by each school individually, after reviewing and analyzing the needs of the students. The minimum size of the educational group for which the elective part of the A2 Program is organized implies eight students.

The mandatory and elective parts of the A2 Program are carried out at the level of the homeroom class and/or at the class level, by forming educational groups. Teachers and schools have autonomy in the decision-making process concerning the optimal way of organization, taking into account the needs, characteristics, and capabilities of students and of the school. Flexibility and autonomy do not refer only to the number of mandatory teaching hours of the A2 Program and educational areas, i.e., literacies, which are the main focus of support and enrichment.

The teacher of the Croatian Language conducts one teaching hour of the mandatory part of the A2 Program, which is related to language and reading literacy. The teacher of Mathematics conducts one teaching hour of the mandatory part of the A2 Program, which is related to mathematical literacy. The teachers of Natural History, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology conduct one teaching hour of the mandatory part of the A2 Program, which is related to natural history literacy. The teachers of History, Geography, Technical Education, Fine Arts, Music, Physical and Health Education, Information and Digital Competences, and foreign languages conduct one teaching hour of the mandatory part of the A2 Program, which refers to other educational areas, i.e., literacies. The elective part of the A2 Program, in the duration of four teaching hours, is performed by all subject teachers and expert associates of the school, according to the expressed needs and by the decision of the school. It is based on the expectation of significantly greater involvement of subject teachers who do not provide mandatory support in the three demonstrated literacies.

When it comes to the teaching area of Natural History, which is represented in the national curriculum with several teaching subjects in subject classes, schools and teachers proceed from the fundamental assumption that the activities of the A2 Program represent a form of educational work with clear expectations of joint planning of activities within the implementation of the Program. In the achievement of the set educational goals related to Natural History, all subject teachers of Natural History will provide support and enrichment in the total annual timetable of the A2 Program related to the area of Natural History. The needs of students in the area of education, i.e., literacy, which are recognized through individual school subjects primarily through the progress of students in the overall area of Natural History, are the primary goal of Natural History teachers in designing and implementing the most appropriate forms of learning that will lead to the progress of their students.

The A2 Program, in addition to mandatory and elective teaching hours focused on support and enrichment, also includes one homeroom class – all activities related to the work of the homeroom class, the dynamics and processes of student, class, and school life within the homeroom class. The homeroom class is also available for work on certain cross-curricular topics and content, which is educationally suitable to include in the homeroom class hour within that program. The homeroom class within the subject class is assigned to the subject teacher on a voluntary basis, but also according to the needs of the school for a sufficient number of homeroom teachers and the decision of the school principal.

In a total of 35 teaching weeks, the school must organize 140 mandatory teaching hours of the A2 Program for each student. The number of elective hours of support and enrichment that will be organized and implemented depends on the expressed needs of the students. The organization and implementation of the A2 Program within the experimental implementation provides schools and teachers with additional forms of flexibility compared to previous work through the possibility of weekly or annual planning of program activities. In the organization and implementation of activities, as well as in assigning teachers to the A2 Program activities, schools have the possibility to

use all mechanisms of horizontal flexibility. Depending on the dynamics of the teaching process in regular classes, the progress and needs of the students, teachers, and schools can, in a given week, devote a greater number of study hours, or even all of them, within the framework of the A2 Program to one educational area. In contrast, the study hours in another area will be covered during another week. The didactic and methodical organization of the time available for the A2 Program on a weekly basis by area does not have to reflect a fixed (daily and/or) weekly schedule of learning activities within a particular area (e.g., a determined distribution of one hour per area per week that is repeated every week), which is fixed throughout the academic year. One of the examples is the determination of the total annual number of hours of mandatory support (140 teaching hours), the determination of the time related to certain areas, and the implementation of support throughout the academic year through different weekly schedules related to certain areas. The structure of the A2 Program in subject teaching is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2.

Structure of the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) in subject classes

The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2), with a focus on learning visible through better educational outcomes, the development of effective strategies and learning skills, and the improvement of independence in student work, must, primarily through the elective part, improve the quality in primary schools and other areas.

Through the A2 Program, support for students during all educational transitions will be systematized and implemented:

- transition of a child from kindergarten to primary school
- transition of students from the classroom to subject teaching
- transition of students from primary school to the system of secondary education.

The A2 Program includes a large number of activities that facilitate children's transition and adaptation from the system of early childhood and preschool education to primary school. Numerous activities in classroom teaching, which will be carried out as part of the A2 Program, will effectively improve this transition period, facilitate adaptation, and eliminate potential adverse consequences, which may carry over to primary school for a longer period of time.

The second transition period for which the Program provides support is the transition from classroom to subject teaching. The Program will enable the continuation of the set of activities, that was started at the end of classroom teaching, at the beginning of subject teaching so that students can more easily overcome this transition period.

The transitional and formative period at the end of primary school and beginning of high school is particularly important for the implementation of activities and the achievement of overall goals of the Program. The Program includes intensive support for students through educational information activities about the high school programs for grammar, vocational, and art schools. The provision of information is followed by expert guidance activities based on modern practices of assessment and testing of student interests. The Program will include a sufficient number of hours in the subject teaching, during which schools, teachers, and expert associates will work in a structured manner with students to strengthen their capacity to recognize their own abilities and interests, which is integrated into the expert guidance system that facilitates student decisions about future educational choices. Through fully informing students about the offers of educational high school programs in their immediate environment, as well as the general features of individual programs, the Program will provide support in effective expert guidance.

Targeted activities aimed at periods of transition represent a clear form of support that improves the psychosocial well-being and quality of life of students. Transitional educational periods pose different challenges, experiences, tasks, and adjustments to different groups of students, and the Program will significantly improve the quality of the educational system by systematically supporting and preparing all students for the new environment. The core idea of the A2 Program as a set of activities aimed at meeting the individual needs of students will thus be realized in the best possible way. In the specific period of transition to high school, the Program will significantly contribute to greater harmonization of the primary and secondary education systems at the level of the educational system, increasing their overall efficiency. Through the implementation of the Experimental Program, the value of the activities envisaged in the A2 Program will be verified.

The overall activities of the A2 Program will also lead to a clear systematization of the work of teachers, expert associates, and schools, as well as the entire educational system when it comes to gifted students. At the class and school level, activities related to gifted students will be realized to a significant extent through methodical forms of enriching the educational work. In contrast, at the level of the system, the A2 Program will represent a significant mechanism and instrument in the implementation of all national policies and guidelines related to the work with gifted students. In accordance with the Guidelines for Working With Gifted Children and Students, it is important to emphasize the harmonization of the system with the educational needs of gifted students, especially through the A2 Program.

An extremely important focus and objectives of the A2 Program refer to disadvantaged students. All existing normative legal acts, which refer to disadvantaged students, are applied throughout the entire Experimental Program. The teaching assistant's participation in the whole-day school activities is fully adapted to the overall participation of disadvantaged students. The participation of disadvantaged students in the activities of the A2 Program in terms of time must be fully adapted to their abilities, without setting any time-related requirements when it comes to the duration of mandatory or elective participation.

Activities within the Program are designed in accordance with the starting points related to the creation of conditions in schools to meet the different educational needs of each student and enabling of all students to learn together. In accordance with the Guidelines for Working With Disadvantaged Students, it is important to emphasize the harmonization of the system with the educational needs of each disadvantaged student, especially through the A2 Program. The flexibility of learning for disadvantaged students within the A2 Program refers to the freedom related to the duration of participation, and the use of suitable teaching materials, techniques, and learning strategies that can meet the different educational needs of students. The cooperation between teachers and expert associates and all relevant experts is provided and represents the basis of the overall efficiency of the A2 Program. The anticipated direct and active engagement of expert associates within the A2 Program, through significantly greater opportunities for individual work, will clearly contribute to the organization and implementation of the necessary activities. Within the Experimental Program, expert associates actively participate in the activities of recognizing and determining the real needs of students through cooperation with school teachers, as well as through the application of their own expert knowledge and procedures. By determining the needs, expert associates, through cooperation with teachers and the school principal, actively participate in the creation, adaptation, and implementation of numerous forms of support and enrichment. In doing so, they perform part of the activities through active expert engagement, especially in forms of support based on individual work and/or work in smaller groups of students, especially with disadvantaged students. In order to maximize the achievement of the overall goals of the A2 Program, and when it comes to disadvantaged students, all of the involved schools will be provided with a sufficient and necessary number of expert associates.

The differentiation of activities within the A2 Program, through the mandatory and elective part, must be systematically aimed at students who are exposed to long-term and unfavorable personal, family, social, and broader social influences. They represent a group of students for whom the overall activities of the A2 Program must be adapted and targeted.

B1 – Program of Extracurricular Activities as part of the school curriculum

The Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) is an integral part of the school curriculum within the Experimental Program. It is organized and carried out as part of the national curriculum through the satisfaction of the needs and interests of students, as well as through the adaptation of educational work to individual educational groups of students.

Student participation in the Program of Extracurricular Activities is elective, does not include evaluation and assessment, and is free of charge. The participation of teachers and other school employees in the Program of Extracurricular Activities is not mandatory for everyone, while the principle of electivity meets the needs of students with extracurricular activities that have been carefully designed and offered to them. If it is not possible to provide the required number of hours of the B1 Program while respecting the principle of electivity, the school principal can assign extracurricular activities to every school teacher. For teachers participating in the B1 Program, it is a form of work duties that are paid additionally, on top of the basic salary.

Schools are responsible for the organization and implementation of B1 activities, whereby they actively collaborate with other schools and their founders. Through a designed financing system, the holder of the Experimental Program supports schools and founders in the implementation of extracurricular activities. The school educational program in the part that concerns extracurricular activities (B1) cannot be a substitute for any part of the national educational program (A1, A2) in terms of theme, methods, or time in the structure of the school year, school week, and school day, but is primarily considered as their additional part. Within the framework of the model of schools as whole-day schools, the organization and implementation of individual educational programs, projects, and activities as a form of extracurricular activities will, to a greater extent, emphasize a clear link with the national educational program, especially the program related to social and humanistic, artistic, and the physical, health, and sports areas with the aim of aiding in the development of a well-rounded person.

In order to ensure the important focus of the B1 Program on the physical and health well-being of students, at least 20% of the activities in classroom, or 30% of the activities in subject teaching (out of the minimum mandatory 10 weekly hours of the B1 Program) must be conducted in these areas. This should clearly lead to ensuring a minimum of one school hour per day available to all students for physical and sports activities.

