

# **Analysis of the 2021 National Assessment Results of the Grade 8 Students**

## **Abstract**

Romanian students take a national assessment (NA) at the end of grade 8. This consists of paper-based tests: a Romanian test, a Math test, and a mother tongue test (the latter applies only to minority students who study in their own language). The final score is crucial in the hierarchy for high school admission.

The Education Research Unit within the National Center for Policies and Evaluation in Education carried out a study on the NA 2021. The purpose of the research is to have a baseline study since 2021 marks the first cohort of students who studied according to the new key competences-based curriculum.

The research has been disseminated as an executive summary consisting of two parts: the first focused on the analysis of the students' participation in the NA to find out dropped out rate and distributions of scores taking into consideration a series of variables; the second focused on several analyses on the assessment per se: the legal instructions referring to NA, a comparative analysis of the national curriculum and the assessment selection of it, item analysis from the perspective of the expected outcomes that are stipulated in the new curriculum, item-by-item analysis of the results in order to identify the level of achievement and to consequently detect further learning needs, a scoring reliability study, a study on the test developers' views on the NA 2021, a study on the teachers' views on the NA.

The executive summary is presented in a table in order to correlate: key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The research points out various dysfunctions of the NA – from the arbitrary selections of the national curriculum, the design of the items, and the scoring guide limited to mere instructions for scorers to human mistakes in the scoring and reporting. The recommendations highlight ways to improve NA from the perspective of examples of good practice in international large-scale assessments (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS).