

Education 2030

Improving Schools: From Finland to Down Under

Knowledgehook Roundtable

25th March 2021

 [pasi_sahlberg](#)

What is the most important challenge in education that we should fix now?

Education pre-pandemic



There is a global learning crisis that amplifies educational inequalities that severely hobbles the disadvantaged youth who most need the boost that a good education can offer. – World Bank Human Development Report 2018

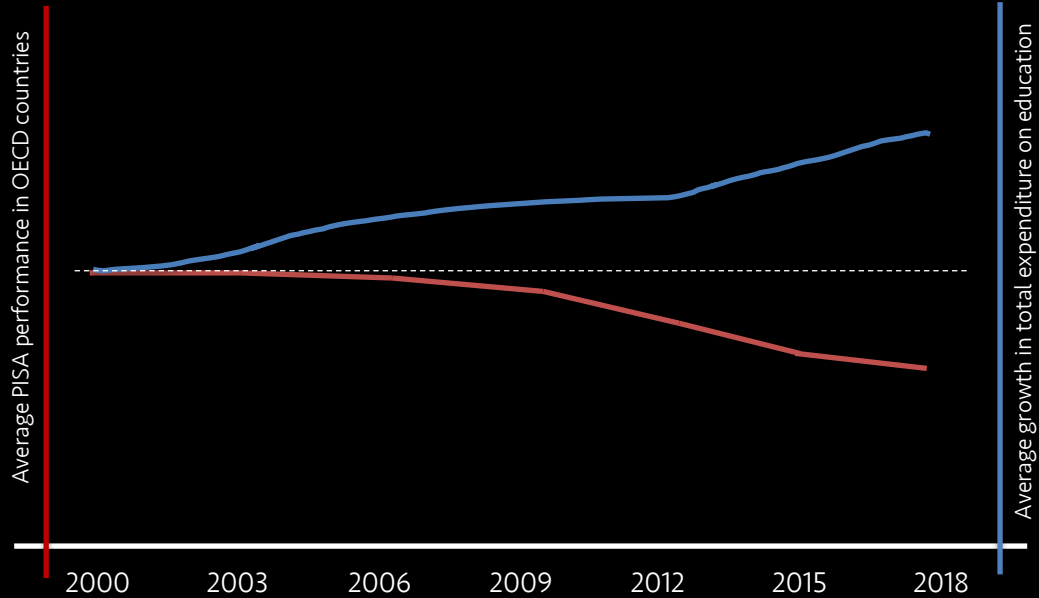


The performance differences across the OECD countries between the most socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students is equivalent to over 3 years of schooling. –PISA 2018



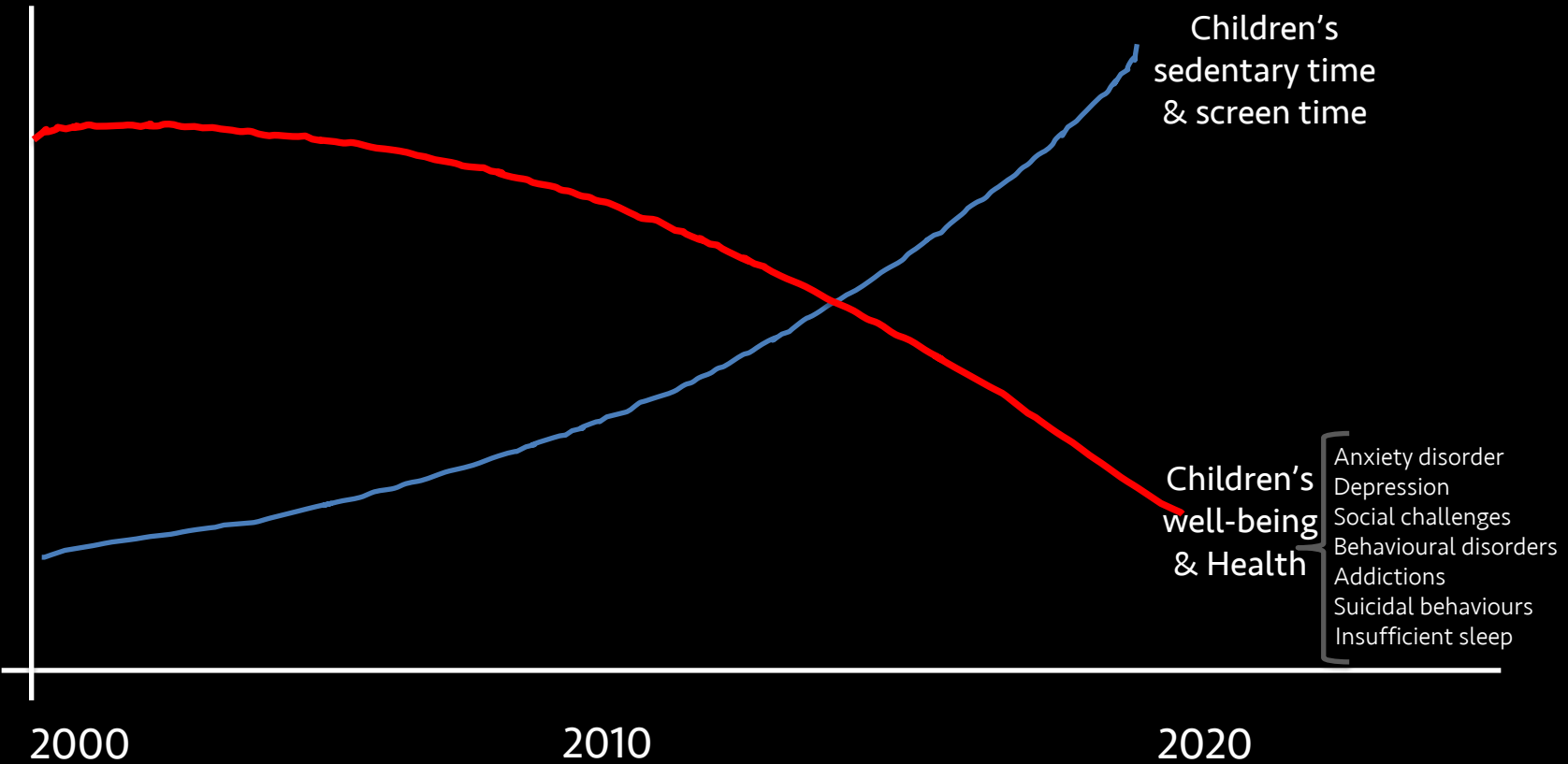
260 million children, adolescents and youth are not at school and only three quarters of 15-year-olds in middle income countries attend school, and just half of them achieve the basic level of proficiency required. – Global Education Monitoring Report 2020