Activities within the B1 Program can be conducted continuously throughout the school year, in the daily timetable after the educational activities of the national curriculum program and the support program, as well as after the end of the teaching weeks dedicated to the national educational program. Schools can also combine and supplement

the above two types of timetables. The program is typically carried out at school, i.e., as a combination of activities within the premises of the school and the immediate extra-academic environment or in other spaces adapted for its performance. The Program of Extracurricular Activities in the school environment can be combined with organizational forms such as student summer school, student camp, going to the theater, and visiting exhibitions.

Central educational institutions prescribe minimum standards for the organization and implementation of extracurricular activities as part of the school educational program, quality and efficiency monitoring indicators, and they grant authorizations to individual programs regarding quality, general educational goals, and their compliance with the national educational program and implementation methods. As part of the experimental implementation, schools will be provided with guidelines for the organization and implementation of the B1 Program.

B2 – Program of Extra-Academic Activities

The Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2) is part of the school curriculum, which is organized and implemented through the collaboration between schools, school founders, and other holders of educational activities. Full responsibility in all aspects of the program lies primarily with the organizers of these forms of educational activities. At the same time, schools participate in the program on a contractual basis, depending on their capabilities. In the implementation of the program, the capacities of school institutions are used, provided that a contract is signed and that the school has given its consent, as well as the capacities of the program holders.

The B2 Program is elective for students, and for students' parents, the participation of their children may represent a payment obligation. The participation of teachers in the activities of the B2 Program is not envisaged, nor is it part of the work duties of teachers, within the framework of existing school obligations and employment contracts. The B2 Program cannot be a substitute in terms of theme, methods, or time in the structure of the school year, school week, and school day, nor can it take the place of the total activities of direct educational work (A1, A2).

The Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2) in the whole-day school serves to satisfy the numerous needs and interests of students, as well as greater integration of the school into the immediate community in which it operates, but also to build greater recognition of the school through activities that contribute to a more modern and high-quality education of students. Within this elective part of the school curriculum, numerous holders of individual forms of educational work who are qualified and interested in the design and implementation of activities aimed at different educational goals can have their own space for the organization and implementation of the program. City offices, services, organizations and bodies, businesspeople, tradespeople, and other interested actors from the corporate sector, associations, and civil society organizations, associations founded after the Homeland Work, parents' associations, interest organizations of parents and other citizens, scientific and higher education institutions

that operate in the area of the local school environment, which can offer programs aimed at connecting with schools or as a space for the development of their own students and employees, art and sports schools and organizations, which can thereby implement their own programs, as well as numerous other interested actors can serve as contributors.

It is expected for that part of the overall program, which is connected to the work of schools as whole-day schools, to aid in the design, organization, and implementation of a greater number of programs aimed at sports, physical, artistic, and creative development, through specific programs aimed at the development of children's artistic competences, programs aimed at the development digital competences, information competences related to the use of new technologies, programs aimed at the development of personal, social, and interpersonal skills, programs aimed at entertainment, additional, skills or new technologies, programs aimed at additional help in learning, development of competences, and learning skills, intellectual progress and development, programs aimed at developing the competences of life in the community, attitudes towards the community, nature, and ecology, as well as for numerous other goals to be achieved, depending on the needs of the users and the capabilities of the educational system. Also, this part of the program will increase schools' awareness of belonging to the community and their need to collaborate as much as possible with the local community in which they operate.

In the organization and implementation of the B2 Program, minimum standards are prescribed for the organization and implementation of extra-academic activities as part of the school program, material and personnel conditions, as well as quality and efficiency monitoring indicators. The implementation of the B2 Program in the context and as part of the school curriculum will be possible following the expert judgment and authorization of individual extra-academic programs in terms of quality, general educational goals, and implementation methods.

6. PLACE AND METHOD OF THE EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” is organized and carried out in the part of primary schools in Croatia that conduct a regular education program and that fulfill the conditions set by the public call, and are selected and covered by the decision of the Ministry of Science and Education on participation in the implementation of the Experimental Program. Formal conditions for the participation of schools in the organization and implementation of the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” are prescribed by the official text of the Public Call, and they essentially refer to the fulfillment of the set infrastructure conditions which are necessary for the organization and implementation of the Experimental Program, as well as conditions related to the geographical location of the school, characteristics of the schools’ environment, the size of the schools, and the characteristics of the work of the schools.

The implementation of the Experimental Program is accompanied by all the necessary adjustments to the work of the schools in the Experimental Program that relate to the following:

- a) forms of program adaptation of direct educational work that include harmonizing the national curriculum in terms of the number of hours of direct teaching and hours of supported, assisted, and enriched learning
- b) necessary adjustments related to the introduction of a longer, more abundant, and varied school day in terms of the theme
- c) adjustments related to the introduction of school lunch for all students
- d) activities aimed at harmonizing educational work at school with various forms of extracurricular and extra-academic education through the B1 and B2 Programs
- e) systematization of the existing forms of educational work of teachers and expert associates
- f) introduction of additional forms of compensation for teachers and expert associates
- g) changes, formal decisions, and the creation of a clear normative framework for the organization and implementation of the whole-day primary school activities
- h) other adjustments aimed at the successful experimental implementation of the whole-day primary school model.

Within the framework of the Experimental Program, the essential features, characteristics, and mode of work of the schools participating in the implementation of the Experimental Program are the following:

- The work of primary schools as whole-day schools is organized in all schools participating in the implementation of the Experimental Program through classroom and subject teaching.
- All students of the participating primary schools take part in the whole-day primary school.
- In whole-day schools, the overall educational work is carried out through four mutually integrated educational programs (A1, A2, B1, and B2), which represent the framework for all educational activities in the academic and extra-academic environment.
- Educational programs within the whole-day school in the Experimental Program are the following:
 - a) The program of the national curriculum, which is realized primarily through regular classes and is designated as the A1 Program
 - b) The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning, which is programmed and implemented in the function of the national curriculum and is designated as the A2 Program
 - c) The Program of Extracurricular Activities as part of the school curriculum is designated as the B1 Program
 - d) The Program of Extra-Academic Activities as part of the school curriculum is designated as the B2 Program.
- Educational outcomes for primary school are prescribed pursuant to the National Framework Curriculum (2011), subject curricula, as well as educational expectations in the curricula of cross-curricular topics. Within the whole-day school, no new educational outcomes and goals are introduced in relation to the existing curricula of subjects that are carried out in the existing form and/or changed timetable. Curricula for experimental implementation will be created for new teaching subjects introduced in the Experimental Program.
- The set educational goals of the national curriculum are achieved directly through the Program of Regular Classes (A1) (mandatory and elective part) and the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) (mandatory and elective part). The educational activities of B1 – Program of Extracurricular Activities, and B2 – Program of Extra-Academic Activities, support the achievement of the goals of the national curriculum and their primary goal is to meet the numerous needs and interests of students, help the parents, integrate academic and extra-academic forms of educational work, as well as contribute to the community in which the school operates.
- Teaching as a form of direct educational work is expressed in the curriculum for primary schools and related curriculum documents of different levels, and represents the central educational activity of the national primary school curriculum (the A1 Program).

- The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (the A2 Program) is primarily focused on the learning of students, who are provided with support and enrichment of learning in the school by the school teachers and expert associates. The A2 Program is a mandatory part of the whole-day primary school, which must be organized in all primary schools participating in the Experimental Program and which cannot be changed at the teacher, school, or founding level in terms of fundamental matters of structure, purpose, and duration.
- The Program of Regular Classes (A1) and the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) in the whole-day primary school within the Experimental Program represent forms of direct educational work. Formally, in all educational documents, national, international, and comparative records and statistics, they are expressed through the number of daily, weekly, and annual school hours. The above is also true when it comes to registers, records, and statistics that refer to students, as well as those that relate to teachers, expert associates, principals, and schools.
- The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning includes activities of programming, monitoring, and evaluation of students and programs exclusively for the purpose of achieving progress and improving quality, without activities of formal evaluation of educational outcomes and success of students.
- The Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning is focused on the needs and interests of individual students, individual groups of students, as well as all students. It is mandatory for all students, and its duration is four teaching hours per week for all students of classroom teaching, and four teaching hours per week for all students of subject teaching. Financing for a longer duration of the Program is provided for individual students or specific groups of students for whom there is such an interest or a need, and it will be provided in a predetermined manner and with a predetermined duration (the four-hour elective part of the A2 Program in the classroom and subject teaching). In terms of content, organization, and implementation, the A2 Program also includes one teaching hour per week, designated as a homeroom class.
- In the whole-day school, direct educational work – which is realized through the Program of Regular Classes (A1) and the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) – is organized and carried out within the school day. The total duration of a school day in a whole-day school, within which mandatory programs are organized and implemented, generally refers to the time period from 8:00 a.m. to 2:15/3:00 p.m. in classroom teaching, or from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30/4:00 p.m. in subject teaching. Mandatory time, depending on the way the A1 and A2 Programs are organized within an individual school, can be longer on certain days, whereby the school is provided with the necessary autonomy and flexibility. The total mandatory daily school time is divided between classes, supported, assisted, and enriched learning of students, school lunch, and breaks for students and teachers.

- In a whole-day school, the time organization of the implementation of educational A1 and A2 Programs can follow different forms of participation, work activities, and time workload of teachers and expert associates, who do not have to follow the same weekly pattern throughout the school year. The total workload of teachers and expert associates is expressed on a weekly and annual level and includes the structuring of work duties in “teaching” (35) and “non-teaching” (11) weeks.
- An approximate schedule and division of the total daily school time in the classroom and subject teaching in the schools participating in the Experimental Program is shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4. In relation to this general model of the approximate schedule of the daily school time, each school within the Experimental Program can be flexible in the organization of daily and weekly school time in terms of the schedule and changes in the activities of the A1 and A2 Programs. In the general model of the approximate schedule, direct educational work related to regular classes starts first, and is followed by learning and work as part of the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning.

