# Why Finland become an education leader in the world

Finland has been attracting attention on global surveys of Newsweek, which ranked it number one in 2010. What’s more, Finland's national education system has been receiving particular praise, because in recent years Finnish students have been turning in some of the highest test scores in the world.[[1]](#footnote-1) It seems that Finland has become the most powerful country in education. After researching, I conclude some reasons for the phenomenon as follows.

Above all, in the matter of the educational system, the Finnish government would spend more money in it. Jeffery Sellers, a University of Southern California political scientist, found another key difference between US and Finland, Finland has much more powerful local governments than the US, and they're tasked with executing the myriad functions of the welfare system, especially the educational system[[2]](#footnote-2). There is no doubt that the government would expend more money in the development of Finnish education.

Otherwise, authorities trust schools and political parties agree on the direction of educational reforms and the school administration in Finland is based on delegation and decentralization.[[3]](#footnote-3) It means that the government has confidence in the measures of schools, and they would not intervene too much in school. In the case, schools can acquire ownership of teaching because they realize the requirements of students more than government. However in China, schools are subject to the arrangement from government in order that students would be taught a lot with socialist views no matter whether they want.

In the matter of students, Finnish students always study with fewer burdens than their peers in other countries. Finland has no standardized tests. The only exception is what's called the National Matriculation Exam, which everyone takes at the end of a voluntary upper-secondary school, roughly the equivalent of American high school.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In addition, they don’t need to pay more attention on their homework because they don't have much homework. Compare with Finland, Chinese and America students need to pay more attention on test. “Education in the United States is too much defined by testing and data,” said Pasi Sahlberg, who is a famous Finnish educator and scholar. In China, students not only need to focus on various exams from many kinds of subjects but also need to concentrate on the heavy homework burden.

Furthermore, no matter clever or not, students would be taught in the same classroom. As a Chinese student, I would tell you that the grade really plays an important role to assess students in school. Students would be divided into gifted students and ordinary students. Besides, the evaluation standard is the grade the student got. If you get a high score and rank high in the final examination, you will be changed into the special class next term, otherwise you definitely will be kept in the regular class.

However, I don’t consider that is a great measure for students. The evaluation of a good student should focus on not only the grade, but also the students’ physical and mental quality, manipulative ability, innovation capability and so on. Therefore, I think the education measure in Finland is great, because we can’t divide students into different class by measuring their scores, which is disrespectful for students.

In the matter of teacher, teachers could receive more respect in Finland. Teacher is the one of most popular professions in Finland, which can be given extensive freedom in developing their own work with high welfare.

It is necessary that the requirement of a teacher in Finland is higher than other countries’. All teachers in Finland must have a master degree,[[5]](#footnote-5) which shows the high standard of teaching. Besides, the teacher preparation institutions are highly selective owing to the requirement of high-quality teacher education. Only one of ten applicants would be accepted, based on multiple measures, including an essay, an entry test, an interview, and evidence of a high motivation to teach.[[6]](#footnote-6)

In addition to studying liberal arts subjects and the subjects they will teach, future teachers study pedagogy, theory, and conduct research about education. It is necessary for them to learn how to teach students with disabilities, and treat students with their mental health. For becoming a teacher, they need to take at least five years to practice teaching. Only then may they become teachers. What I have mentioned above show that not only the teachers but also the government take the study of education seriously.

The next reason is what I really want in China—higher education is completely free. As a student who lives in a middle-class family, the cost of higher education especially takes up a large part of the household expenses.

However, Finland views education as a basic human right, and as such, free of cost to students. Thus, graduates of higher education in Finland don’t need to pay off the student debt so that they can receive as much education as they require without any cost, because it is good for the development of students. If student need to pay for the high cost of their education, there is no doubt that they would have to be busy with quite a few part-time jobs so that they could not spend much time in their study. Otherwise, they could receive more time in study or other extracurricular activities, and save more money for their family.

To sum up, the reasons that why Finland would be the education leader in the world are various, which can be divided into the aspects of education system, teachers, and students. There is an old Chinese saying：“reject the dross and assimilate the essence.” As far as I am concerned, the education of Finland should gained extensive attention from other counties, especially China. Only when the Chinese education gains more essence from other powerful education country, the Chinese national will become stronger, more independent and creative, which is beneficial for the development of China.

1. theatlantic.com—What Americans Keep Ignoring About Finland's School Success [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kacper Pempel , The Secret to Finland's Success With Schools, Moms, Kids[N] , Reuters, JUL 11, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. cnn.com—Why Finland's schools are top-notch [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. theatlantic.com—What Americans Keep Ignoring About Finland's School Success [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NYTimes.com—education from finland [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. edutopia.org—Teacher Education in Finland [↑](#footnote-ref-6)