Trend 1: Student learning vs. education spending

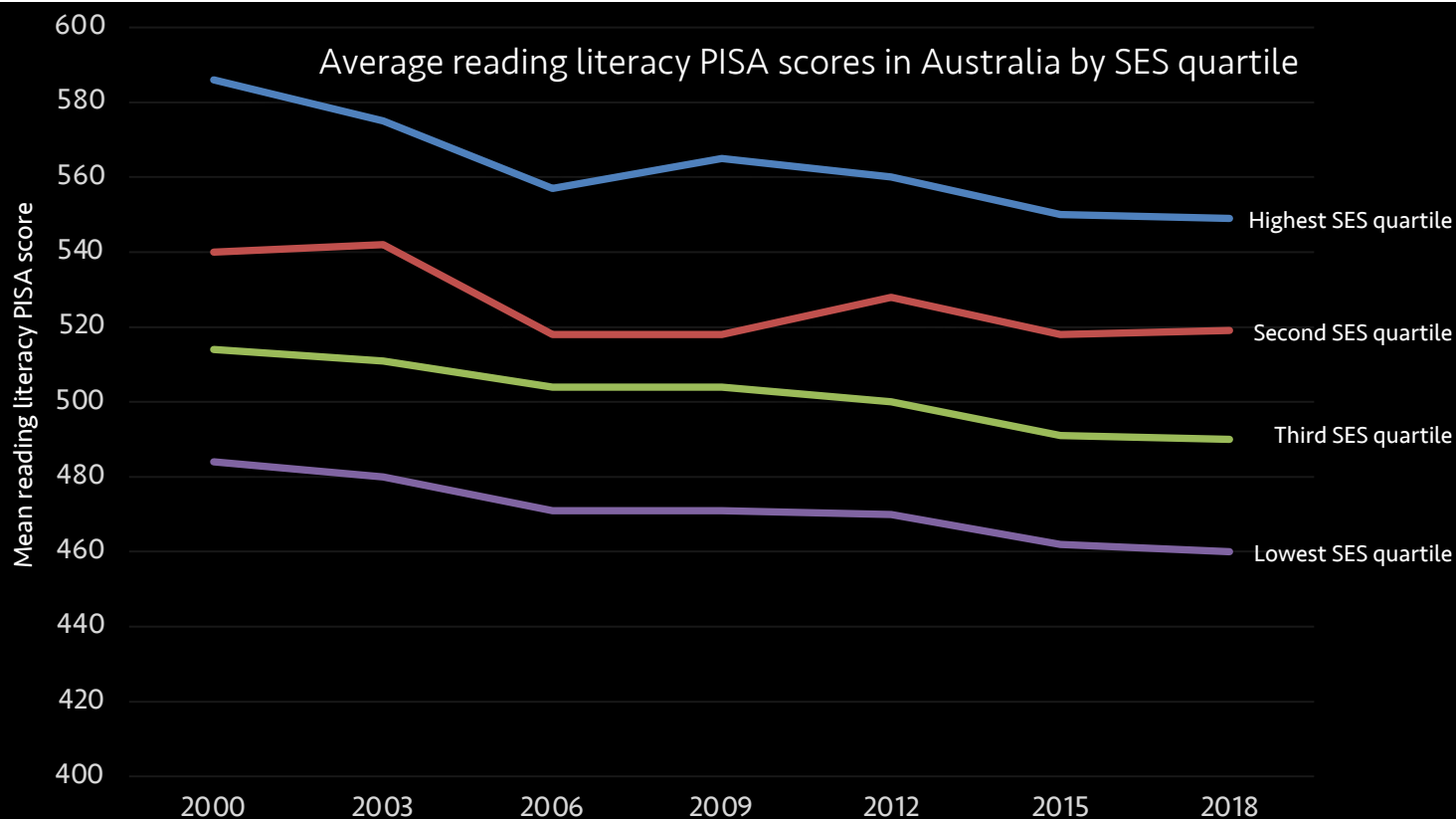


