

# Finnish lessons for Change Agents:

- *Past, present, and future*

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Changing Education (HY) – Travel Capstone (UoM) Lecture



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



# In this presentation I'll show how...

...**the Finnish Way** stands as a counterforce to **the Global Educational Reform Movement**, proving that collaboration, creativity, and professionalism are the true drivers of successful change in education.

# Finnish education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century...

...progressed from a hierarchical, parallel system with significant educational inequalities to a unified, comprehensive system driven by the goal of national welfare and equity through systems reforms, such as **free school meals** in the 1940s, **comprehensive school reform** in the 1960s, and increased **professionalism of teachers** since the 1980s.














































































2000



# PISA

## Programme for International Student Assessment

2000			2003			2006					
Reading literacy			Mathematics			Science					
1.		Finland	546	1.		Finland	544	1.		Finland	563
2.		Canada	534	2.		South Korea	542	2.		Canada	534
3.		New Zealand	529	3.		Netherlands	538	3.		Japan	531
4.		Australia	528	4.		Japan	534	4.		New Zealand	530
5.		Ireland	527	5.		Canada	532	5.		Australia	527
6.		South Korea	525	6.		Belgium	529	6.		Netherlands	525
7.		United Kingdom	523	7.		Switzerland	527	7.		South Korea	522
8.		Japan	522	8.		Australia	524	8.		Germany	516
9.		Sweden	516	9.		New Zealand	523	9.		United Kingdom	515
10.		Austria	507	10.		Czech Republic	516	10.		Czech Republic	513
11.		Belgium	507	11.		Iceland	515	11.		Switzerland	512
12.		Iceland	507	12.		Denmark	514	12.		Austria	511
13.		Norway	505	13.		France	511	13.		Belgium	510
14.		France	505	14.		Sweden	503	14.		Ireland	508
15.		United States	504	15.		Austria	506	15.		Hungary	504
16.		Denmark	497	16.		Germany	503	16.		Sweden	503
17.		Switzerland	494	17.		Ireland	503	17.		Poland	498
18.		Spain	493	18.		Slovakia	498	18.		Denmark	496
19.		Czech Republic	492	19.		Norway	495	19.		France	495
20.		Italy	487	20.		Luxembourg	493	20.		Iceland	491
21.		Germany	484	21.		Poland	490	21.		United States	489
22.		Hungary	480	22.		Hungary	490	22.		Slovakia	488
23.		Poland	479	23.		Spain	485	23.		Spain	488
24.		Greece	474	24.		United States	483	24.		Norway	487
25.		Portugal	470	25.		Italy	466	25.		Luxembourg	486

