

Comparing elephants and bananas in educational achievements: what do data reveal?



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The background

- **Low literacy** has many consequences on both individual and societal level.
- **Functional literacy** is the skills needed to cope with the circumstances of life
- **Widespread functional illiteracy** makes a society dysfunctional.
- **Functional illiteracy** is measured by large-scale, international assessments .
- Results are **supposed to be comparable** and completing to inform reforms in education.

The problem

- An international test (PISA) concludes a **large proportion of functionally illiterate students** in Bulgaria.
- The national assessment **shows different results.**
- The **two are not comparable** and it remains unclear what reforms are needed and how to implement them.

PISA reading literacy framework

PISA reading literacy concept: a broader set of competencies that allows readers to engage with written information.

PISA assesses:

- text – the diversity of the reading materials.
- cognitive processes – the cognitive approach that shows how the reader interacts with the text.
- reading scripts – the diversity of reading situations or purposes.

PISA results in reading

(2018)

average
score of the
**Bulgarian
students**
420 points

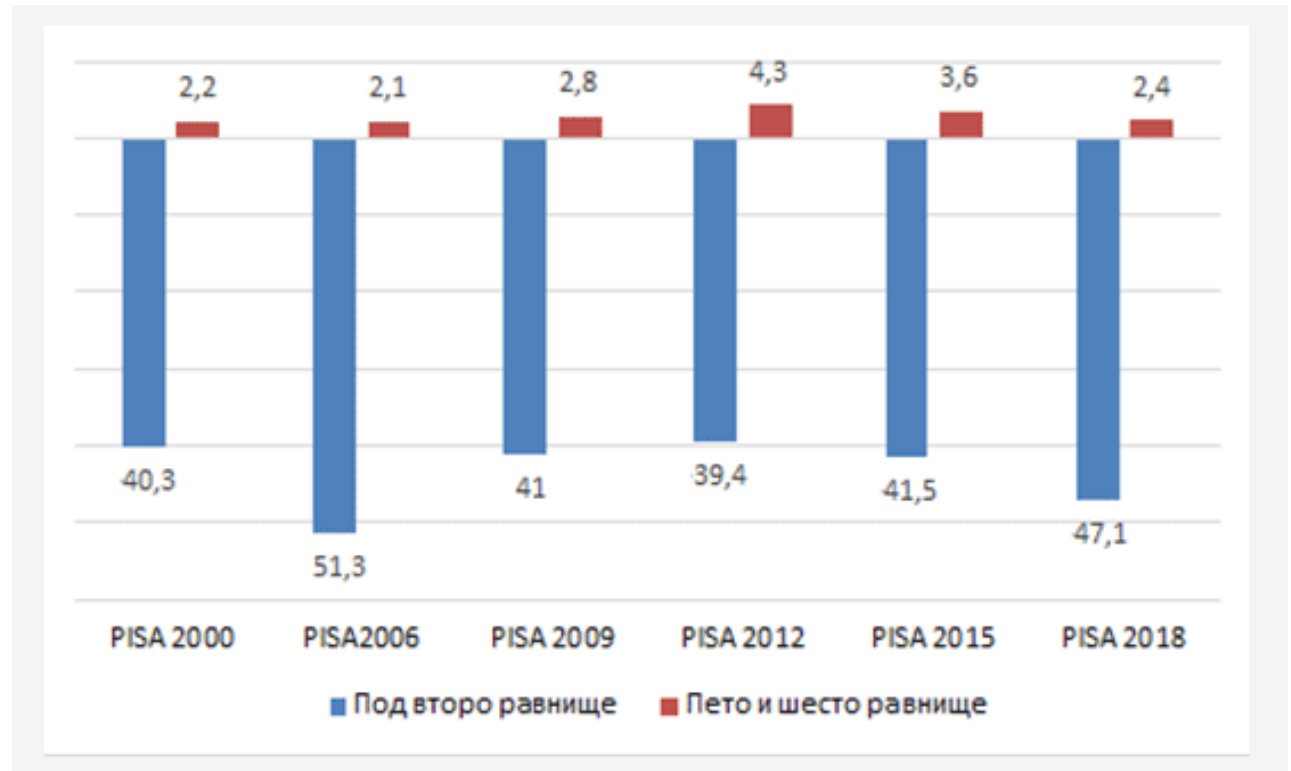
versus

average
**OECD
countries'**
score
487 points

- This result places Bulgaria last among the EU and EEA member states.
- After 2012 the average scores of the Bulgarian students steadily deteriorating.

PISA results in reading

- * Bulgarian students **below the critical level 2** – the functional literacy threshold - 47.1%
- * Students with results at the **highest levels 5 and 6** – 2.4%



National testing

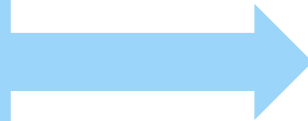
Purpose: to be used at system and school level to reform the school curricula, plans and content, readjust teaching methods to increase the quality of education.

