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Transformations of the Local School Network as a Consequence of Changes in the Educational System – the Example of the City of Poznan

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to characterize the transformation of the local school network for children and youth in Poznan, taking place from September 2017 as a result of changes in the education system. The subject of the research are primary and secondary self-government schools in Poznan. In order to determine the spatial accessibility to schools, simplified measures of the school network density indicator were applied: the number of schools per 10 km² of the Poznan city area and the number of pupils per 1 school.

As a result of the education reform, no primary school in Poznan has been closed. In the case of lower secondary schools, public authorities have adopted the principle of incorporating or transforming these schools into other types of schools, thus giving up the possibility of their liquidation. One of the consequences of changes in education cycles will, among other things, double the number of candidates for upper secondary schools in the school year 2019/2020, who will be both graduates of the eight-year primary school and lower secondary schools (the so-called “double class”).

Key words: reform of the education system, spatial accessibility of schools, local education policy, city of Poznan.

Introduction

1 September 2017 was a landmark with regards to the implementation of the new educational reform under the Act of 14 December 2016 on Educational Law. On that day, the functioning of eight-year primary schools was reinstated and the gradual withdrawal from the lower secondary education was initiated¹. The education system in Poland is currently subject to significant changes. In the year 1999, the system was changed from the one consisting of two levels to the one consisting of three levels, and at present, the change is reverse, which naturally has caused a lot of turmoil in the process of transformation of the local school network in connection with the accomplishment of the objectives of the new educational act.

Usually, the implementation of reforms, especially in education, has both its proponents and ardent opponents, and the unambiguous assessment of the effects of implementation of these reforms is often difficult. The arguments in favour of the establishment of lower secondary schools in the year 1999 included the popularisation of secondary education and the creation of equal opportunities in the access to education for children and youth. Meanwhile, as some researchers believe, the introduction of the system of external exams at the end of the primary school contributed to the triggering of processes of school selection in lower secondary schools, especially in cities, which, in turn, led to the deepening of social divisions (Kwieciński, 2002, Murawska, 2004, Gmerek, 2011). There is no doubt that educational performance of schools has become one of the major criteria for selection of schools by pupils (Dolata, 2001, Zahorska, 2009, Walaszek, 2016)². This, bearing in mind the significant dynamics in an increase in the number of private schools in the recent years and their undeniable competitive advantage on many levels over the local government schools, has translated into the differentiation of schools in terms of: the wealth of pupils and the social capital of their families, and as a consequence of this, the educa-

¹ In fact, eighth-grade pupils will attend primary schools in the school year 2018/2019 and lower secondary school pupils will finish their education in the “old system” in June 2019.

² It is worth noticing that according to the educational reform, the system of external examinations has been maintained (such an exam will take place at the end of primary school, what is more, the result of the exam is one of the criteria for admission to a public post-primary schools - article 134 of the Education Law). This may mean that the school selection process, evident at the stage of selecting to lower secondary schools in the „old” educational system, will be transferred to the upper secondary school selection level, or because the theoretical option exists, it will concern the primary school selection level.

tional performance. This "vicious circle" has strengthened the social-economic polarisation of pupils in lower secondary schools, which has been demonstrated with particular emphasis during the recent years. This also became one of the main arguments of the present government for their withdrawal. On the other hand, it is worth emphasising that the location of lower secondary schools in many towns raised their profile, and the schools became the centre of life of local communities. Some positive effects of the reform from the year 1999 also include significant achievements of Polish lower secondary school pupils in the international PISA survey (Programme for International Student Assessment).

It is worth noticing that the transformation of the education system from the three-level one to the two-level one has its consequences for the changes in the location and spatial accessibility of schools. The local school network existing in the year 2016, which consisted of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools will finally be transformed into the network of primary and post-primary schools. The dilemma related to the issue of whether it is more advantageous to create a dense network of small schools or rather large "collective" schools to which pupils are transported, is known both to geographers and pedagogues. This issue was raised in the studies by Averett and Mc Lennan (2004), Blatchford (2007), Guzik (2003), resulting in frequently differing stances.

