

Education reforms in the Republic of Belarus: legal aspects

L.A. Krasnabayeva

In this article the process of formation, institutionalization and development of the national education system is considered on the basis of regulatory legal material. The normative documents accepted in this period laid the foundation, on the one hand, the fundamentals and directions of educational policy, on the other hand, practical ways of their implementation. Education in the Republic of Belarus is the main priority of state policy. The main innovations of the Code of the Republic of Belarus «On Education» are analyzed in the article, the provisions on education, quality assurance in education are discussed. A particular emphasis is made on the issues of the upgrading of the system of teacher education. The article raises the question of the professional motivation of future graduates. The issue of professional motivation of future graduates is discussed. According to the results of the legal analysis, conclusions are drawn reflecting the current trends in legislative regulation in the field of education.

Keywords: education system, education school, educational policy, education reform, normative documents, teacher.

В данной статье на основе нормативно-правового материала рассматривается процесс становления, институционализации и развития национальной системы образования. Принятые в этот период нормативные документы заложили основу, с одной стороны, основы и направления образовательной политики, с другой – практические пути их реализации. Образование в Республике Беларусь является основным приоритетом государственной политики. В статье анализируются основные нововведения Кодекса Республики Беларусь «Об образовании», обсуждаются положения об образовании, обеспечение качества в образовании. Особое внимание уделено вопросам совершенствования системы педагогического образования. В статье поднимается вопрос о профессиональной мотивации будущих выпускников. По результатам юридического анализа сделаны выводы, отражающие современные тенденции законодательного регулирования в сфере образования.

Ключевые слова: система образования, школа образования, образовательная политика, реформа образования, нормативные документы, учитель.

Education in the Republic of Belarus is regarded as one of the main priorities in the state policy. The modern system of teacher education in the Republic of Belarus is a developing system that is open, multilayered and multifunctional. The indicator of the development of the system is the constant updating of the content and the structure of teacher education at all stages and levels. Almost half of the country's pedagogical staff is involved in the system of general secondary education. In our country there are more than 8 thousand educational institutions, in which about 430 thousand employees work. The system of education includes the system of preschool education, the system of general secondary education, the system of vocational and secondary specialized education, the system of higher education, the system of postgraduate education, the system of additional adult education, the system of additional education for children and youth, and a special education system [1].

The development of the national system of education and upbringing is based on the following basic principles: the priority of universal values; national, cultural and scientific basis; orientation to the world level of education; humanism; connection to the public practice; ecological orientation; continuity and connectedness; the unity of teaching, spiritual and physical education; democracy; environmental approach; encouragement of talent and education; compulsory basic education.

All these principles were established under the framework of the reform of the general school education, conditioned predominantly by the transformation of the social and economic structure of society, the turn to a market economy and changes in the political sphere of Belarusian society.

The process of reforming the education system in the Republic of Belarus began in 1998. The blueprint for the reform of the general educational school system in the Republic of Belarus and the Program for its implementation were developed and approved, the following points were deter-

mined: the content of 12 main stages, organizational, managerial and resource support of the reform, the leading directions of the development of the levels of general education. In the process of the reform, a transition to the education of children from the age of six was carried out. Alongside the structural reorganization of the school system, a new system for assessing students' knowledge was introduced (introduction of the 10-point assessment of knowledge); centralized testing at the end of school, as well as the planned transition to 12-year training [2].

However, at the official level, the reform of school education was found to be ineffective and completely suspended. In 2008, the Decree No. 15 by the President of the Republic of Belarus «On Certain Issues of General Secondary Education» in order to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens to obtain general secondary education that meets the current conditions of the socioeconomic development of the Republic of Belarus has established that the period for obtaining general secondary education is 11 years.

These transformations did not include significant reforms in teacher education aimed directly at the training of schoolteachers and improving pedagogical qualifications. Nevertheless, they occurred.