Status:

- low quality data
- numerous omissions and inconsistencies
- not fit for processing

National results

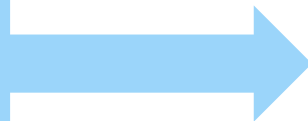
**Announced average
score in BLL (2015)**
58.68/100



58.68/100

equal to a **good-very good** score

**Calculated
average score**



34.10/100

Comparison

Year	PISA	NEA
2018	420/487	51.98/100
2015	432/493	34.10/100

Year 2018:

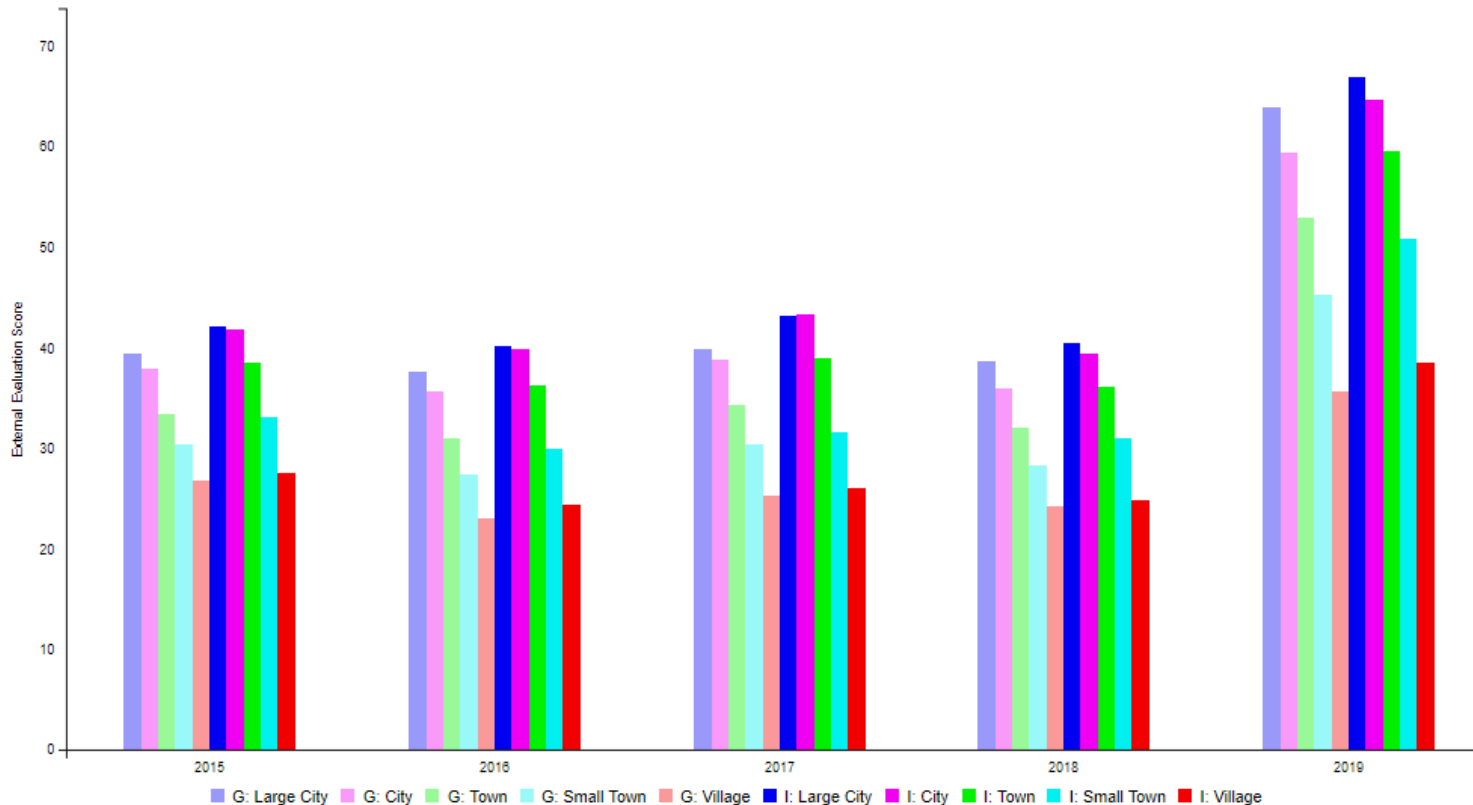
- **NEA** average score of **51.98 points** - a good result in the Bulgarian interpretation
- **PISA** average score of **420 points** means functional illiteracy

Performance of innovative schools

by location size (PISA):