Figure 3. An Approximate Schedule and Division of the Total Daily School Time in Classroom Teaching, Which is Managed by Each School Individually

CLASSROOM TEACHING

	Hour	SCHEDULE OF TEACHING/LEARNING	SCHEDULE OF BREAKS
A1	1	8.00 a.m. – 8.45 a.m.	
			BREAKFAST First break: 10 min
	2	8.55 a.m. – 9.40 a.m.	
			Second break: 10 min
	3	9.50 a.m. – 10.35 a.m.	
			RECREATION BREAK Third break: (up to a maximum of 25 min)
	4	11.00 a.m. – 11.45 a.m.	
			Fourth break: 10 min
	5	11.55 a.m. – 12.40 p.m.	
			LUNCH Fifth break: (up to a maximum of 40 min)
A2	1	1.20 p.m. – 2.05 a.m.	
B1 + B2	2.05 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.		
B2	After 5 p.m.		

Figure 4 An Approximate Schedule and Division of the Total Daily School Time in Subject Teaching, Which is Managed by Each School Individually

SUBJECT CLASSES

	Hour	SCHEDULE OF TEACHING/LEARNING	SCHEDULE OF BREAKS
A1	1	8.00 a.m. – 8.45 a.m.	
			First break: 5 min
	2	8.50 a.m. – 9.35 a.m.	
			BREAKFAST Second break: 10 min
	3	9.45 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	
			RECREATION BREAK Third break: (up to a maximum of
	4	10.50 a.m. – 11.35 a.m.	
			Fourth break: 5 min
	5	11.40 a.m. – 12.25 p.m.	
			Fifth break: 5 min
	6	12.30 p.m. – 1.15 p.m.	
			LUNCH Fifth break: (up to a maximum of 40 min)
A2	1	1.55 p.m. – 2.40 p.m.	
B1 + B2	2.40 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.		
B2	After 5 p.m.		

- Upon the completion of the activities of the A1 and A2 Programs in which all students participate, the mandatory school day time ends. For students who express the interest and need, after the mandatory A1 and A2 Programs, teachers and schools can organize and implement the elective part of the A2 Program, the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1), and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2). Extracurricular and extra-academic forms of work are systematized within the B1 and B2 Programs with the aim of meeting the numerous needs and interests of students. Student participation in the B1 and B2 Programs is voluntary.
- In the overall organization of (daily and weekly) time of whole-day school activities of the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2) cannot replace or be carried out instead of the A1 and A2 Programs within daily school time (e.g., carried out at the beginning of the school day, in middle of the school day, and the like).
- As part of the national funding program, schools are provided with financial resources for the implementation of numerous activities in a number of areas of

the B1 Program, where student participation is free of charge for their parents. Holders of the B2 Program have financial resources at their disposal for financing extra-academic programs. Part of the activities or all of the activities within the B2 Program may include participation costs for students' parents. If the activities of the B2 Program are organized within the school and serve to meet the needs of students, parents, and the school within the whole-day school model, it is possible to provide financing through grant schemes.

- Teachers, schools, and founders within the whole-day school have the necessary freedom and flexibility in organizing the activities of the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2), thereby following the established principles of ensuring a common structure, goals, minimum allocation of time, and meeting the needs and interests of students.
- Teachers and schools have considerable freedom and flexibility in organizing the activities of the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning based on the principles of recognizing and responding to the needs and interests of their students. All activities must follow a common structure in terms of area, objectives, scope of students, and minimum time allocation of the A2 Program.
- The work of teachers and expert associates related to direct educational work in regular classes (the A1 Program) represents the central element of their weekly and annual workload. Other forms and types of educational work of teachers and expert associates in the whole-day school, which include all students, are systematized through the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (the A2 Program). Activities related to the A2 Program are expressed as an element of the weekly and annual workload of teachers and expert associates. The work of teachers and expert associates in the activities of the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2) in the whole-day school is paid additionally, on top of their existing basic salary.
- The work of teachers and expert associates related to the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) is a partly mandatory and partly elective in the whole-day school for teachers, and is subject to meeting the need of the school to organize and implement the envisaged B1 Program. It represents a form of educational activities that is expressed as an element of the weekly and annual workload of the teachers participating in the B1 Program. Teachers participating in the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) are paid a salary supplement (to the basic salary related to the A1 Program). In the experimental implementation, if there is a greater interest of teachers for the participation than the required number of teachers to perform the weekly number of hours of the B1 Program, which meets the determined needs and interests of students, the participation of every teacher in the B1 Program is decided at the school level.
- Within the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2), all educational activities are carried out by experts outside the school, whom the activity holder within the

B2 Program provides. The participation of school teachers in the B2 Program activities is not envisaged, and the school in no way intervenes in their involvement in that program.

- In the whole-day school, the direct educational work of one homeroom class within classroom teaching during the daily and weekly school hours of the A1 and A2 Programs is organized and predominantly carried out by one classroom teacher. Subject teachers, who conduct the classroom subjects envisaged by the classroom teaching curriculum, participate in a part of the A2 Program, as well as expert associates of the school.
- In the whole-day school, the direct educational work of the homeroom class within the subject teaching during the daily and weekly school hours of the A1 Program is organized and carried out by the subject teacher. Within the framework of the A2 Program activities, subject teachers organize and implement educational work focused on individual educational areas, i.e., literacies, according to the prescribed structure and duration, based on the principles of joint cooperation and a team approach to student learning, with active participation and the role of expert associates.
- The expert associates of the school participate in the activities of the A2 Program, especially in the activities of management, organization, and monitoring of implementation both through classroom and subject teaching, as well as at the school level. They directly participate in the implementation of certain forms of educational work related to the goals of the A2 Program, especially those related to individual work and work with smaller groups of students, work related to expert information and counseling, improvement of educational transitions, and work with gifted students and disadvantaged students.
- The school principal is the person responsible for all school activities related to the whole-day school. The principal is directly responsible for the organization of the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) and the Program of Extra-Academic Activities (B2), which are implemented in collaboration with school founders, parents, holders of extra-academic educational activities, and all actors in the school environment and community.
- During the experimental implementation in selected schools where the extended stay is organized, it is organizationally and in terms of the program replaced by the school's work model as a whole-day school. The program holder and the founders of the schools will find a solution for the teachers of the extended stay, along with the decision of the founders of the school, on the continuation of payment for their work. The implementation guidelines for the Experimental Program, which are adopted following the decision on the selection of schools, will describe their expert participation in the activities of the whole-day school as a form of an intermediate solution that can be conducted to the end of the Experimental Program or in other educational institutions, *within the competence*

the founders, as a form of permanent solutions. Within the Experimental Program, the method of assigning teachers from the current extended stay is described.

- During the Experimental Program, in the part of work duties related to the set minimum and maximum number of weekly teaching hours in the Program of Regular Classes (A1), there is an intermediate solution for subject teachers concerning the permitted deviation in the number of teaching hours as an indicator of the full standard if such a need arises in the case of an individual teacher. For the duration of the Experimental Program, the minimum standard for regular classes is 18 teaching hours for teachers. Within the Experimental Program, there is a description of the method of assigning teachers who have fewer teaching hours, which can, at the latest, last up to the end of the Experimental Program.
- In all schools participating in the experimental implementation of activities related to the A2 Program, they are organized at the very beginning of the Experimental Program with all students of all grades according to the envisaged structure and duration.
- In all schools participating in the experimental implementation of activities related to changes in the A1 Program, they are introduced according to the following dynamics of changes:
 - At the beginning of the implementation of the Experimental Program, the weekly timetable in the subjects of the Croatian Language, Mathematics, Fine Arts, Music, Physical and Health Education, Geography, and Technical Education will be increased for the expected duration of changes as described in the A1 Program.
 - At the beginning of the Experimental Program, the elective subject of The World and I is introduced to all grades and homeroom classes, whereby the electivity is ensured at the student level in relation to the subject of Religious Education. Schools are encouraged to conduct classes in subjects at the grade level by bringing together students from homeroom classes wherever possible.
 - At the beginning of the Experimental Program, an elective subject of a second foreign language is introduced as a mandatory subject for all fourth grades and homeroom classes. The electivity of subjects is ensured at the school and/or homeroom class level, not at the student level.
 - At the beginning of the Experimental Program, the subjects of Natural History and Society and Community are introduced to the first grade and all first-grade homeroom classes in the schools participating in the Experimental Program, replacing the subject of Science and Social Studies. In the second and subsequent academic years of the implementation of the Experimental Program, the above students take part in new subjects.

- At the beginning of the implementation of the program, the subject of Practical Skills is introduced to the first grade and all first-grade homeroom classes in the schools participating in the Experimental Program. In the second and subsequent academic years of the implementation of the Experimental Program, the above students take part in a new subject.
- At the beginning of the program, the subjects of Information and Digital Competence and Natural History are introduced to the first grade and all first-grade homeroom classes, and to the fifth grade and all fifth-grade homeroom classes in the schools participating in the Experimental Program. In the second and subsequent academic years of the implementation of the Experimental Program, the above students take part in a new subject.

7. TIME REQUIRED FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” is organized and executed in the following academic years: 2023/2024, 2024/2025, 2025/2026, and 2026/2027. All elements and components of the Experimental Program will be implemented in four academic years. The evaluation part of program implementation will take place at the beginning of the program and will monitor all time points of its implementation. All evaluation indicators, results, and outcomes will be systematized at the annual level, and reports and at the level of the overall organization and implementation of the Experimental Program in the final evaluation report in the summer of 2027.

IN THE FIRST YEAR of the implementation of the Experimental Program

For all primary school students (in all grades and homeroom classes), the A2 Program is introduced in the envisaged duration, structure, and activities, as described in the A2 Program.

For all primary school students (in all grades and homeroom classes), the B1 Program is introduced in the envisaged duration, structure, and activities, as described in the B1 Program.

For all primary school students (in all grades and homeroom classes), the B2 Program is introduced in the envisaged duration, structure, and activities, as described in the B2 Program.

Regarding the A1 Program, the implementation will be carried out as follows:

In all grades and homeroom classes:

The Croatian Language and Mathematics are conducted in a new weekly duration.

For all students (in all grades and homeroom classes), the subject of The World and I is introduced as an elective subject in relation to the subject of Religious Education.

In the first grade and all homeroom classes:

The subjects of Fine Arts and Music are conducted in the new envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

New subjects of Natural History, Society and Community, Practical Skills, and Information and Digital Competences are introduced in the envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

Other subjects that are not listed here and are included in the Primary School Curriculum are conducted in the current duration.

In the second grade and all homeroom classes:

The subjects of Fine Arts and Music are conducted in the new envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

Other subjects that are not listed here and are included in the Primary School Curriculum are conducted in the current duration.