It seems that some of the major "controversies" with regards to the implementation of the educational reform from the year 2016 at a local level included, above all, the short deadlines set by the legislator to adapt the local school network to the new legal frames. The negative effects of this situation were felt, in particular, by the local governments, which were obliged to establish the new school network within their respective areas in a very short time from the moment of adoption of the Educational System Act, i.e. only by 31 March 2017. In large cities, the task related to the re-organisation of the school network was surely more difficult than in small municipalities in view of the greater number of schools and pupils. In Poznan, though also in Warsaw, Cracow or Gdansk, the resolutions on the adaptation of the public school network to the new school system were adopted in the second half of March 2017, i.e. only a few or several days before the expiry of the final deadline set by the legislator. The transformation plans related to the school network required positive opinions of provincial school superintendents and only after such an opinion was obtained, the local governments could adopt the relevant resolutions in this respect³.

³ It is worth noticing that social consultations were organized in many municipalities, thus

Quite apart from any evaluations of various circles as to the introduced changes in education, the reform has already been implemented, though it is definitely too early to evaluate its effects. Consequences of educational reforms and, in general, state reforms, manifest themselves in the long run. The sector of educational services is influenced by many factors, including those independent of the introduced legal regulations, as for instance those resulting from the continuous changes in the society and economy, which are difficult to predict at the stage of design and implementation of new reforms, and which also affect their final evaluation.

Implications of the change in the education system for the functioning of the school network

The aim of this section is to present the issues related to the development of the school network in the light of changes in the educational system and in reference to the national and local level of the public management of education.

According to Stankiewicz (1999, Kożuch et al., 2016), the state's educational policy determines, above all, the objectives, rules, conditions for the development and functioning of education, education of teachers, organisation and management of education as well as development of the school network. Thus, the aim of the educational policy of the state is also to outline the general frames related to the functioning and spatial organisation of the school network, which takes place, e.g. by determining the maximum distances of a pupil from school⁴, or the criteria of recruitment to schools⁵.

As has been pointed out by Kożuch (et al., 2016, p. 60), the local educational policy created at the level of different local government units should not deviate from the national educational policy in terms of the main accepted directions and priorities of education. It is worth noticing that these policies should be closely linked to each other with regards to the accomplishment of joint developmental objectives both by the state and local governments.

Projects regarding the school network, adapted to the new school system, have become some of the elements of the local educational policies created as

giving residents the opportunity to express their opinions on the transformation of the school network and the participation in this process.

⁴ In article 39 of the Act of 14 December 2016 - Educational Law, it was defined that the distance to school can't exceed 3 km in the case of pupils from 1st to 4th class of primary school and 4 km in the case of pupils from 5th to 8th class of primary schools.

⁵ Framework conditions for recruitment to schools have been specified in the Act of 14 December 2016 - Educational Law. Detailed rules of admission to schools are defined by the school's governing body, in the case where it is a municipal self-government - in the local resolutions.

a result of changes in the school system. These projects, having gained consent from the School Superintendent, were adopted as real programmes for the implementation of the educational act at the local level by the year 2019. With the adoption of resolutions regarding the new school network, the local governments determined the location and accessibility of schools to pupils anew. As has been pointed out by Guzik (2003, p. 63): "the establishment of lower secondary schools made pupils more distant in space from their school". Since September 2017, owing to the creation of divisions of seventh grade students in primary schools, it may be said that these students have become spatially "closer" to the school.

The result of the activity of the state, local governments and schools is the final decision of the users related to the choice of schools. This decision follows, above all, from the location of schools in relation to the place of residence, but also from the teaching conditions and educational outcomes, which pupils of a given school achieve. (Walaszek, 2016). Individual decisions of pupils with regards to the selection of a school translate into inter-school movements of pupils (in the case of primary schools with a specific district, they refer to movements between these districts, and in the case of post-primary schools– the ranges of impact of these schools, which often are of inter-municipal character).