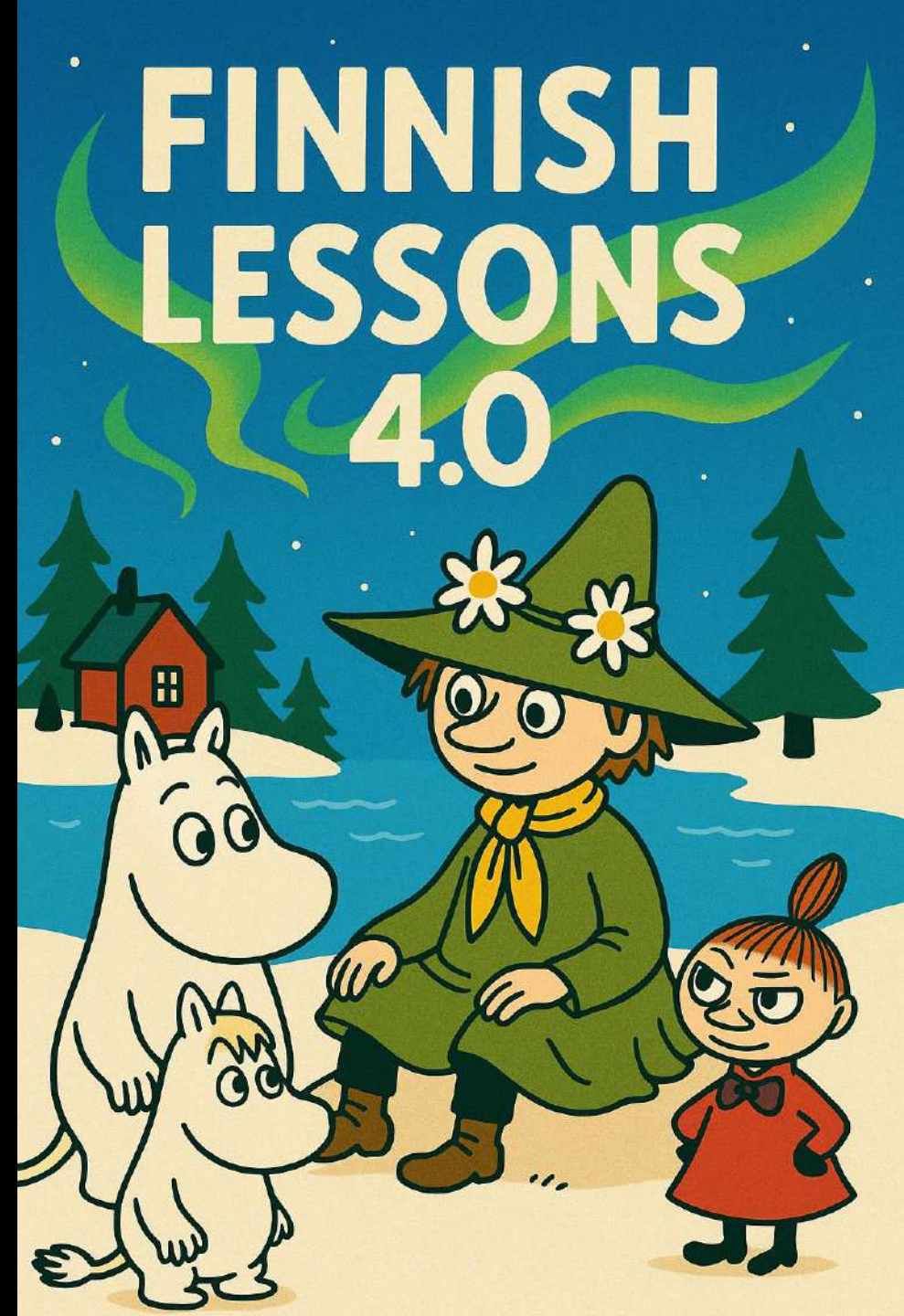
What drives excellence in education systems?

Why some education systems fall short?

# The Global Education Reform Movement...

...is a set of interconnected, market-oriented educational policies, such as **school choice**, **competition** between schools, **prescribed standards** for teaching and learning, and test-based **accountability** that have spread globally since the 1980s and been influenced by neoliberal public sector policies, economic efficiencies, and global competitiveness.