In the third grade and all homeroom classes:

The subjects of Fine Arts and Music are conducted in the new envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

Other subjects that are not listed here and are included in the Primary School Curriculum are conducted in the current duration.

In the fourth grade and all homeroom classes:

The subjects of Fine Arts and Music are conducted in the new envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

The subject of Physical and Health Education is conducted in the new envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

The subject of the second foreign language is introduced, as described in the A1 Program.

Other subjects that are included in the Primary School Curriculum are conducted in the current duration.

In the fifth grade and all homeroom classes:

The subjects of Technical Education and Geography are conducted in the new envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

The new subject of Information and Digital Competences is introduced in the envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

The new subject of Natural History is introduced in the envisaged duration, as described in the A1 Program.

Other subjects that are included in the Primary School Curriculum are conducted in the current duration.

IN THE SECOND YEAR of the implementation of educational programs included in the Experimental Program:

Within the A1 Program, all changes introduced in the first year of implementation continue to be implemented in the following grade according to the timetable and changes contained in the Experimental Program Curriculum. All changes introduced in the first year are introduced to the new generation of students according to the same dynamics as in the first year of the Experimental Program. In the framework of A2, B1, and B2 Programs, all students of all grades continue to participate.

IN THE THIRD YEAR of the implementation of educational programs included in the Experimental Program:

Within the A1 Program, all changes introduced in the first year of implementation continue to be implemented in the following grades according to the timetable and changes contained in the Experimental Program Curriculum. All changes introduced in the first year are introduced to the new generation of students according to the same dynamics as in the first year of the Experimental Program. In the framework of A2, B1, and B2 Programs, all students of all grades continue to participate.

IN THE FOURTH YEAR of the implementation of educational programs included in the Experimental Program:

Within the A1 Program, all changes introduced in the first year of implementation continue to be implemented in the following grades according to the timetable and changes contained in the Experimental Program Curriculum. All changes introduced in the first year are introduced to the new generation of students according to the same dynamics as in the first year of the Experimental Program. In the framework of A2, B1, and B2 Programs, all students of all grades continue to participate.

8. SPATIAL, PERSONNEL, AND OTHER CONDITIONS

Spatial Conditions

Organization and implementation of the Experimental Program entitled “Primary School as a Whole-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable Education System” require schools to do the following:

- a) carry out the regular primary school curriculum in one shift
- b) have a sufficient number of classrooms and other rooms for the implementation of A1, A2, B1, and B2 Programs
- c) have the possibility of organizing meals within the associated premises, according to the relevant requirements
- d) ensure conditions for effective implementation of the A2 Program activities
- e) ensure conditions for the professional work of teachers and expert associates within the whole-day school
- f) ensure spatial conditions for the organization and implementation of activities related to physical and leisure activities of students as a component of the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools.

A quality and efficient environment for whole-day school activities, especially when it comes to the A2 Program, differs in relation to the traditional classroom environment. The work model of a whole-day school significantly differs in relation to the possible work of schools through the organization of classes throughout the whole day and/or most of the day. Spatial adaptation of schools to whole-day school activities is an important task in ensuring the conditions for its implementation. Schools provide students with a stimulating and interesting environment that invokes interest and encourages the development and learning of all children. The school environment should eliminate the strict boundaries between the space of their living room, study room, and school. It must also provide them with spatial opportunities for rest, entertainment, and learning in a spatial environment that does not imply a typical classroom. As part of the activities of the A2 Program, different students will expect different strategies and ways of effective learning, school work, and reviewing what they have learned. Therefore, the school must provide different groups of students with spatial opportunities for the most efficient ways of learning. Furthermore, schools must make an effort to ensure space for students to rest, play, relax, and do activities other than sitting at school desks.

In order for schools participating in the Experimental Program of whole-day schools to appropriately adapt to the spatial and organizational requirements of the implementation of the program, the holder of the Experimental Program has envisaged financial resources, which are accompanied by guidelines and expert assistance.

It is of particular importance to provide quality learning environments in classroom teaching. Kindergarten children enter the school world, which differs in the approach to the child’s learning. It is necessary to offer them such an environment that is simultaneously a space for entertainment and socialization, and a space for learning with

new tasks and challenges, to which students of such an age can quickly adapt and accept, demonstrating interest and willingness to participate. By the increasing integration of the early childhood and preschool education system and the primary school system, this goal will be easier to achieve. The activities of the A2 Program in classroom teaching are based on the predominant learning through play and the visual and artistic expression of students. Wherever possible, learning that integrates physical activity and movement must be emphasized within the framework of the whole-day school. The activities of the program lead to clear learning for the students, as well as to an expected increase in their physical activity, exercise, and use of different forms of movement through which motor skills and coordination are improved, and the possibility of expressing their feelings using body movements is highlighted. Classroom teachers have significant freedom and flexibility in the programming of educational work, whereby they can eliminate some of the previously imposed restrictions in order to achieve the set expectations.

The quality environment for the activities of the Program in classroom teaching is used to strengthen students' skills in getting acquainted with their own living spaces, such as the way to school, the space of the school building, and the immediate physical and social environment of the school. By integrating methodical activities within all educational areas, and differentiating the learning environment significantly more frequently, the A2 Program ought to clearly contribute to the development of students' spatial abilities, the ability to visualize and display space, and to strengthen the capacity for spatial orientation.

Through the overall activities of educational programs, it is necessary to provide students with opportunities to develop curiosity and new interests through the effective use of the environment. Children and students must be able to explore, experiment, and consider the advantages and disadvantages of individual choices. Through numerous educational and didactic tools and equipment, students are provided games, a part of the room or a specially designed space for research and experimentation, practical work, crafts, and construction, a painting nook, a space for mathematical challenges, and the like. All of the above must be the essential characteristics of a whole-day school. On the other hand, efficient use of space means that students who prefer to study in a quiet environment devoid of external sounds and distracting stimuli must be offered such learning opportunities. Likewise, students who, for example, choose to move while learning should also be allowed and offered such learning opportunities. In effective adaptation of the environment, schools pay special attention to the use of outdoor spaces – school playgrounds, parks, school yards and gardens, as well as common spaces, combining all of them in an efficient way to promote activity, particularly within the A2 Program, and the overall educational programs of the whole-day school.

Personnel Conditions

The Experimental Program is organized and implemented in schools that are selected through a public call, which have the personnel conditions for its implementation for all four academic years. Classroom teachers, subject teachers, expert associates, the

principal, and the school's administrative and technical personnel participate in the implementation of the Experimental Program. School teachers do not participate in the implementation of the B2 Program, but schools actively cooperate with the holders of the B2 Program activities, who provide their own expert personnel for its organization and implementation.

During the Experimental Program, the structure of the current weekly and annual work duties of teachers and expert associates is changed, and these provisions from the text of the Experimental Program are applied to principals, teachers, and expert associates in experimental schools.

All employees of the school that participates in the Experimental Program will retain their salary amounts when the implementation of the Program begins. No employee of a school that participates in the experimental implementation can have a lower salary than the one they had at the beginning of the Program, provided that they fulfill their work duties to the same extent as at the beginning of the Program. The employment contract that they had at the beginning of the Experimental Program is valid for all school employees.

In the event that, due to the method of organization and implementation of the Experimental Program, the scope of their direct educational work is reduced and they no longer meet the full standard set within the Experimental Program, all employees of a school that participates in the Experimental Program are allowed to be assigned up to the full standard for other types of work duties at the beginning of the program following the decision of the Minister. This will be applied throughout the entire duration of the Experimental Program. The Minister's decision is issued to all of the above employees upon selection of a school that will participate in the Experimental Program on an equal basis for all employees. Assigning employees up to the full standard primarily refers to teaching in the A1 Program, and then, if this is not possible, by participating in the A2 Program, followed by participating in the B1 Program, and finally, by participating in class master work duties, i.e., to work duties designated as other and specific tasks. Assigning said employees may also include a combination of the above work duties, instead of only one type of work duties. However, it is not acceptable to artificially reduce the workload of employees by conducting classes below the standard. When this is possible through the organization of work in the school, it needs to be done in favor of other stated and described types of tasks and work duties in order to meet the standard and/or the minimum standard for these types of tasks.

At the beginning of the Experimental Program, all employees of experimental schools will have their basic salary at the beginning of the experimental implementation linearly increased by the fixed whole-day school supplement, which amounts to 5% per month on the basic salary.

Throughout the Experimental Program, the basic salary, in addition to the fixed whole-day school supplement of 5%, is increased by other supplements, which are envisaged for the teachers and expert associates who participate in certain educational programs. They are the following:

- (i) *The A2 supplement in the maximum amount of 15%. Each assigned teaching hour of the A2 Program counts as a 2.5% supplement to the basic salary.*
- (ii) *Supplement for class master duties in the amount of 5%. Each assigned homeroom class, in addition to performing other class master work duties, counts as a 5% supplement to the basic salary.*
- (iii) *The B1 supplement in the maximum amount of 5%. Each assigned one teaching hour of the B1 Program counts as a 2.5% supplement to the basic salary.*

In total, when calculated on all bases, the maximum amount of the supplement to the basic salary within the Experimental Program can be no greater than 25% per month. The type of participation in the educational programs of the whole-day school and the amount of work duties are directly dependent on the amount and the manner in which the basic salary will be increased for individual teachers and expert associates (in addition to the fixed whole-day school supplement of 5%). For the largest number of teachers and expert associates, it is expected to be at the maximum and/or close to the maximum level. However, the work model of whole-day schools also allows for another possibility. When it comes to individual teachers who will not participate in the activities of the educational programs of the whole-day school for a longer period of time, compared to their current work, the salary supplements in the Experimental Program can only be reflected in the same fixed whole-day school supplement of 5% for all. The whole-day school provides schools and teachers with considerable flexibility in the organization of educational program activities, which affects the type and amount of work duties of individual teachers. The total workload of teachers and expert associates is expressed on a weekly and annual level, and includes the structuring of work duties in “teaching” (35) and “non-teaching” (11) weeks. In terms of assignments, it is expressed in the total statutory 40-hour weekly duration for all.

All the above supplements (fixed whole-day school supplement, supplement for class master duties, A2 supplement, B1 supplement) are paid every 12 months (for the whole year), throughout all four years of the Experimental Program. They are paid on the basis of the basic salary in addition to all statutory contributions (pension, health, etc.). If, during the Experimental Program, all employees of all primary schools in the Republic of Croatia have their basic salary increased on other bases (outside of the whole-day school basis), then these supplements envisaged within the Experimental Program are also applied to employees participating in the Experimental Program.