Purpose and scope of the article

The aim of the article is to characterise the transformations of the local school network for children and youth (with the omission of special schools) in Poznan, which have taken place since September 2017 as a result of changes in the education system. The way in which the network of primary and post-primary schools will change in the years 2017–2019 and which lower secondary schools were transformed or incorporated into the structure of other types of schools is presented in the article.

The subject of studies refers to primary and post-primary schools in Poznan. In the Polish education system, primary schools and lower secondary schools according to the "old system", were run, in the majority of cases, by local governments, though in the recent years, the number of schools run by other entities has increased. In Poznan, and in Poland in general, the domination of the local government sector in the ownership structure of the education sector is evident, therefore, a decision has been made that the subject of interest in this article covers local government schools.

The spatial scope of the study is the city of Poznan – the main centre of the Poznan agglomeration. The time frames of the study cover the years 2016–2019, i.e. the period which comprises the stage of preparation of the local

governments for the implementation of the reform (the year 2016) and the first stage of its implementation (2017-2019), which is concentrated on the gradual withdrawal from the lower secondary education and the extension of cycles of education in primary and post-primary schools.

Methods and sources of research

In order to determine the spatial accessibility to schools, simplified measures of the school network density were applied: the number of schools per 10 km² of the Poznan city area and the number of pupils per 1 school of a given type (in the case of the lower secondary education – the school where lower secondary school classes are taught). The number of schools per unit of area is the indicator of the school network density and thus the equality in access to schools, which is easy to interpret.

Resolutions of Poznan City Council of 28 March 2017 on the adaptation of the network of primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools to the new school system, introduced by the Act on the Educational Law for the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019 are the sources of data here. As has already been mentioned, the local governments were obliged by the legislator to establish the new school network until the end of March 2017, upon obtaining the positive opinion from the school superintendent. The data regarding the number of students in schools during the school years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 and the estimated number of pupils in schools for the school years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 were obtained from the Department of Education of Poznan City Hall.

Changes in the spatial distribution of schools in Poznan in the years 2017–2019

The change in the school network in a large city such as Poznan is more difficult than in small municipalities, because of a great number of schools and their users, a more diversified ownership structure, significant intensity of movements of pupils between school districts and travels to schools from nearby towns. The educational market in Poznan is very diverse, both with regards to the authorities that govern schools, the types of schools and their prestige, therefore, the adaptation of school network to the new school system was an uneasy task. It is worth emphasising that in Poznan the resolution on the adaptation of the network of primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools to the new school system introduced by the Act on the Educational Law

for the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019 was adopted by the City Council only 3 days before the expiry of the deadline set by the central administration.

Primary schools

In 2016, there were 96 primary schools located in Poznan: 68 of these schools were run by the city with the status of a county and 28 were governed by entities not associated with the local government. In 2016, primary schools were attended by 31 839 pupils in total, whereby most of them attended primary schools run by the city with the status of a county – Poznan – 26 691 pupils (84%) and 5 148 (16%) pupils went to schools governed by entities other than those related to the local government sector.

In September 2017, the number of primary schools increased by 8 schools as a result of transformations of lower secondary schools into primary schools (Fig. 1). No primary school was liquidated in Poznan as a result of the edu-

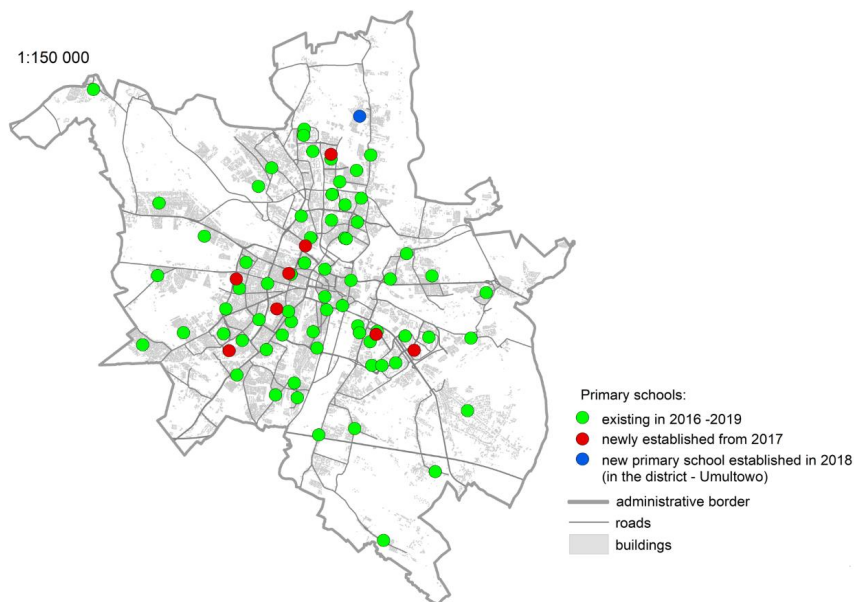


Fig. 1. The network of local government primary schools in Poznan in the years 2016–2019

Source: author's compilation based on resolutions of the Poznan City Council on the adaptation of the network of primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools to the new school system, introduced by the Act on the Educational Law for the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019.

cational reform. By the year 2019 the network of local government primary schools in Poznan will be stable and will eventually cover 77 schools, including the presently built school in the Umultowo district, which will commence its activity in September 2018.

With regards to the location of new primary schools functioning since 2017, it is worth paying attention to the aspect of space. New primary schools were located in the areas or in the neighbourhood of districts characterised by the phenomenon of internal sub-urbanisation, but also in inner-city areas, which are characterised by the phenomenon of depopulation. Such a location of new primary schools follows from the fact of taking into consideration the demographic conditions of the functioning of the school network, including the change in the number of inhabitants and the necessity to ensure places in primary schools for the present “seventh-grade pupils”, and in the school year 2018/2019 “eighth-grade pupils”, who continue education according to the new school system.

Lower secondary schools

In the year 2016, there were 70 lower secondary schools in Poznan, of which 44 were run by the city with the status of a county, 25 schools were managed by entities other than those related to the local government sector, and one lower secondary school was run by the local government unit. In the year 2016 lower secondary schools in Poznan were attended in total by 13 767 pupils: 11 211 pupils (81.5%) of local government schools, 2551 (18.5%) pupils of schools run by entities not associated with the local government sector, and only 6 pupils of the school run by the government administration. The domination of the local government sector in the primary education and lower secondary education sectors is evident. The number of pupils in primary schools and lower secondary schools exceeds the number of pupils according to the school age groups, which means that schools in Poznan also educate children from the outside of this city.

Pursuant to article 129 of the Act of 14 December 2016 – regulations implementing the Act on Educational Law – local governments were granted fairly broad options regarding the ultimate disbanding of lower secondary schools. It was possible:

- to transform or incorporate the lower secondary school into the 8-year primary school,
- to transform or incorporate the lower secondary school into the three- or four-year general secondary school,
- to transform or incorporate the lower secondary school into the four- or five-year technical secondary school,

- to transform or incorporate the lower secondary school into the first-level sectoral vocational school.

Of course, in the light of the provisions of the Act, the liquidation of lower secondary schools is also possible through gradual winding up of their activity without prior transformation or incorporation into another type of schools; in such a case the functioning of a given school will cease when all current pupils of that school graduate from it⁶.

Lower secondary education in Poznan in the years 2017–2019 will be provided in 44 locations – in primary schools or in lower secondary school classes established in other types of schools. As a result of the educational reform in Poznan:

- eight lower secondary schools were transformed into primary schools,
- 24 lower secondary schools were incorporated into primary schools,
- three lower secondary schools were incorporated into technical secondary schools, one into the sectoral vocational school and eight into general secondary schools.

