

## **5. EDUCATION IN AMERICA**

## 5.1 Structure of Education

---

America in comparison to Europe, has the advantage of already solved problems regarding to the organization of education across States.

America and also other countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand) had play-leading role in designing schemes and involving users in new terms and arrangements. Terms like tuition fees, loans, vouchers, had led institutions to find ways for the new perception of the education environment.

The following figure shows the structure of education in the United States. The figure presents the three levels of education (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary) and gives the approximate age range of persons at each level. Pupils ordinarily spend from 6 to 8 years in the elementary grades, which may be preceded by 1 or 2 years in nursery school and kindergarten. A 4- to 6-years program in secondary school follows the elementary school program. Pupils normally complete the entire program through grade 12 by age 18.

High school graduates who decide to continue their education may enter a technical or vocational institution, a 2-years College, or a 4-years college or University. A 2-years college normally offers the first 2 year duration of a standard 4-year college curriculum and a selection of terminal vocational programs. Academic courses completed at a 2-years college are usually transferable for credit at a 4-years college or University. A technical or vocational institution offers postsecondary technical training leading to a specific career. An associate degree requires at least 2 years of college-level work, and a bachelor's degree normally can be earned in 4 years. At least 1 year beyond the bachelor is necessary for a master's degree, while a doctor's degree usually requires a minimum of 3 or 4 years beyond the bachelor's. Professional schools differ widely in admission requirements and in program length.

*America has the advantage of a homogeneous educational system  
in comparison with Europe.*

Medical students, for example, generally complete a 4-years program of premedical studies at a college or University before they can enter the 4-years program at a medical school. Law programs normally require 3 years of coursework beyond the bachelor's degree level.

*The implementation of a single system across every State gives the possibility of setting and adapting better the educational subject in America related to the situation Europe and to face them from a different point of view.*

## 5.2 *The two faces of Education*

---

While in the USA an intense process related to the Higher Education has been experienced, it is also important to notice that America gives great importance on education issues regarding mathematics and science simultaneously. It is also important to add that the USA do not make the mistake in the degree of growth market oriented policies for the Higher Education to forget General Education. This is visible from the statistics and not only by themselves but also from the way that those statistics are made. In order to testimonial this we will present two statistical tables. One has to do with the average mathematics performance of other countries compared with the United States in 1995 and the other with the average science performance of other countries compared again with United States the same year.

Many of the statistics in this chapter are derived from the statistical activities of the NCES. In addition, substantial contributions have been drawn from the work of other groups, both government and nongovernmental, as shown in the source notes of the relevant tables.

In the following two tables two important things can be observed:

1. United States is not only interesting in secondary education but also in elementary and primary as well as, this can be observe also from the statistics.
2. There is a specific classification, according to the following three answers:  
Like us, better than us, worst than us.

*America gives great importance on educational issues.*

## Average mathematics performance of other countries compared with the United States: 1995

Fourth grade (in most nations)			End of secondary education		
Average scores significantly higher than the United States			Average scores significantly higher than the United States		
Singapore			(Netherlands)	(Norway)	(Austria)
Korea			Sweden	(France)	(Slovenia)
Japan			(Denmark)	New Zealand	(Germany)
Hong Kong			Switzerland	(Australia)	Hungary
(Netherlands)			(Iceland)	(Canada)	
Czech Republic					
(Austria)					
Average scores not significantly different from the United States			Average scores not significantly different from the United States		
(Slovenia)	Canada		(Italy)		
Ireland	(Israel)		(Russian Federation)		
(Hungary)			(Lithuania)		
(Australia)			Czech Republic		
Average scores significantly lower than the United States			Average scores significantly lower than the United States		
(Latvia)	Norway	Portugal	(Cyprus)		
Scotland	New Zealand	Iceland	(South Africa)		
England	Greece	Iran, Islamic Republic			
Cyprus	(Thailand)	(Kuwait)			

## Average science performance of other countries compared with the United States: 1995

Fourth grade (in most nations)			End of secondary education		
Average scores significantly higher than the United States			Average scores significantly higher than the United States		
Korea			Sweden	(Canada)	(Austria)
			(Netherlands)	New Zealand	(Slovenia)
			(Iceland)	(Australia)	(Denmark)
			(Norway)	Switzerland	
Average scores not significantly different from the United States			Average scores not significantly different from the United States		
Japan			(Germany)	(Italy)	
(Austria)			(France)	Hungary	
(Australia)			Czech Republic	(Lithuania)	
(Netherlands)			(Russian Federation)		
Czech Republic					
Average scores significantly lower than the United States			Average scores significantly lower than the United States		
England	Hong Kong	Iceland	(Cyprus)		
Canada	(Hungary)	Greece	(South Africa)		
Singapore	New Zealand	Portugal			
(Slovenia)	Norway	Cyprus			
Ireland	(Latvia)	(Thailand)			
Scotland	(Israel)	Iran, Islamic Republic			
		(Kuwait)			

NOTE: Nations not meeting international guidelines are shown in parentheses.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Centre for Education Statistics, *Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Fourth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context*, 1997 and *Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Twelfth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context*, 1998 .

### 5.3 Educate future leaders

---

The interest of America about education and for its introducing as a product of offered services was and it will be always in the first line trying to see the benefits of an international policy in the point to constitute priority of the White House. In this framework, the White House on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2000 publishes a statement, the memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies with subject International Educational Policy.

This memorandum signed from the President Bill Clinton, provides an important direction to the internationalisation of educational policy and as the President Clinton stated “ We have to maintain our role as world leader to prepare our citizens for a global environment to attract and educate future leaders from abroad. In order to increase the 500.000 foreign students studying at postsecondary level and contribute some \$9 billion annually to our economy but also they are developing appreciation for ours”.

Continuing the President points out the priority of this policy. It is important the statement presented “Report of the international education study team” which is prepared as part of the implementation of the President International Education Policy (02/01) with title “survey of US posts - International Education obstacles and opportunities”.

The purpose of the project is to obtain and analyze comprehensive information on measures in various countries affecting the ability of students to gain access to education and training services provided by foreign suppliers.

Members of the project are the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, in conjunction with the U.S. Departments of Education, State and Commerce.

The Methodology ruled the project is to:

- Survey information currently available to USG agencies on the educational systems of other countries and their manner of regulating foreign providers of education

*Interest of America of the education is, its understanding as a product of offered services.*

- Identify country practices that tend to discourage entities from engaging in international education and training or that discriminate against non-national providers of education
- Develop a database of U.S. public and private entities, currently engaged in education and training activities abroad for profit and assess their experiences.
- Estimate or evaluate the commercial significance or potential commercial significance of these enterprises worldwide and in key countries.
- Examine the educational programs of other countries engaged in international education
- Recommend possible solutions that might be achievable through trade agreements and through international cooperation for problems identified in the study.

Information would be sought on limitations on foreign ownership of education facilities; discrimination against education provided by foreign-owned schools; lack of recognition of degrees earned in foreign institutions; denying students permission to study abroad and similar restrictions.

Consistent with the intent of the President's Directive to remove unnecessary obstacles to international education, this study would assist in determining the magnitude of the problems encountered.

Recommendations would be designed to assist the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and other U.S. Government agencies, in their efforts to negotiate trade agreements with other countries to reduce obstacles to U.S. entities engaged in providing education and training services to foreign students in the United States and abroad.

It is very significant that the survey of U.S. was prepared by embassies in 140 countries with main goal to obtain information on obstacles and opportunities for US entities seeking to supply education and training services on a commercial basis in foreign markets.

*Intent of the President Directive is removing unnecessary obstacles to international education.*

The interest of U.S. in this internationalisation of education is visible also from the article of Michael Scan “ Other’s Open Doors” – How others attract international students. This article examines what other countries make in order to increase the number of international students This can also be achieved for the following (See also [www.opendoors.iienetwork.org](http://www.opendoors.iienetwork.org) for complete online survey and *Open Doors 2002* data).

"These numbers are encouraging," said Patricia Harrison, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. "International education has become of paramount importance to economic, political, and social conditions in both developing and developed countries at all levels. Our ability to promote sustainable development, civil society, and international peace requires better educational and social institutions. Welcoming learners from abroad over the long term helps enormously to eliminate hostile preconceptions, to promote cultural relations and to attempt to solve conflicts peacefully."

*According to IIE President Allan Goodman, “International students continue to see the U.S. as their premier study destination and our campuses continue to welcome them in record numbers, knowing that their presence in our classrooms strengthens our own understanding of global issues and improves the chances for peace and development around the globe.”*