Within the Experimental Program, a new way of assigning teachers and expert associates is introduced, starting from all individual current work duties related to regular classes, class master duties, supplementary classes, additional classes, and extracurricular activities. Most of the other work duties and rights from the work duties of the teachers remain unchanged; they are partly expressed in a different manner, and the structured ones are limited in terms of their total duration.

The value of these changes during the experimental implementation will be assessed, as well as the new methods and amounts of payment for teachers, expert associates, and school principals, as well as all school employees in the category of administrative and technical personnel. At the end of the Experimental Program, a decision concerning its

value will be made. An important goal of the whole-day school is reflected in the significant improvement of the professional, social, and material status of teachers, expert associates, and principals, and, within the Experimental Program, this goal is approached with considerable attention and a series of designed measures.

As part of the Experimental Program, when it comes to teachers of class and subject teaching, the following elements of assigning work duties in 35 teaching weeks are applied:

TASKS AND WORK DUTIES OF TEACHERS	CLASSROOM TEACHING	SUBJECT CLASSES	Note (The maximum increase of the basic salary on all bases in whole-day school is up to a total of 25%.)
1.Direct educational work			
A1 teaching	18 teaching hours	20-22 teaching hours	
A2 support and enrichment	4 teaching hours	up to 4 teaching hours	
Total standard	18 teaching hours A1	20-22 teaching hours A1	During the pilot project, the minimum allowed standard is 18 teaching hours for A1.
2.B1 Program	<i>(partly mandatory)</i>	<i>(partly mandatory)</i>	
B1 extracurricular activities	up to 2 teaching hours	up to 2 teaching hours	
3.Class master duties and related tasks, cooperation, and teamwork			
Homeroom class	1 teaching hour <i>(mandatory)</i>	1 teaching hour <i>(mandatory in part)</i>	
Homeroom class and school management (administration of student and classroom activities, etc.), sessions of class and school councils	1 teaching hour	1 teaching hour	
Cooperation with other teachers and expert associates	2 teaching hours	2 teaching hours	
Cooperation with parents	2 teaching hours	2 teaching hours	
4.Expert and methodical preparation			
Preparation for direct work with students in A1	9 teaching hours	10 to 11 teaching hours	
Preparation for direct work with students in A2	up to 2 teaching hours	up to 2 teaching hours	
5 Professional development			
Professional development	1 teaching hour	1 teaching hour	
6 Other tasks (the total maximum workload of the teachers for all the other tasks for up to:)	<i>(up to 10 teaching hours)</i>	<i>(up to 10 teaching hours)</i>	
On-duty obligations with students	up to 5 teaching hours	up to 5 teaching hours	

School Support (information and communication technology, timetable creation tasks, electronic grade book, resource administrator, grade book administrator, aesthetic arrangement of the school)	up to 2 teaching hours	up to 2 teaching hours	
Expert Extracurricular Work With Students (choir and/or orchestra, club of young technicians, school sports club or society, school cooperative, swimming, exercise room for children with difficulties)	up to 3 teaching hours	up to 3 teaching hours	
Projects, cooperation and expert and development tasks (projects, county expert councils, expert committees, student mentoring, competition preparation, student mentoring, cooperation with higher education institutions and system institutions, specific tasks of teachers as mentors, advisors, and higher advisors)	up to 2 teaching hours	up to 2 teaching hours	
According to other regulations (unions, occupational safety and health, information commissioner, person in charge of protection of employee dignity)	up to 6 teaching hours	up to 6 teaching hours	
Tasks resulting from the annual plan and the school's curriculum (planning and management of extra-academic classes, trips, excursions, preparation of performances, other cultural and public events, and the like)	up to 2 teaching hours	up to 2 teaching hours	
Tasks assigned by the principal (regular tasks at school and tasks related to the work of the school and work within the workplace of teachers and expert associates)	up to 2 teaching hours	up to 2 teaching hours	
TOTAL (of solar hours)	40	40	

The tasks and work duties of teachers in 35 teaching weeks are assigned in teaching and solar hours. During the non-teaching weeks (11 weeks), teachers are also assigned up to a total of 40 solar hours, whereby in the category of other tasks, teachers, instead of teaching and support that is not carried out, in the category of other tasks and work duties related to supplementary work and preparations for the supplementary classes (up to 20 teaching hours per week), remediation exams and committees on remediation exams (up to five hours per week) and on-duty obligations when there are no classes (up to five hours per week), administrative duties of homeroom class teachers at the end of the academic year, administrative work of subject teachers who are not class masters at the end of the academic year, the preparation of the new academic year (distribution of textbooks, class preparation, administration), work related to and resulting from the annual plan and the school's curriculum, and tasks assigned to them by the principal. The tasks and work duties of teachers in non-teaching weeks related to expert and methodical preparation, all class master administrative tasks, professional development, cooperation with parents, and teamwork, are assigned to teachers in non-teaching weeks for a longer period of time.

The workload of teachers in direct educational work (the A1 Program and the A2 Program) cannot be reduced or replaced by assignments in the category of other tasks in the whole-day school, except as an intermediate solution for the duration of the Experimental Program and in the manner described in the Experimental Program.

The teachers' assignments related to other tasks amounts to a maximum of 10 teaching hours per week during the teaching week for each teacher. The duration of the teacher

participation in work duties related to certain categories of other tasks is determined. The total workload of the teachers for other tasks depends on the total workload of the teachers for all other categories of work duties (primarily related to the A2 and B1 Programs), and there must be a total of 40 solar hours per week, which is prescribed by law. In non-teaching weeks, when there is no responsibility for direct educational work, as indicated, there is a greater workload for other tasks, i.e., other types of tasks (expert and methodical preparation, professional development and the like), in order for each teacher to have a workload of up to a total of 40 hours per week, which is a legal requirement for the full salary amount.

Regarding the place of work and performance of the teachers' work duties, the work activities and duties of teachers related to A1, A2, B1, and the homeroom class are carried out at school. All other work duties can be performed partly at school or completely outside of school, provided that the nature of these duties allows for it. This is primarily a matter of work organization and decisions within the school itself, whereby the general decision on the manner and place of conducting certain types of work activities must apply equally to all teachers and expert associates of the school.

Within the Experimental Program, tasks and duties of teachers that are in the category of Other Tasks as *Expert Extracurricular Work With Students*, and include a choir or orchestra, club of young technicians, school sports club or society, school cooperative, swimming, exercise room for children with difficulties, are primarily and as a rule intended to be organized as B1 extracurricular activities. If the school organizes and implements these types of work activities in the above manner, the teachers to whom that has been assigned as hours of the B1 Program are entitled to a five-percent supplement to the basic salary for two teaching hours per week. If the school and the teachers collectively decide, for organizational, pedagogical, or other reasons, to organize these types of expert extracurricular work with students outside the B1 Program, these teachers are assigned to the category of other tasks for the envisaged duration and without the envisaged B1 supplement.

During the Experimental Program, tasks that are in the category of other teacher tasks as *School Support*, and that include information and communication technology support, timetable creation tasks, electronic grade book, resource administrator, grade book administrator, and aesthetic arrangement of the school, teachers who perform them can be assigned up to a total of two teaching hours in within the framework of meeting the minimum standard. This form of assignments represents an intermediate solution during the Experimental Program, in relation to the principle that the minimum standard applies to the A1 Program within the whole-day school.

During the Experimental Program, for all teachers who do not have the full standard of 18 teaching hours of the A1 Program, it is possible to assign them up to the full standard in weekly and annual assignments with teaching hours related to the subject of The World and I (the A1 Program), teaching hours related to the A2 support, teaching hours in the B1 Program, extracurricular activities listed in Other Tasks in the category of *Expert Extracurricular Work With Students*, and in the category listed in Other Tasks within *School Support*. When it comes specifically to tasks within the A2 Program, teachers are

assigned hours of mandatory A2 support for students and/or hours of elective A2 support for students. In doing so, their support primarily refers to independent and direct work with students.

The described method of assignment is envisaged and allowed only during the Experimental Program, since it is a pilot-project in which the values of work organization are tested, and provides time for teachers and schools to make quality adjustments. By monitoring and evaluating, it will be possible to see all aspects and values of this kind of assignment method.

Generally, teachers who are assigned up to the minimum standard for other types of work activities (except for teaching), until the minimum standard is fulfilled, are not entitled to the supplements provided for certain whole-day school programs. More precisely, teachers who are assigned hours of the A2 and B1 Programs as part of supplementing the standard, do not have the right to the envisaged supplements for the hours of those programs in the number of hours that serves to fulfill the minimum standard (they have a fixed whole-day school supplement for all school employees). For the hours of the A2 and B1 Programs for which they are responsible for more than the minimum standard of 18 hours of the A1 Program, they are paid the envisaged supplements. Teachers who use the *School Support* hours from the category of Other Tasks to fulfill the minimum standard of 18 hours of the A1 Program are not entitled to the supplement envisaged for such tasks.

Teachers from the existing extended stay, who, by the decision of the founder, work in schools participating in the Experimental Program, are assigned according to the same principles as classroom and subject teachers. Generally, they do not have direct assignments within the A1 Program (with the possibility of assignments related to the teaching subject of The World and I, or the specifics of an individual school in relation to other teaching subjects). The minimum assignment of 18 teaching hours per week is achieved primarily by assignment within the A2 Program, the B1 Program, and tasks from the category of Other Tasks related to on-duty obligations with students, school support (information and communication technology, timetable creation tasks, electronic grade book, resource administrator, grade book administrator, aesthetic arrangement), Expert Extracurricular Work With Students (choir and/or orchestra, club of young technicians, school sports club or society, school cooperative, swimming, exercise room for children with difficulties), certain other tasks within the set categories (e.g., on-duty obligations), as well as tasks resulting from the annual plan and the school's curriculum (planning and management of extra-academic classes, trips, excursions, preparation of performances and other cultural and public events, and the like) and tasks assigned by the principal (regular tasks at school and tasks related to the work of the school and work within the workplace of teachers). All teachers from the existing extended stay are paid a fixed whole-day school salary supplement of 5%, and for work activities amounting to over 18 hours of assigned work duties, salary supplements are envisaged within the framework of the Experimental Program, according to the salary increase model described in the text of the Experimental Program. With the decision on the school's participation in the Experimental Program, a decision will be made for each of the teachers (of the participating school) involved in the extended stay. The necessary implementation

information related to the Experimental Program, which is made after the decision on the selection of schools, will describe in detail their expert participation in the activities of the whole-day school. The decision concerning each individual teacher involved in the extended stay is valid until the end of the Experimental Program.