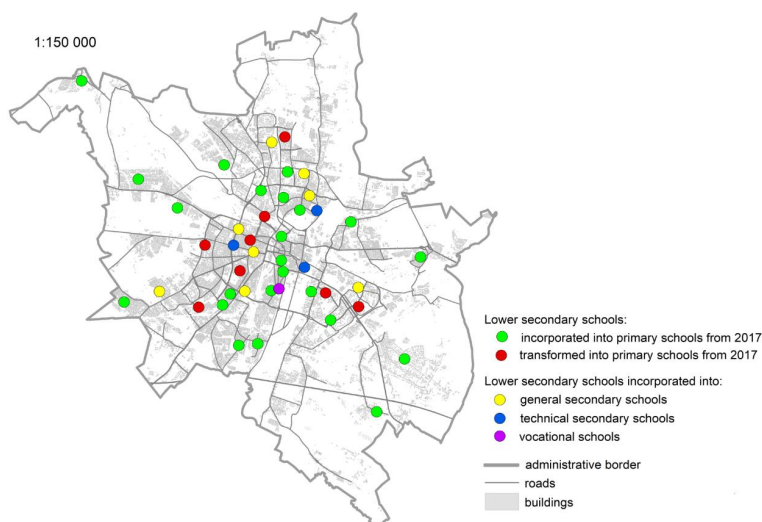


Fig. 2. Transformations and incorporations of local government lower secondary schools into other types of schools in the years 2016–2019

Source: author's compilation based on resolutions of the Poznan City Council on the adaptation of the network of primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools to the new school system, introduced by the Act on the Educational Law for the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019.

⁶ In the school year 2018/2019, lower secondary schools will be attended by the final class of lower secondary third-grade pupils.

In Poznan, a rule was established that lower secondary schools were to be incorporated or transformed into other types of schools, thus resigning from the option of the gradual withdrawal from these schools. It can be concluded that the network of schools where education of lower secondary pupils will be continued in the years 2017–2019 was planned in such a way as to prevent its change in relation to the year 2016. However, as the recruitment of pupils to schools for the school year 2017/2018 started, it turned out that not all objectives set by Poznan city authorities related to the functioning of the school network for the years 2017–2019 were accomplished. A good example of this may be the Lower Secondary School No. 63, which was transformed into the Primary School No. 73. Starting from September 2017, this school was supposed to be attended by pupils of the first and seventh grade, but in the end, these were not formed in view of the lack of the sufficient number of pupils.

Upper secondary schools

In the Polish education system, the following upper secondary schools could be distinguished until the year 2016: general secondary schools, technical secondary schools and vocational schools. In 2016, there were 29 local government general secondary schools in Poznan and 11 ones not governed by local governments, 18 local government technical secondary schools and 3 technical secondary schools not run by local governments, and also 12 local government vocational schools, 1 government vocational school and 1 vocational school not run by the local government. From September 2017, the basic vocational schools were to change their name to the first-level sectoral vocational schools.

Among all the types of upper secondary schools in Poznan (and generally in Poland), young people most frequently choose general secondary schools. In the year 2016, in Poznan, 10 818 pupils chose education in local government general secondary schools, which constituted 55% of all pupils of upper secondary schools run by the local government. In the years 2017–2018 in Poznan, there will be 29 general secondary schools run by local governments and from 2019 – 30 schools of this type. Three of them will be established as a result of the transformation of current lower secondary schools: two general secondary schools will begin their activity by September 2017 and one by September 2019 (Fig. 3).

The second most frequently chosen type of the upper secondary school in Poznan in the year 2016 were technical secondary schools. In 2016, 18 local government technical secondary schools were attended in Poznan by 7526 pu-