The main directions of modernization have affected the organization, structure and the content of pedagogical education, namely the transition from the departmental system of education to the university system; the creation of institutes for further training, research centers at universities, the introduction of a multi-level training system; the emergence of new industries (andragogy, valeology, etc.) and the areas of pedagogical knowledge (media education, multicultural education, gender pedagogy, etc.), the development and implementation of new educational standards [3].

However, as practice has shown, such a transformation of pedagogical education was not enough. The problems in the work of teachers are evidenced, for example, by the fact that a significant number of students are forced to get tutors for admission to higher education institutions (for example, in 2016, 30 % of school leavers attended classes with tutors) [4]. It shows that school education is not enough for most school leavers. Currently, the normative legal basis for the development of teacher education is: the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2020 [5], the Concept of the Development of Teacher Education for 2015–2020 in the Republic of Belarus [6], the State Program «Education and Youth Policy» for 2016–2020 [7], the Concept of Formation and Development of Innovation-Industrial Clusters in the Republic of Belarus [8]; Conceptual approaches to the development of the education system of the Republic of Belarus up to 2020 and for the future up to 2030 [9].

The prospects for the development of the education system in the upcoming five-year period will depend on the degree of intensity of the economic development of the country, the possibility of finding additional resources to ensure the qualitative growth of the national education system, the strategy for action to solve the tasks set for the education system, to reach at least 6 % of the gross domestic product funding target for education. It is possible to say that the sphere of pedagogical education, as well as education in general, needs further reform. The main tasks of transformations in the sphere of general secondary education are:

1. The creation of an independent quality assessment system for general secondary education;
2. The development of pre-vocational training and vocational training of students (including the sixth school day);
3. The Introduction of profile education in the third stage of general secondary education;
4. The active use of information and communication technologies in the educational process;
5. Increasing of the qualification level of teachers.

In addition, the mechanism for implementing the set tasks until 2020 includes participation in the International System for Assessing the Quality of General Secondary Education PISA [9].

While considering the pedagogical education itself, one of the steps of the education reform is the formation of new competencies for future teachers. At present, the educational standards of 2013 stipulate the formation of three groups of competences for the future specialists in the field of education: academic ones, including knowledge, skills in the studied subjects and the ability to

learn; social-personal, including cultural-value orientations, the knowledge of the ideological, moral values of society and the state and the ability to follow them; professional, including the ability to solve problems, develop plans and ensure their implementation in the chosen field of professional activity.

The reform consists in the fact that the graduates of pedagogical specialties of higher education institutions will also need to have information and communication skills: to have a methodology for searching for new information, ideas, etc., a methodology for analyzing and adapting knowledge to their professional needs; to be able to transform information into specific knowledge; form the information culture of students, etc. Moreover, they will need project competencies allowing the graduates to consciously and independently plan professional activities, meaningfully build a professional career, etc. A modern teacher will need to be able to work with different categories of children and their parents: talented and gifted children; orphans and children left without parental care; with children with disabilities and children with special psychophysical development; children who find themselves in socially dangerous conditions; prone to alcohol or narcotic and psychotropic substances; with deviant behavior; with cyber dependency; as well as with their families, including disadvantaged; to act confidently in a context of inclusive education; own technologies of pedagogical support, mediation, tutoring [7].

Among the main priorities of the state educational policy is the development of an inclusive approach to education that will ensure the realization of the citizens' right to receive quality education and social integration, which is an important factor in the sustainable development of society [10].