The work assignments of the teachers are expressed on a weekly basis during school hours and solar hours, and on an annual basis. The structure and weekly duration of work assignments, expressed in school hours and solar hours, are expressed for each teacher separately for the weeks in which the programs of direct educational work of the A1 and A2 Programs are carried out (35 teaching weeks) and the weeks in which they are not (11 weeks). Taking into account the differences in the weekly duration of the work assignments for individual work duties between the weeks of the A1 and A2 Programs and the other weeks, the work assignments of each teacher are summarized on an annual basis as well.

Classroom Teachers

The school must have a sufficient number of classroom teachers corresponding to the number of homeroom classes in the school. One teacher carries out educational activities with one homeroom class.

Classroom teachers conduct 18 mandatory teaching hours of the A1 Program of regular classes, within which they ought to organize and conduct regular classes for all students in the following subjects: (i) Croatian Language, (ii) Mathematics, (iii) Natural History, (iv) Society and Community, (v) Fine Arts, (vi) Music, and (vii) Practical Skills. In accordance with the work model of schools as whole-day schools, the classroom teacher has significant flexibility in the organization of classes with an emphasis on the possibility of integrating teaching activities around educational areas, as well as the time organization of classes that aid in achieving educational outcomes in the best possible way. When it comes to the A1 Program, classroom teachers in the Experimental Program do not teach the subjects of Foreign Language 1, Foreign Language 2, Physical and Health Education, Information and Digital Competences, and Religious Education. This part of the A1 Program is performed by subject teachers in classroom teaching.

Classroom teachers teach a total of four teaching hours in the A2 Program – three mandatory teaching hours with all students and one elective hour of the A2 Program with one part of the students.

Classroom teachers are also always class masters of a given homeroom class. This part of the workload is expressed in the duration of one teaching hour per week. Due to the part of the workload related to the homeroom class, the basic salary of all classroom teachers is increased by an additional 5% per month. When it comes to class master duties, classroom teachers are also assigned other teaching hours within the working week, i.e., the homeroom class – administration related to students and the class, cooperation with other teachers and expert associates, and cooperation with parents. The total weekly number of teaching hours available to the classroom teacher to fulfill work duties related to the homeroom class is six teaching hours, of which one refers to the homeroom class.

Classroom teachers participate in the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1), which is partly mandatory and partly elective. It is elective in situations where the school is able to organize the required number of hours of the B1 Program without the participation of an individual teacher, and the expressed interest of other teachers and expert associates is sufficient for its organization. If the number of hours of the B1 Program is needed to meet the needs and interests of students that require the participation of all classroom teachers, the school principal will assign extracurricular activities to a teacher as a work duty, with the envisaged five-percent B1 supplement to the basic salary.

For the teachers' working hours related to the A1, A2, and B1 Programs, teachers need to be present and available for work on the school premises.

The standard of direct educational work of classroom teachers amounts to 18 teaching hours. In the first year of the Experimental Program, it refers to teachers in the first grade, while teachers in the second, third, and fourth grades have a lower standard due to the dynamics of the introduction of teaching subjects of the A1 Program in individual grades.

Classroom teachers must participate in four hours of the A2 Program, and they are always class masters conducting one hour of the homeroom class. The maximum mandatory weekly workload of classroom teachers during the Experimental Program amounts to 23 teaching hours. (In the first year of the Experimental Program, it refers to teachers in the first grade, while teachers in the second, third, and fourth grades have a smaller number of mandatory teaching hours for direct educational work).

The mandatory assignments of classroom teachers amounting to 23 teaching hours is followed by an increase in the basic salary for the total amount of supplements of 20% (a fixed five-percent whole-day school supplement, a ten-percent A2 supplement and a five-percent supplement for classroom teaching). The remaining 5% of the supplement is paid to the teachers participating in the B1 Program.

Subject Teachers

The school must have a sufficient number of subject teachers in order to implement the Experimental Program in its total duration. Within the framework of the A1 Program, subject teachers organize and teach the following subjects: Croatian Language, Mathematics, Natural History, Fine Arts, Music, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, Technical Education, Foreign Language 1, Foreign Language 2, Physical and Health Education, Information and Digital Competences, Religious Education, and The World and I.

Subject teachers are assigned weekly regular classes of the A1 Program amounting to 20 to 22 hours. This is considered the full standard of direct educational work. Throughout the Experimental Program and only as an intermediate solution, 18 teaching hours of the A1 Program are considered the full standard for the teachers who have a smaller number of teaching hours of regular classes at the beginning of the Experimental Program. In terms of the smaller number of hours, the above amounts to 10% of teaching hours. During the Experimental Program and in terms of a greater number of weekly teaching hours of the A1 Program, a deviation of 10% is also considered as the full standard as an intermediate solution. For the implementation of the subject of The World and I (the A1

Program), the school can assign all subject classes teachers in the Experimental Program up to the fulfillment of the full standard and full salary requirements. Teachers can teach the subject both in the classroom cycle and in the subject cycle.

Teachers of subject classes typically conduct up to a total of four teaching hours of the A2 Program. They refer to mandatory and elective teaching hours of the A2 Program. Subject teachers of the Croatian Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Natural History must participate in the activities of the A2 Program according to the prescribed structure and duration. Teachers of Foreign Language, Information and Digital Competences, Physical and Health Education, and Music participate in the A2 Program in both classroom and subject classes. Teachers of other teaching subjects participate in the mandatory hours of the A2 Program in subject teaching according to the prescribed structure and duration. In the elective part of the A2 Program, they participate in both classroom and subject classes according to the expressed needs and interests of the students, and in accordance with the decisions of the school, which ensures the implementation of the A2 Program and the whole-day school model. Within the Experimental Program, exceptions can occur, in which some subject teachers will not participate in the activities of the A2 Program, which depends on the needs and interests of the students and the way the A2 Program is organized within the school.

The basic salary of teachers participating in the A2 Program is increased through the A2 supplement. The increase is realized so that each assigned A2 school hour implies an increase in the basic salary of 2.5%, up to the total cumulative amount of the A2 supplement to the basic salary of 15% per month. As indicated, as an intermediate solution for a smaller number of subject teachers, work assignments up to the minimum standard are possible through the activities of the A2 Program. In such situations, the envisaged A2 supplement is not taken into account for the hours of A2 support for students up to the minimum full standard, and the hours above the minimum full standard are taken into account.

The teachers of the subject classes are also class masters of homeroom classes. Teachers who are assigned homeroom classes by the principal within the framework of the Experimental Program have a supplement for classroom teaching in the amount of 5% to their basic salary. When it comes to class master duties, classroom teachers are also assigned other teaching hours within the working week, i.e., the homeroom class – administration related to students and the class, cooperation with other teachers and expert associates, and cooperation with parents. The total weekly number of teaching hours available to the classroom teacher to fulfill work duties related to the homeroom class is six teaching hours, of which one refers to the homeroom class.

Subject teachers participate in the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1), which is partly mandatory and partly elective. It is elective in situations where the school is able to organize the required number of hours of the B1 Program, without the participation of an individual teacher, and the expressed interest of other teachers and expert associates is sufficient for its organization. If the number of hours of the B1 Program is needed to meet the needs and interests of students that require the participation of all subject

teachers, the school principal will assign extracurricular activities to a teacher as a work duty, with the envisaged five-percent B1 supplement to the basic salary.

For the teachers' working hours related to the A1, A2, and B1 Programs, teachers need to be present and available for work in the school premises.

Expert Associates

As part of the Experimental Program, expert associates have several important expert roles and duties. This is primarily reflected in the activities of planning, organizing, managing, expert monitoring, and evaluating the activities of the A2 Program (at the school level, at the level of subject and classroom teaching, at the level of the grade, and at the level of the homeroom class). Thereby, within the Experimental Program, the organization of educational work will be tested in which, in addition to classroom and subject teachers, the holders of educational activities in the subject of The World and I can also be pedagogues or school psychologists. The above is possible primarily due to the fact that the area of the curriculum is interdisciplinary and, to a considerable extent includes these two scientific fields. The participation of expert associates in the A1 Program related to the subject of The World and I can only be on a voluntary basis and by their own choice when it becomes part of their work duties.

Expert associates are assigned the role of operational managers of the A2 Program. Essentially, with their expert knowledge and work within the Experimental Program, they must contribute to the effective achievement of the goals of the A2 Program, as described in that program. Additionally, they must significantly contribute to the harmonization of activities within educational programs, especially the A1 and A2 Programs, which consist of direct educational work with students. In doing so, expert associates, using their expert knowledge, must significantly contribute to the overall improvement of the teamwork of all teachers and expert associates as one of the important forms of work in the Experimental Program.

Within the Experimental Program, expert associates actively participate in direct activities of diagnosing, recognizing, and determining the real needs of students through cooperation with teachers, as well as through the application of their own expert knowledge and procedures. By determining the needs, through cooperation with teachers and the school principal, they actively participate in the creation, adaptation, and implementation of numerous forms of support and enrichment. They perform part of the activities through active expert engagement, especially in forms of support based on individual work and/or work in smaller groups of students. By implementing a certain scope of support and enrichment activities, expert associates participate in the design and implementation of procedures for evaluating the efficiency of the A2 Program when it comes to individual students, groups of students, as well as all students.

In the implementation of the A2 Program, teachers provide students with feedback on the process, level, and quality of student work related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Expert associates play a significant role in the design and implementation of monitoring activities and providing feedback on the progress of students in achieving the

set educational goals; due to their expert knowledge, they can provide significant help to teachers related to the quality and effectiveness of the Program. Through collaborative and direct work with teachers, collaborative work with all teachers of a certain grade, and through work with students, they use all available diagnostic and expert procedures to collect information, indicators of student progress, and the level of fulfillment of their needs.

Expert associates are constantly taking measures in order to optimize the activities of the A2 Program and achieve the effectiveness of the Program at the class level, educational level, and the level of the whole school. They use all the advantages of whole-day schools to achieve the expected goals, and through the Experimental Program, they overcome numerous limitations (e.g., difficult work of expert associates with students during classes, the impossibility of working with students who are traveling long distances, immediate departure of students from school after classes due to extra-academic and other activities, collision with the educational goals of regular classes or homeroom classes). Through clearly defined common activities with all teachers of the school, expert associates significantly improve collaborative relationships and increase the capacity for teamwork and collaborative work in the school.