# The Finnish Way of Change

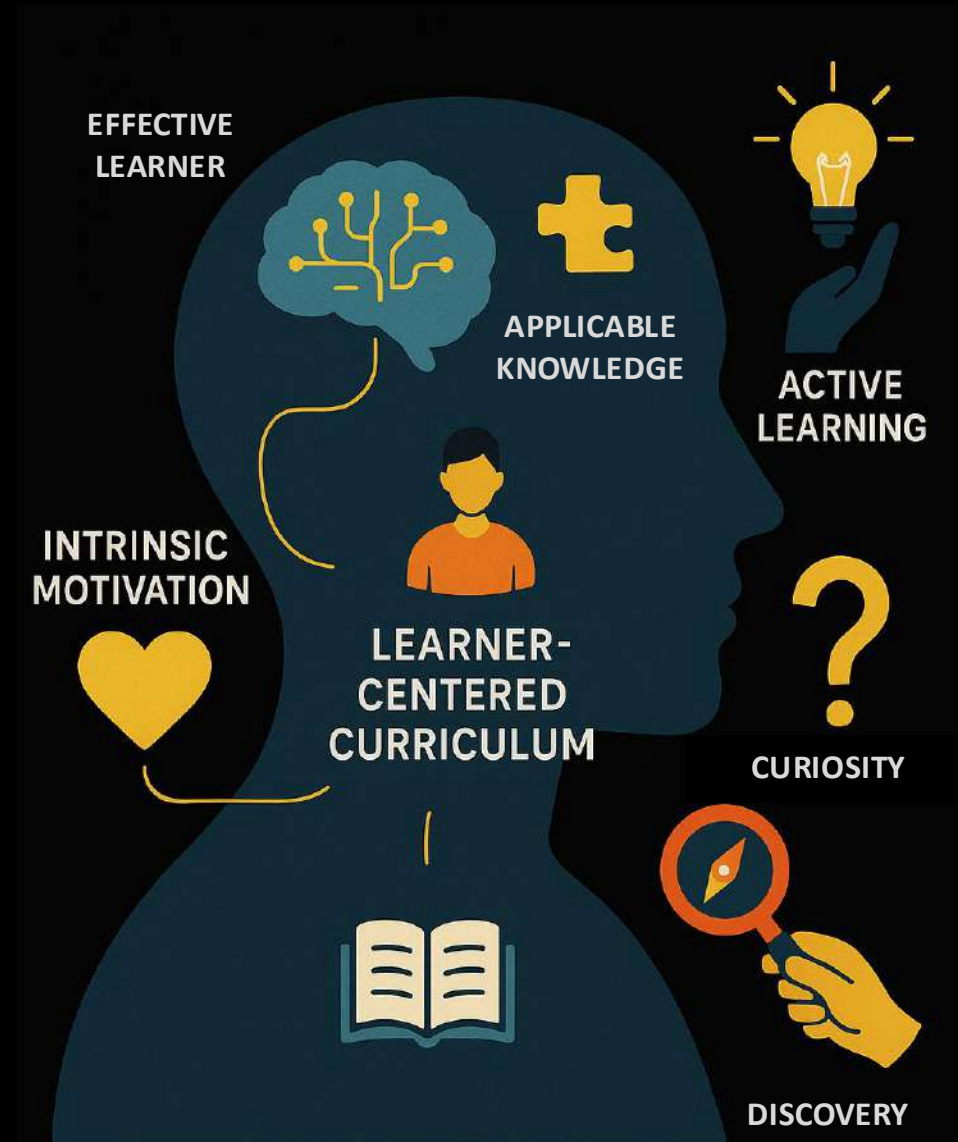




*“**The Finnish Way** is guided by a clear purpose to educate the whole child, to learn what to do with what you know, and to grow into humanity.”*

– Finnish Lessons 3.0

## 1 Humanistic view to education





*“**The Finnish Way** is built on a pedagogical imperative that teaching and learning in school are systematically tailored to the needs of each and every student, taking into account their individual differences.”*

– Finnish Lessons 3.0

## 2 Equity as a policy priority



*“**The Finnish Way** makes plain that collaboration with teachers, not confrontation, is the path to better results. The evidence is clear – and the road ahead should be, too.”*