Source: OECD database (2020)

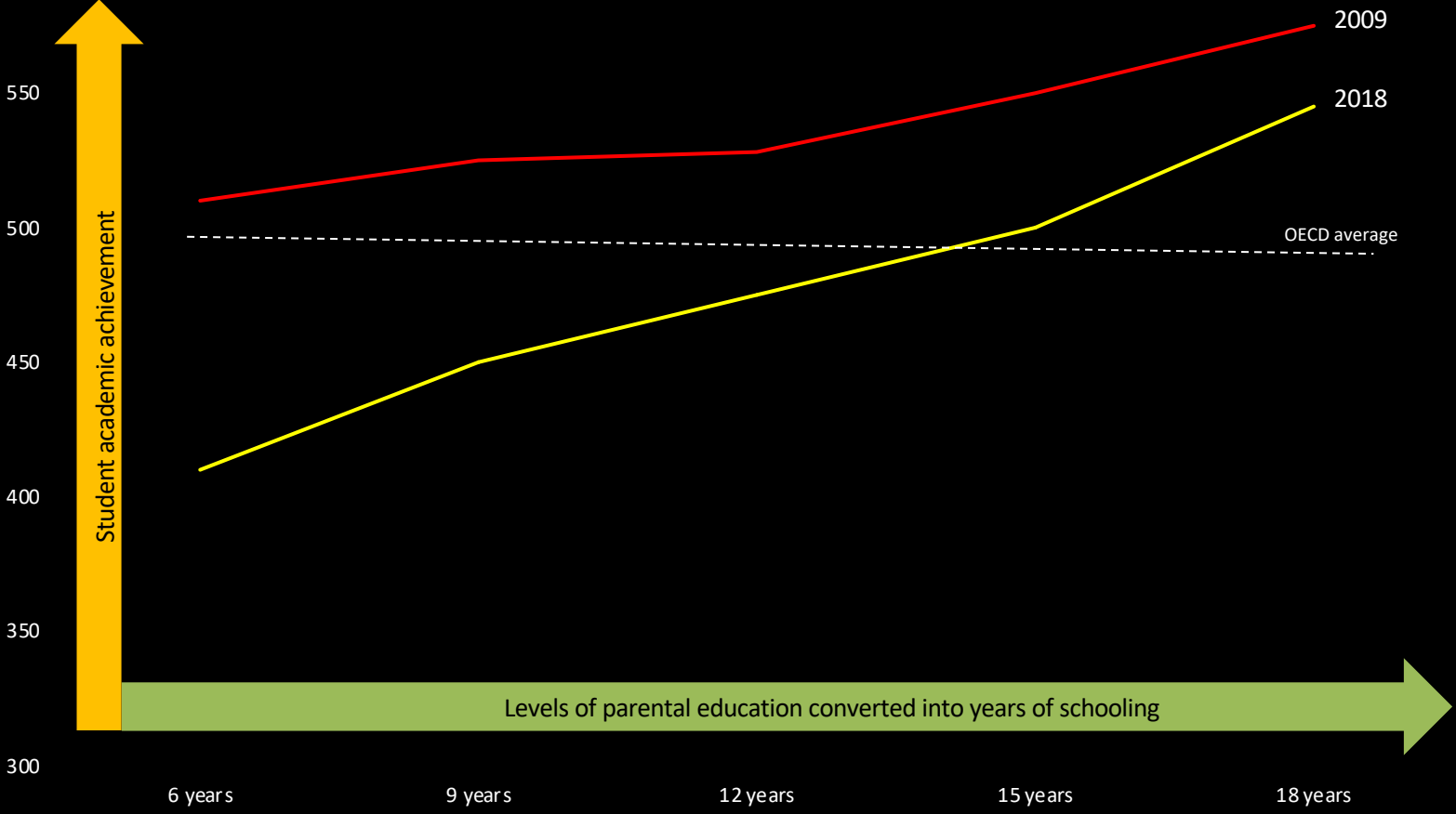
Trend 2: Student wellbeing vs. sedentary time