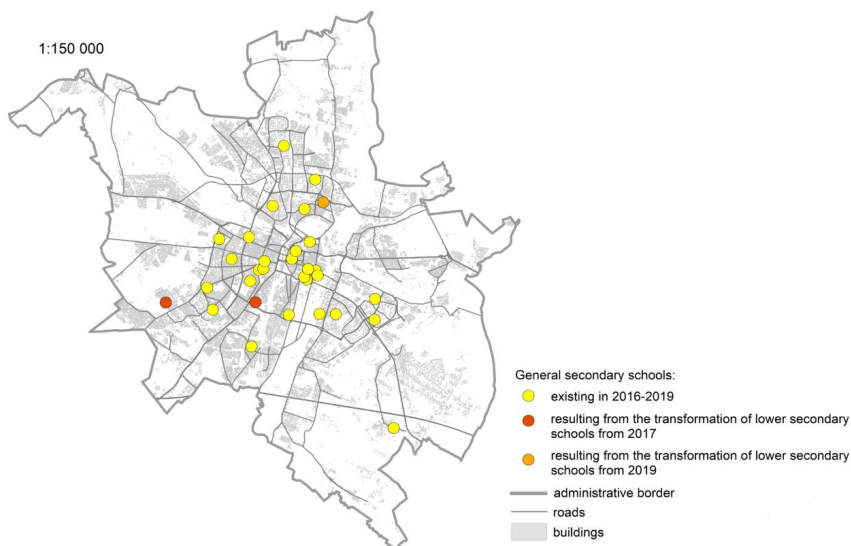


Fig. 3. The network of local government general secondary schools in the years 2016–2019

Source: author's compilation based on resolutions of the Poznan City Council on the adaptation of the network of primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools to the new school system, introduced by the Act on the Educational Law for the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019.

pils, which constituted 38% of all pupils of upper secondary schools in Poznan. In the years 2017–2019, the number of local government technical secondary schools in Poznan will be maintained and will include 18 schools.

Vocational schools enjoy the least popularity among the youth. In 2016, only 1303 pupils (7%) attended local government vocational schools. From September 2017, in connection with the introduction of the educational reform, basic vocational schools were to change their names to first-level sectoral vocational schools. In the years 2017–2019, there will be 15 schools of this type functioning in Poznan, i.e. one more than in the year 2016 (Fig. 4).

In the case of new post-primary schools, their rather peripheral location in relation to the city centre becomes apparent. Taking into account that post-primary schools are, to a great extent, the places of education for the youth from outside Poznan, such a location of new schools may be of benefit to pupils arriving to Poznan from municipalities situated in the western part of the Poznan agglomeration⁷.

⁷ For example, in 2013 upper secondary schools in Poznan were attended by 601 pupils

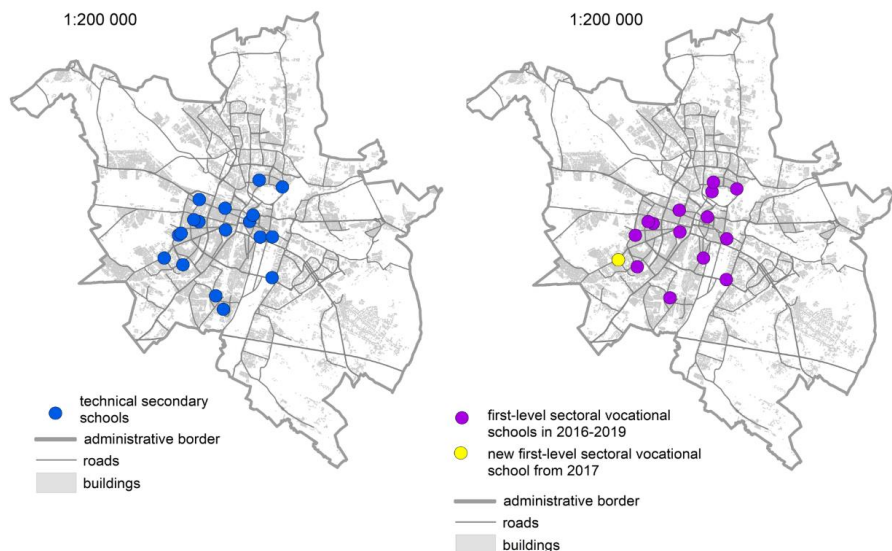


Fig. 4. The network of local government technical secondary schools and first-level sectoral vocational schools in the years 2016–2019

Source: author's compilation based on resolutions of the Poznań City Council on the adaptation of the network of primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools to the new school system, introduced by the Act on the Educational Law for the period between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019.

Spatial accessibility of schools in Poznań in the years 2017–2019

The implementation of the educational reform in a large city such as Poznań required the performance of numerous studies and analyses by the public authorities, including those related to the predicted number of children and youth attending schools in Poznań. The aim of the sub-section is the determination of changes in the spatial accessibility of schools based on the data regarding the predicted number of pupils in schools from the Department of Education of Poznań City Hall.