– Finnish Lessons 3.0

## 3 Collaborative professionalism

KAREN HAMMERNESS · RAISA AHTIAINEN  
PASI SAHLBERG

# EMPOWERED EDUCATORS IN **FINLAND**



HOW HIGH-PERFORMING SYSTEMS SHAPE TEACHING QUALITY



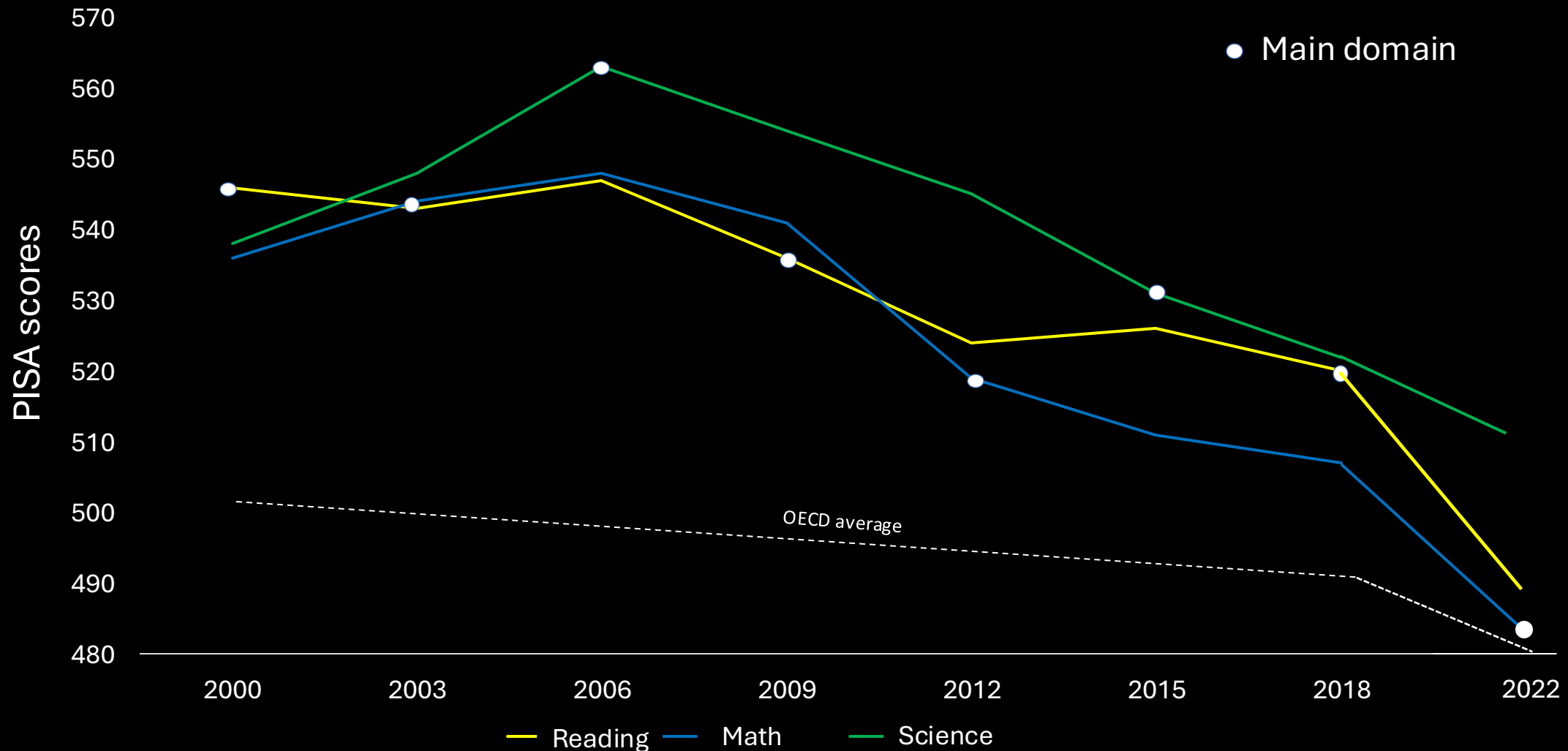
scope  
Stanford Center for  
Opportunity Policy in Education