Trend 3: Growing inequalities

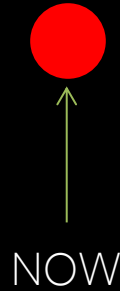


Average National PISA Score in reading, mathematics and science vis-a-vis Levels of Parental Education in Finland in 2009 and 2018



Source: Finnish Lessons 3.0 (2021)

Which way should we take now in Australia and in Finland?



Finland

System: Light administration that relies on clear professional responsibilities and trust as the key drivers. Quality through equity.

School: Professional autonomy to make key decisions regarding curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Teachers: Highly trusted profession that is collectively responsible for all aspects of teaching and learning in schools.

Australia

System: Heavy administration that is designed on test-based accountability and school choice as the key drivers. Equity through excellence.

School: Administrative autonomy but more compliance regarding teaching and learning in school through centrally mandated standards.

Teachers: Less trusted profession that is individually held accountable for teaching and learning in school.

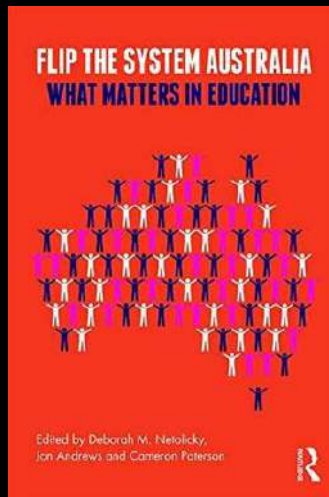
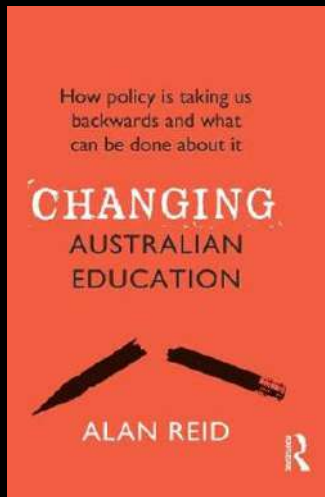
The beauty of the Finnish school system is its design. It is the system that can make miracles, not its individual parts.

The power of the Australian school system is its extraordinary schools. It performs well because of these schools even if systems' structural failure.

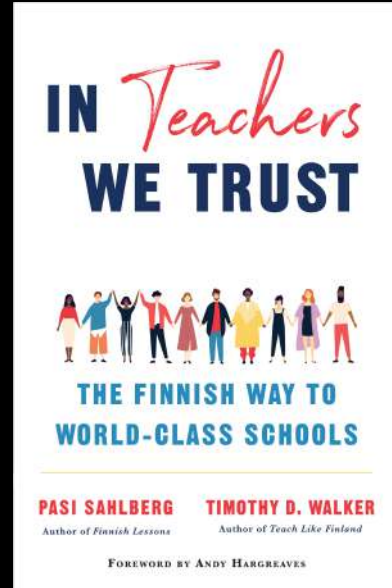
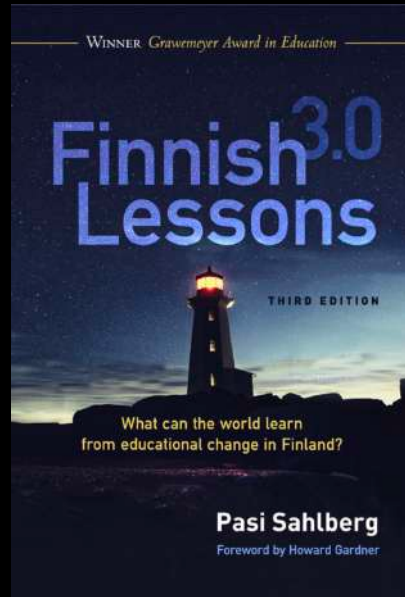
MY CONCLUSION

The pandemic is teaching us that successful education systems need to be more flexible, creative and resilient by investing in smarter professional collaboration and stronger student engagement.

The key education leadership question is not “What should we do next?” but “What should we stop doing now?”



THANK YOU!



pasi_sahlberg