As has already been mentioned, the number of local government primary schools has increased since September 2017 by eight schools. One new school

from Tarnowo Podgórne commune, 577 from Komorniki commune and 534 from Dopiewo commune, which are located in the western part of the Poznań agglomeration, occupying after Lubon, Swarzędz, Czerwonak communes, the fourth, fifth and sixth positions in terms of the number of pupils commuting to post-primary schools in Poznań (Walaszek, 2016).

will commence its activity in the year 2018 in the northern, strongly urbanizing district of the city of Poznan – Umultowo. The cycle of education in the primary school will be extended gradually, the number of pupils per one primary school will increase, though only slightly (in the period encompassing the years 2016–2019 by 51 pupils per single establishment). Also, the spatial accessibility of primary schools measured by the number of these schools per 10 km² of the city area will increase.

The spatial accessibility of schools, where lower secondary school divisions will be run, will not change until the year 2019 in comparison with the year 2016 (before the implementation of the reform). In the years 2017–2019 there will be 2 lower secondary schools per 10 km² of the city area, thus the school network will remain stable. The withdrawal from the education at the level of the lower secondary school will take place gradually, which means that each year a smaller number of pupils of the lower secondary schools will be educated in Poznan according to the “old system”, though in the same locations. It is worth noticing that in the year 2018, on average, there will hardly be 70 pupils per 1 school with lower secondary classes. At present, it is pointed out that the process of disbanding lower secondary schools brings negative effects with regards to the employment of teachers in view of their part-time jobs or the necessity to travel to their workplaces in several schools. As the final decision regarding the class sizes is taken in this case by the governing authority, there may be a risk of managing large classes where the teaching and learning comfort may be significantly reduced.

Taking into account the forecasts regarding the burden which schools will have to face, secondary school education services will be affected most severely by the situation, especially during the school year 2019/2020, when graduates of 8-year primary schools and lower secondary schools start to attend the post-primary schools (the latter will basically attend the upper secondary schools according to the nomenclature of the “old system”). This will then be “a double class”, which will accumulate in first grades of post-primary schools. As the forecasts of Poznan City Hall indicate, during the school year 2019/2020, the burden for post-primary schools will increase in relation to the preceding school year, whereby, on average, technical secondary schools will be affected most severely (by 132 pupils per 1 technical secondary school), then general secondary schools (by 112 pupils per 1 general secondary school and 75 pupils per 1 first-level sectoral vocational school).

Tab. 1. Characteristics of spatial accessibility and forecasted burden on schools in Poznan in the years 2016–2019

Feature	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Primary schools				
number of pupils	26 691	29 202	34 376	34 175
number of schools	68	76	77	77
number of pupils per 1 school	393	384	446	444
number of schools per 10 km ²	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.9
Lower secondary schools				
number of pupils	13 767	5 738	3 094	0
number of schools	44	44	44	0
number of pupils per 1 school	313	130	70	0
number of schools per 10 km ²	1.7	1.7	1.7	0
General secondary schools				
number of pupils	10 818	10 924	13 134	16 492
number of schools	29	30	30	30
number of pupils per 1 school	373	364	438	550
number of schools per 10 km ²	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Technical secondary schools				
number of pupils	7 526	7 644	10 355	12 724
number of schools	18	18	18	18
number of pupils per 1 school	418	425	575	707
number of schools per 10 km ²	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
1 first-level sectoral vocational schools				
number of pupils	1 303	1 339	2 560	3 684
number of schools	14	15	15	15
number of pupils per 1 school	93	89	171	246
number of schools per 10 km ²	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6

Source: Department of Education of Poznan City Hall.

One of the effects of the educational reform is the change in the cycles of education. By the year 2018, the accessibility of primary schools in Poznan will be improved while the accessibility of schools with lower secondary classes will not change. On the one hand, this advantageous situation from the point of view of pupils may be exceptionally disadvantageous for teachers and the finances of local governments.