JOSSEY-BASS™  
A Wiley Brand

# UNFINISHED BUSINESS

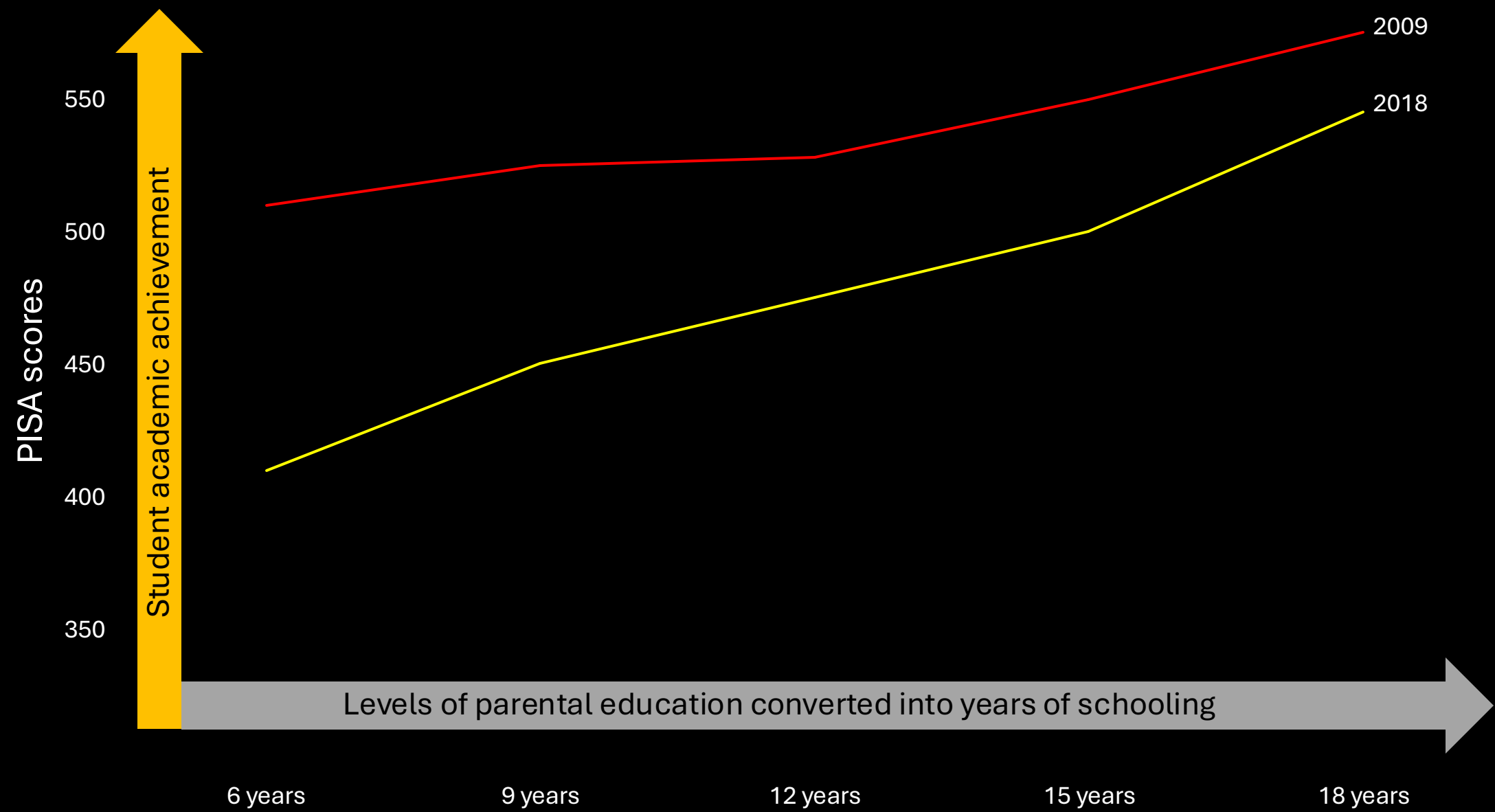


# Student performance in Finland since 2000





# Student achievement vs. level of parents' education in Finland



# 1 Nokia Syndrome

*“**Nokia** had lost much of its creative capacity to come up with new ideas when previously set dreams had been fulfilled.”*

- Finnish Lessons (2011)



## 2 Digital distraction

*“Changing behaviours of young people as a consequence of excessive time spent on **digital media and technologies** have increased the number of students with psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive challenges in schools.”*

- Finnish Lessons 3.0



### 3 Broken promises

*“**Continued budget savings** since 2010 increased school and class sizes, left more children with special needs without adequate support in school, and brought efficiency before pedagogy in educational planning.”*

- Finnish Lessons 3.0

#KOULUTUSLUPAUS  
~~LEIKKAUS~~



**Peli petetyistä lupauksista  
ja leikatuista unelmista!**

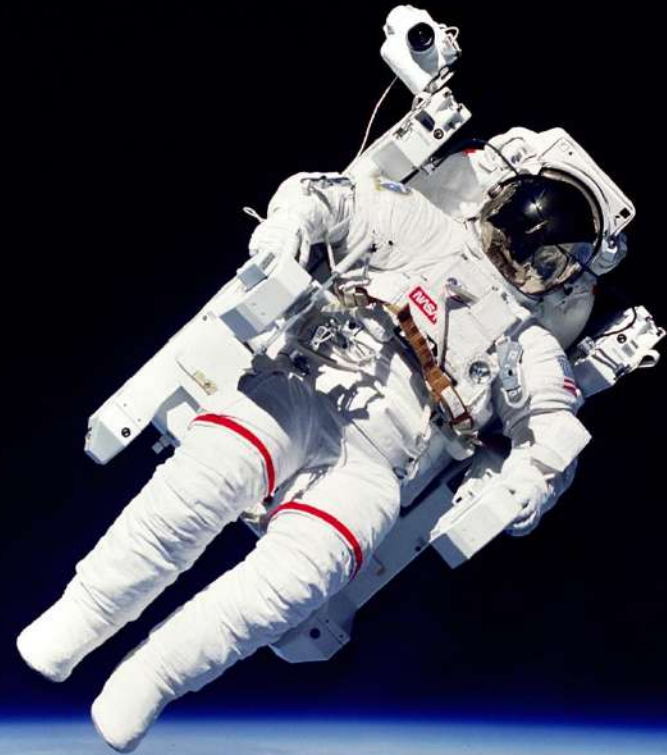


**The Next Theory of Change:**  
*“Be the best at getting better”*

***“90% of our training  
is preparing for the  
unexpected.”***

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- Butch Wilmore



**Build deeper collaboration**

**Strengthen collective  
autonomy & agency**

**Mobilise local  
innovations**

*Shared vision*

*Common purpose*

**What's next  
for Finland?**



*“From little things,  
big things grow.”*