The State Program for the Development of Special Education in the Republic of Belarus for 2012–2016 [11] includes measures to improve the training of teaching staff. On September 1, 2016 on the basis of the Belarusian Pedagogical University named after Tank the Institute of Inclusive Education was opened. The priority directions of its activity are the development of the system of training of teachers capable of implementing various forms of education of persons with special educational needs at different levels of education (organization of the educational process at the initial stage of higher professional education, development and implementation of master's programs, training of highly qualified educational workers). The urgency of creating the Institute of Inclusive Education is primarily conditioned by the accession of the Republic of Belarus to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted at the UN in 2006, which proclaimed the obligation of the States parties to the Convention to ensure inclusive education at all level in a lifetime. At the moment, the system of general secondary education in the Republic of Belarus is as follows. In the academic year 2017/2018, 3,067 general secondary schools operated in the Republic of Belarus, including 1,580 secondary schools, 208 gymnasiums and boarding schools, 29 lyceums (including specialized ones), 885 educational pedagogical complexes and 190 special education institutions. Almost all schools are public. The last private gymnasium was closed in 2011. The share of children who studied in the Belarusian language in 2005/06 – 2012/13 school years decreased from 23,3% to 16,6 % (from 280.2 to 150.7 thousand), in Russian – increased from 76,7 % to 83,3 % (change from 922,9 thousand to 757.7 thousand). In addition, in the 2012/13 academic year, 670 children were taught in Polish and 57 in Lithuanian.

For comparison: in 2017/18 school year, in the 51 higher educational institutions of the Republic of Belarus 284,300 students study (159,800 on daytime education, 1,300 at night, and 123,200 at correspondence courses. more than 19 thousand foreign citizens study in higher education, in Belarus there are 330 students of institutions of higher education per 10 thousand people, which corresponds to the level of European countries.

The implementation of conceptual approaches in the sphere of education will require the adjustment of the Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus, which is the main legislative act regulating social relations in the sphere of education, changes and additions to the Decrees of the President of the Republic of Belarus, adoption of new Resolutions of the Council of Ministers. It is also necessary to develop a plan of measures aimed at implementing the provisions of the Code. It is assumed that the reform of pedagogical education and the implementation of conceptual approaches will allow forming a national model of competitive multilevel education.

References

1. Education Code of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource] : January 13, 2011, № 243-3 : adopted by the House of Representatives on December 2, 2010 : approved by the Council of the Republic on December 22, 2010. – Access mode : <http://www.pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=hk1100243>. – Access date : 04.09.2018.
2. Tasks, directions and results of the reformation of the Belarusian school [Electronic resource]. – Access mode : <http://www.zavtrasessiya.com/index.pl?act>. – Access date : 05.16.2018.
3. Kapranova, V.A. Educational reforms: domestic and foreign experience: monograph / V.A. Kapranova. – Minsk : BSPU, 2007. – 162 p. (in Russian)
4. Listopadov, V. Education reform: When Will the Belarusian School Finish the Stalin Decade? [Electronic resource] / V. Listopadov. – Access mode: <https://news.tut.by/society/492550.html>. – Access date : 05.15.2018. (in Russian)
5. On the development of the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2020: approved. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of June 27, 2003, № 863 // National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus. – 2003. – № 74. – 5/12698.
6. About the State Innovative Development Program of the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020: approved. by Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of January 31, 2017, № 31 // National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus. – 2017. – 1/16888.
7. On approval of the Concept for the development of pedagogical education for 2015–2020 [Electronic resource]: approved. Order of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus of February 25, 2015, № 156. – Access mode : http://etalonline.by/?type=text®num=u615e2727#load_text_none_10_3. – Access date : 05.15.2018.
8. On approval of the Concept of formation and development of innovation-industrial clusters in the Republic of Belarus and measures for its implementation: approved. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of January 16, 2014, № 27 // National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus. – 2014. – 5/38322.
9. Conceptual approaches to the development of the education system of the Republic of Belarus until 2020 and for the future until 2030 [Electronic resource]: approved Order of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus of November 29, 2017, № 742. – Access mode : <http://edu.gov.by/sistema.../respublikanskyi>. – Access date : 04.24.2018.
10. On approval of the Concept of development of inclusive education for persons with peculiar psychophysical development in the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]: approved. Order of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus of July 22, 2015, № 608. – Access mode : <http://edu.gov.by/sistema.../respublikanskyi>. – Access date : 04.24.2018.
11. On approval of the State program for the development of special education in the Republic of Belarus for 2012–2016: approved. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of March 7, 2012, № 210 // National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus. – 2012 – № 32. – 5/35382.