No drastic changes in the number of pupils per 1 school are planned by the year 2019 in primary schools. Unfortunately, such a situation will occur in September 2019 in post-primary schools, where two classes will be accumulated: pupils graduating both from the eight-year primary school and lower secondary school⁸. Based on the data from the Educational Information System, regarding the number of pupils in the school year 2017/2018, it is possible to estimate that in the year 2019, there will be 5167 pupils graduating from primary schools and 5059 third-grade pupils graduating from lower secondary schools in Poznan, in total 10 226 pupils. For instance, in the year 2017, the number of lower secondary school graduates amounted to 3872 people. Thus, in 2019, the number of eighth-grade graduates as well as third-grade graduates from lower secondary schools will be higher in relation to the year 2017 by as many as 6 354 pupils (i.e. 164%).

Summary

Probably the most important dilemma to be resolved by the local government authorities at the stage of preparations for the implementation of the educational reform was the decision as to which schools' activity should be maintained in the current form, and which schools should be incorporated or transformed into other types of schools. It may be presumed that in this difficult situation, local governments made attempts at reaching a certain "balance", taking into account the necessity to reconcile their own interests, the interests of teachers, parents and pupils, especially those who continued lower secondary education. In the case of the city of Poznan, the plan of the new school network for the years 2017–2019 can be considered stable, at least until the moment of termination of

⁸ In 2022 and 2023 primary schools will educate "double classes" of pupils, which results from the separation of children into two classes (those born in the first half of 2008 began to attend the first grade as six-year-olds and those born in the second half of 2008 as seven-year-olds). In turn, in 2024, primary school will be graduated by a smaller number of pupils, resulting from the 2016/2017 recruitment to primary schools. Such a small number of pupils graduating from primary schools will result from the reintroduction of compulsory schooling for seven-year-old children introduced in 2016. In 2016, therefore, parents could decide whether they would let their six-year-old children to continue their education in kindergarten or let them attend the first grade of primary schools. The small number of pupils finishing eight classes of primary schools in 2024 will therefore be a consequence of the withdrawal of compulsory schooling for six-year-old children, but also the result of preferences of parents (according to a survey conducted in 2013 by the Public Opinion Research Center, 64% of parents surveyed stated that the best age for starting school education is 7).

education by the last class of lower secondary school pupils. A positive aspect is, especially for pupils and teachers that no school was liquidated in the process of adaptation of the local school network to the new educational system.

Another important challenge for local governments will be the redevelopment of the school network, this time in the already fully functioning new education system, which, in principle, will take place only when the current pupils of lower secondary schools and primary schools graduate from post-primary schools. In this respect, the calculation of the current costs of introduction of the reform, related to the maintenance of schools, as well as the demographic forecast for the city will certainly be important. It is necessary to consider whether the maintenance of a larger number of primary schools in the context of the demographic crisis may lead to the establishment of a more dense and at the same time more accessible school network, though also more expensive to maintain.

As the liquidation of schools is always a socially sensitive issue, it would be advisable to carry out, sufficiently in advance, analyses related to the development of the school network after the year 2019. In this regard, it must also be taken into consideration that in September 2019, the recruitment to post-primary schools will include pupils who graduated from lower secondary schools according to the “old system” and pupils who graduated from eight-year primary schools. This accumulation of both classes may be problematic especially when it comes to the process of further education of pupils according to different curricula. It is also hard to make an assumption in advance what decisions pupils will finally make with regards to the choice of a post-primary school, taking into account, e.g. the establishment of second-level sectoral vocational schools.

Above all, in the process of implementation of the new educational reform, there was not enough time to carry out thorough analyses related to the forecast of functioning of the school network for the upcoming years. The speed of introduction of the educational reform put local governments in a difficult situation where, above all, they were faced with the necessity of meeting the statutory deadlines. However, it turns out that some school network plans confronted with the reality turned out to be unrealistic. One example of this may be the problem of the former Lower Secondary School No. 63 in Poznań related to the recruitment of pupils to first grades of the primary school, which was presented in this article. It cannot be ruled out that such a problem also affected other local governments all over Poland.

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