In communicating with parents, the primary responsibility and role of classroom and subject teachers is to ensure constant, high-quality, and efficient communication. Expert associates can participate in the communication with parents without replacing the role and importance of the teacher. When it comes to all aspects of student participation in the A2 Program, feedback to parents is provided by teachers based on their role and the complete information they have about each student's progress, needs, and interests.

The Experimental Program is based on and implies the complete dedication of all expert associates of the school. Within the experimental implementation, there is a possibility of various forms of cooperation between expert associates, as well as cooperation between expert associates and school teachers, depending on their number and structure. The general approach implies the fact that all activities within the Experimental Program, in the part that refers to expert associates, should be covered by the expert associates.

By integrating different areas of professional expertise and excellence in a synergistic manner, with all activities that are common to all expert associates, and responsibility for all areas of school work and student work, and in addition to the regular work described, expert associate pedagogues in the work model of the primary school as a whole-day school should devote particular expert attention to help teachers in the most high-quality and efficient way to overcome challenges that may relate to the organization and implementation of methodological activities of the A2 Program, as well as to the harmonization of methodological activities between the A1 and A2 Programs in achieving the set educational goals and professional training and preparation of teachers at the school level in the application of expected methodical forms of work within the framework of the A2 Program. When it comes to working with students, independently and/or through cooperation with other expert associates in the school, they are focused on achieving the set goals, especially within the A2 Program.

In addition to all activities that are common to all expert associates, and in addition to the regular work described, expert associate psychologists and expert associates with the educational and rehabilitation background within the framework of the A2 Program should pay special expert attention to expert work and activities with students at the classroom, group, or individual level. Psychologists are actively involved in educational support for students on an individual level. By combining work with classroom and subject teachers, they independently provide individual support to students according to established needs (students with developmental disabilities, gifted students, gifted students with disabilities) in order to meet the needs and interests of students and increase the overall efficiency of the A2 Program. In connection with this form of work, they actively participate in all accompanying activities such as making diagnoses at the school level, setting expected achievement outcomes, developing support strategies, developing personalized curricula as part of overall support, working together with teachers in the homeroom class, and independently applying personalized procedures, individual work with one student or a small group, and monitoring progress and directing support. At the level of educational support for small groups and the whole class, expert psychologists carry out activities that serve the overall efficiency of the A2 Program, such as work in order to acquire general and specific learning and memorization techniques, reduce school-related anxiety, increase the attention span and motivation, and work with students who are experiencing emotional difficulties. This form of work is carried out by expert associates using all forms of work, such as individual interventions and workshops, and the design and implementation of intervention programs.

In addition to all of the activities that are common to all expert associates, and in addition to the regular described work, expert associates with the educational and rehabilitation background (expert associate educational rehabilitator, expert associate social pedagogue, and expert associate speech therapist) are actively involved in activities of supported, assisted, and enriched learning through numerous forms of individual work with disadvantaged students, work in small groups with disadvantaged students, individual work with students with behavioral disorders, work in small groups and implementation of preventive programs at the level of homeroom classes or at the level of educational cycles, and individual speech therapy work with students, which can be enriched by working in small groups.

Within the framework of the A2 Program, expert associate librarians, in addition to the regular work described, are particularly focused on cooperation with school teachers in the design and implementation of educational activities particularly aimed at the linguistic and reading literacy of students. They provide help in the organization and implementation of the methodical activities of the A2 Program. They organize and carry out direct activities with students at the classroom, group, or individual level (e.g., creative workshops, writing workshops, providing help to teachers in order to achieve educational outcomes related to language and reading literacy, work with individual groups of students in enrichment as a form of educational activities) independently and/or in collaboration with teachers.

An important area of collaborative work of all expert associates at any given school is related to all of the planned activities that relate to the optimization and successful transition of students from individual educational levels and periods. Within the implementation of the Experimental Program, during the entire primary school, and especially in the three final grades, within the A2 Program, educational and expert counseling activities, i.e., guidance, are carried out. Schools will implement a program regarding expert informing at the beginning of education up to the eighth grade in which, in addition to expert associates, teachers and the students' parents will participate. It will include numerous collaborative workshops, as well as individual work and assessment of students and individual and group counseling of students. In order to achieve the above goal during the Experimental Program, schools will have to strengthen and improve cooperation with existing institutions that provide expert counseling, especially with the Croatian Employment Service.

The third important area of work of all expert associates within the A2 Program is related to enrichment as the fundamental goal of the Program. The whole-day school model will be the framework for the implementation of most of the national policies and models that refer to gifted students, which will be operationalized and implemented through the activities of the A2 Program. It is expected from expert associate psychologists and pedagogues in particular, to deploy systematic efforts.

Changes are also introduced in the presentation of the work of expert associates. Their direct work related to the A2 Program amounts to six solar hours per week in 35 teaching weeks, or four solar hours in other weeks. Such work of expert associates is clearly limited from the work that is expressed as regular work and which, in the experimental implementation, amounts to 19 solar hours per week for all expert associates. The regular work of expert associates includes all of their regular tasks. In addition to the above, expert associates are provided up to 5.25 solar hours per week for teamwork activities, and cooperation with other teachers and parents. For expert associates, this represents a work duty of a total of 30.25 solar hours per week on the school premises. Other work of expert associates does not imply the obligation to work on the school premises and enables the flexible organization of work.

Within the framework of the Experimental Program, a basic salary increase for expert associates of 4.5% of the fixed whole-day school supplement for all school employees, and a supplement of 15% to the basic salary related to the direct participation of expert associates in all activities of the A2 Program is envisaged. Expert associates receive these supplements to their basic salary throughout the entire calendar year. Expert associate pedagogues and psychologists are also entitled to a five-percent supplement to their basic salary if they teach the subject of The World and I (up to two hours a week are envisaged according to the A2 Program criteria).

The Experimental Program encourages the participation of expert associates in the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B2) in the classroom and in the subject cycle of primary school. The participation of expert associates is elective and is the result of their expressed interest and the needs of students to participate in the Program of Extracurricular Activities. Expert associates who participate in the B1 Program on an

elective basis can participate in it for a maximum of two hours per week and receive a B1 supplement to the basic salary for each school hour of that program. The total increase in the basic salary for activities within the B1 Program can amount to 5%.

Other work duties and assignments of expert associates relate to professional preparation for efficient organization and implementation of the A2 Program, as well as professional development. Within the Experimental Program, in order to increase the overall efficiency of the A2 Program and achieve clearer overall goals of the whole-day school in the selected schools, clear conditions for the efficient work of expert associates in order to achieve the overall goals of the whole-day school need to be provided. Clear expectations are determined for the school, according to which the fundamental focus of the work of expert associates is expert work related to students, teachers, and educational programs of the whole-day school, and that their participation in the activities of administration, documentation management, management and maintenance of the school register, organizational and general administrative tasks does not represent the main part of their work. Such activities must be performed by the school's administrative services, the principal and/or the administrators in charge for such activities, i.e., all teachers and expert associates of the school within the framework of the weekly assignment, in the category of other tasks to which everyone is assigned on an equal basis. Also, decisions that are made at the school level and that relate to the organization of the work and presence of all teachers and expert associates on the school premises, on the same basis and in the same manner, must refer to the work of expert associates and time they spend in the school during teaching and non-teaching weeks.

The structure, minimum and maximum duration of individual work duties of an expert associate within the Experimental Program are as follows:

	Duties and tasks of an expert associate	In the weeks of the A1 and A2 Programs (35 weeks)		In the remaining 11 weeks	Total in the school year		Payments
		60' hour		60' hour	60' hour		
		Min	Max	Up to max	Min	Max	
1	Regular tasks of expert associates	19	19	19	874		Maximum increase of the basic salary on all bases in whole-day school is up to a total of 25%. Basic salary is increased by the fixed whole-day school monthly supplement, which amounts to 5% for all
2	Elective participation in direct work with students in the A1 Program (The World and I as an <i>elective</i> subject)	0	1.5	0	0	52.5	A variable supplement to the basic salary of 2.5% for each A1 hour, up to a total cumulative monthly amount of 5 % for the A1 Program.
3	Direct work with students in the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning (A2), and work related to the organization of the A2 Program	6	6	4	254		A variable supplement to the basic salary of 2.5% for each A2 hour, up to a total cumulative monthly amount of 15% for the A2 Program.
4	Direct work in the organization and implementation of the Program of Extracurricular Activities (B1) (<i>mandatory or elective participation</i>)	0	1.5	1.5	69		A variable supplement to the basic salary of 2.5% for each B1 hour, up to a total cumulative monthly amount of 5 % for the B1 Program.
5	Professional development	0.75	0.75	4	70.3		
6	Cooperation with parents	1.5	1.5	1.5	69		
7	Cooperation with other teachers and expert associates, teamwork	3	3	3	138		
8	Tasks related to homeroom class and school management (administration of student and classroom activities, etc.), class and school councils	0.75	0.75	2	40.25		
9	Other tasks according to the structure described in the EP:	3.5-6.5		2.5	150		
	Total weekly working hours (60')	40		40	1840		

School Principals

School principals are managers and expert leaders of the school as an institution, and they are responsible for the overall organization and implementation of all educational programs, i.e., A1, A2, B1, and B2 Programs. In the implementation of the Experimental Program, there is an increased scope of work due to the new organization of the school's work. The schedule of the A2, B1, and B2 Programs is not, as it was before, defined at the beginning of the academic year, but instead the activities of individual programs can be changed on a weekly or monthly basis. In relation to the new activities of the Experimental Program, the principals still perform regular and specific tasks and activities in full, which are prescribed by the relevant normative legal acts. As part of the experimental implementation of the whole-day school, the principals will receive a salary increase amounting to 25% compared to their salary at the beginning of the Experimental Program.

The Experimental Program, in addition to changes and significant improvements in the financial status of teachers, expert associates, and school principals, also brings forth a number of modernization elements related to the professional conditions of their work. Infrastructure conditions for work at schools and performing professional activities are provided to teachers within the framework of the work model of primary schools as whole-day schools. In terms of time, work duties and activities are very clearly structured for teachers, which allow for comparability between teachers in the direct amount of direct work in teaching and direct work in the Program of Supported, Assisted, and Enriched Learning. All other elements of teachers' work duties and activities are the same for everyone (e.g., time for professional development, cooperation with parents, cooperation with other teachers, tasks related to management, daily break, expert and methodical preparation, and the like).

The Experimental Program provides teachers with significantly greater autonomy and independence. By positioning the A2 Program as a space where each teacher is the one who needs to recognize the needs of their own students and respond to them efficiently, and by placing a greater emphasis on cooperation and collaborative work within the school, the aim is to significantly modernize educational work. In the A2 Program, teachers are the central holders of all educational activities aimed at student learning; they make decisions directly through cooperation with expert associates and other teachers and adapt their work to the needs of students and the dynamics of activities in the classroom, or the progress in terms of achieving educational goals. The A2 Program significantly reduces the limitations that teachers experience in regular classes regarding the total available time for the achievement of curriculum goals. In addition to the realization of the common goals of the curriculum, it provides them with the necessary time, resources, and flexibility for educational work aimed at the learning of individual students, groups of students, as well as all students.

Through the Experimental Program, teachers implement dynamic and integrative forms of work and are unrestricted to a significant extent with regard to individual teaching subjects. Based on the needs and characteristics of students, they choose work methods, types, and ways of adapting various forms of learning. Through the activities of the A2

Program, they have a clear opportunity to respond to most of the challenges related to the true heterogeneity of a certain homeroom class. The program provides teachers in primary schools flexibility and effective mechanisms for adapting and quickly implementing changes in the form of learning and in the course and dynamics of learning, encouraging them to use all forms of differentiation of the learning processes effectively. In the numerous activities of the A2 Program, teachers are provided with the flexibility to form study groups, as well as the use of teaching materials adapted to the needs of individual groups or individual students.

The activities of teachers within the Experimental Program do not imply the burden of additional administration tasks. When it comes to the A2 Program, teachers provide students with feedback on the process, level and quality of work, which primarily serves to improve the process of knowledge and skill acquisition, instead of meeting the needs of formal assessment.

Through the Experimental Program, the value of the elements related to the personnel element of the organization and the implementation of the program will be verified.

9. METHODS OF PROFESSIONAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The experimental implementation is accompanied by a designed system of information collection (professional monitoring) on all elements of the organization and implementation of the Experimental Program of the whole-day school. Furthermore, Pursuant to Article 29 of the Primary and High School Education Act⁸, the designed evaluation model is an integral part of the Experimental Program. The holder of evaluation activities is the National Center for External Evaluation of Education, based on legal powers in the field of evaluation.

Monitoring and evaluation are aligned with the objectives and tasks of the Experimental Program. They are aimed at all objectives of the Experimental Program and at all aspects of its organization and implementation, as well as at all direct or indirect stakeholders in the organization and implementation of the Experimental Program. All of the above tasks of the Experimental Program are subject to evaluation.

The data required for monitoring and evaluation will be collected periodically and in predefined time intervals, which will ensure the coherence and quality of monitoring, i.e., the evaluation related to the achievement of individual objectives, tasks, and overall objectives of the Experimental Program. All modern and advanced methodological approaches within modern educational evaluation research will be used in the monitoring and evaluation process. In terms of the concept and implementation, they will methodologically rely on quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodological procedures and techniques. In terms of analytics and statistics, monitoring and evaluation will use descriptive, comparative, inferential, structural and model forms of analyzing all evaluation outcomes.

All schools in which the Experimental Program is implemented, which are designated as experimental schools, will participate in the monitoring and evaluation process. Schools participating in the Experimental Program will be associated with the so-called equivalent control schools, which are comparable to them in all or in the majority of the most important characteristics. The central focus of the evaluation is the schools in which the Experimental Program will be implemented, but in order to draw appropriate conclusions, comparisons between schools are an integral part of the evaluation design and draft. During the monitoring and evaluation process, data will be collected from various sources (official databases, pedagogical documentation), and various methods will be used (standardized knowledge tests, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, structured observations, and documentation analysis), which will be aimed at different target groups.

The monitoring and evaluation process will focus on all educational programs included in the model of primary schools as whole-day schools (A1, A2, B1, and B2), on the evaluation of the overall results of the Experimental Program, and on the monitoring of

⁸ Official Gazette No. 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, corr. – 105/2010, 90/2011, 16/2012, 86/2012 – consolidated text, and 94/2013, 152/2014, 7/2017, and 68/2018.

all information that can provide insight into all aspects, processes, and outcomes of the Experimental Program. The above approach enables the collection of data according to various and predefined indicators of the achievement of the set objectives of the Experimental Program. Furthermore, it allows the possibility to answer questions related to certain aspects of organization and implementation, as well as to answer the fundamental question of the efficiency of the proposed model of primary schools as whole-day schools.

Based on the conducted analyses, periodic reports will be prepared in accordance with the measurement points. Following the implementation of the Experimental Program, a complete evaluation report will be prepared, on the basis of which it will be possible to draw conclusions and recommendations for the improvement and further implementation of the Program.

The person responsible for monitoring and evaluation will, in cooperation with domestic and foreign higher education and scientific institutions, exchange all scientifically and professionally relevant information related to all aspects of the organization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Experimental Program in order to be able to make informed decisions about the Program outcomes. Thereby, through a comprehensive evaluation design, numerous professional monitoring and evaluation activities will be gathered and systematized within the framework of a comprehensive and complex evaluation program. The overall outcome of professional monitoring and evaluation will be a series of clear, carefully and methodologically designed and usable indicators on numerous aspects of the efficiency, quality, and outcomes of the Experimental Program.

The full implementation of the whole-day school model in the Croatian educational system is possible only after the evaluation of all aspects of the organization, implementation, and outcomes of the experimental implementation and after the application of improvements to the initial model.

10. FINANCIAL FUNDS REQUIRED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

For all the expected adjustments, as well as for the creation of assumptions for the introduction of the whole-day school model in all primary schools in Croatia in the academic year 2027/2028, sufficient financial resources have been provided through several sources.

Long-term capital investments will amount to at least EUR 1 billion.

1. For the public call funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 (NPOO)⁹, EUR 862.6 million will be provided. The call is open to 619 multiple-shift schools, and the applicants are the founders of primary schools. There is a possibility to register for the construction of a new school or the extension of an existing building. Based on school construction regulations and demographic projections, the Ministry of Science and Education created a procedure for assessing the needs and financing conceptual designs that will facilitate the planning process for the founders. The goal is to ensure an increase in the one-shift coverage to 100% of the schools, and, in the event of demolition or the renovation of the space for the purposes of obtaining a use permit, the costs of a replacement construction will be acceptable.
2. As part of the Competitiveness and Cohesion Program (PKK) for the 2021 -2027 program period, within the SO4 (ii) objective, an amount of approximately EUR 143 million is envisaged for the adaptation of single-shift schools for the implementation of the whole-day school model, namely to ensure adequate kitchens, dining rooms, and the level of equipment, as well as to eliminate the issue of currently suboptimal classroom spaces, and similar adaptations.
3. The introduction of the whole-day school model into the primary education system of the Republic of Croatia will be financially and organizationally supported by the funds of the European Social Fund (ESF+) for the 2021 -2027 program period, and the support will refer to three key areas. The total amount of financial resources provided for support amounts to approximately EUR 108 million, which refers to the following:
 - ensuring quality and continuous professional development of educators – the planned funds amount to EUR 44 million
 - providing support to schools in the area of extracurricular and extra-academic activities within the framework of the implementation of the whole-day school model (including the costs of hiring additional experts needed for the implementation of extra-academic activities at the school level) – the planned funds amount to EUR 60 million, and will be allocated in the form of grants. The publication of the Call is envisaged for June 2023.

9 Planoporavka.gov.hr

- establishment and strengthening of the system capacity in the area of monitoring and improvement of the implementation of the whole-day school model – with planned funds in the amount of EUR 4 million.
4. The Ministry of Science and Education is using a loan in the amount of EUR 25 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for the implementation of the “Croatia: Towards Sustainable, Equitable, and Efficient Education Project”. The development goal of the Project is to improve the learning environment in selected schools according to the whole-day school system and to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Science and Education for the expansion of the whole-day school system and the implementation of sectoral reforms. The Project consists of the following elements:
- Component 1: More hours for more learning – the envisaged loan amount is EUR 3.3 million
 - Component 2: Planning and presentation of infrastructure solutions for the whole-day school – the envisaged loan amount is EUR 15.7 million
 - Component 3: Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Science and Education for the implementation of reforms – the envisaged loan amount is EUR 6 million.
5. During the process of calculation of the costs for the introduction of the whole-day school, all aspects of this significant program reform were taken into account, including the financing of the new work model, i.e., the total increase in the salary of teachers within the framework of the Experimental Program. The salary increase can, on all bases, amount to up to a maximum of 25% of the amount compared to the regular salary that teachers would have if the school did not participate in the Experimental Program. For this item, EUR 36.8 million has been provided from the state budget for the next four years.

In conclusion, as can be seen from the above, funds in the amount of over EUR 1.2 billion have been provided for the new framework and work model of primary schools as whole-day schools. During the process of calculation of the costs for the introduction of the whole-day school, all known aspects of this significant program reform were taken into account, and the value of the elements related to the personnel element of the organization and implementation of the program will be verified through the Experimental Program. During the experimental implementation, an estimate of the necessary funds will be made following the implementation of the Experimental Program. By increasing the number of hours of classes and other forms of educational work, improving the system of professional development of teachers, expert associates, and principals, and with the improved and new school infrastructure, the learning outcomes of students, especially of the disadvantaged ones, will be clearly improved. All the goals and tasks of the Experimental Program will be achieved as expected, as well as the expected implementation of the model in all primary schools at a later date. A new, contemporary, and dynamic school day, in compliance with the professional and personal duties of parents, mothers and fathers of children who attend the whole-day school, will

facilitate participation in the labor market, and thus increase income due to the fact that their children will be taken care of from the pedagogical point of view. Thanks to the Experimental Program, the capacity of the Ministry of Science and Education will be strengthened in order to expand the whole-day school system throughout the country and implement the necessary sector reforms indicated in the 2030 National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia¹⁰, and described in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026, and the 2027 National Education System Development Plan.¹¹

10 Official Gazette No. 13/2021.

11 The *National Plan* was adopted at the 203rd session of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, March 22, 2023.