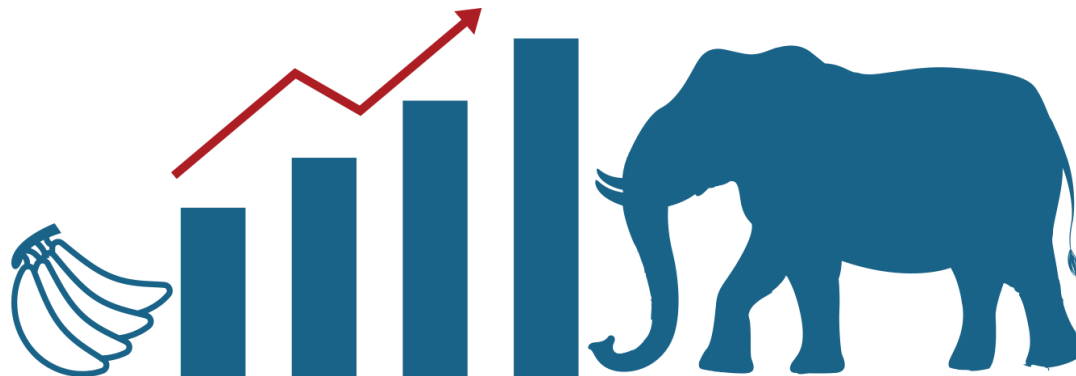
Bulgarian language and literature 2015-2019

National external evaluation after 7-th grade

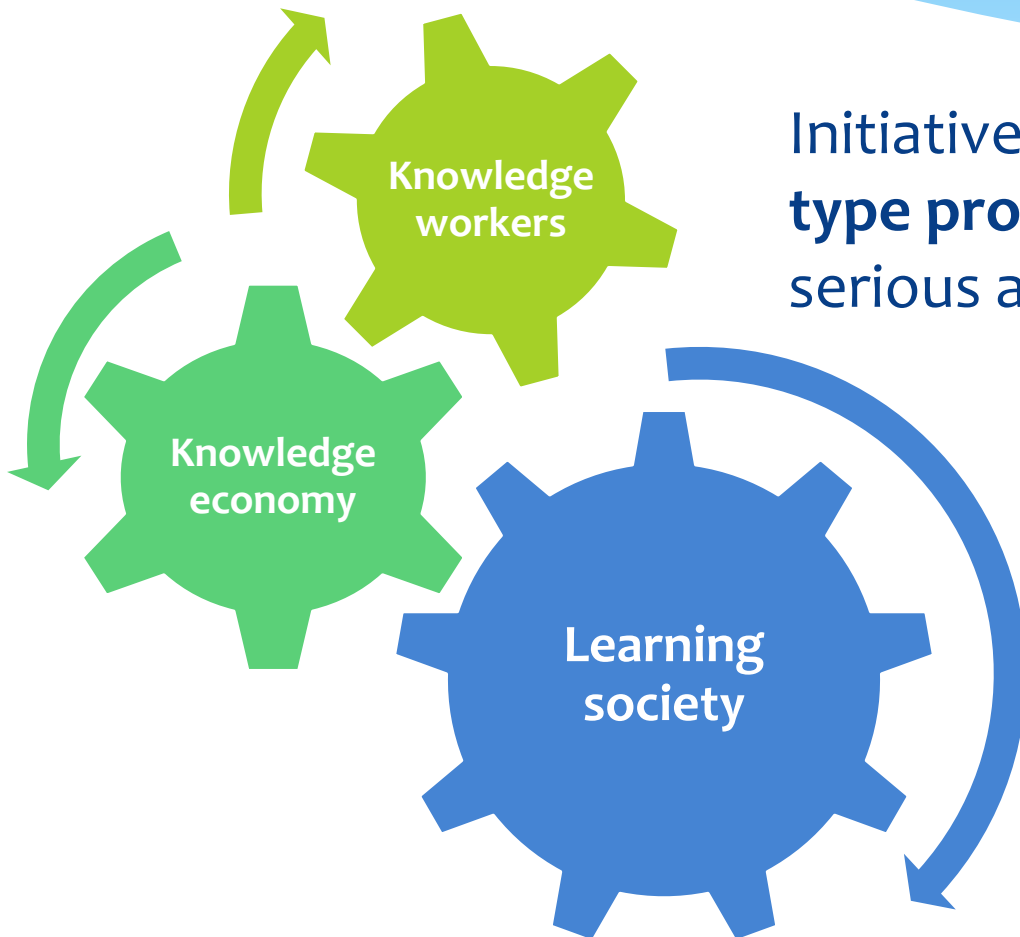


Conclusions

- The two sets of scores are **incomparable** - large discrepancy in the testing method and content of the learning achievements.
- National results grading system **does not correspond to the prevailing standards internationally** and cannot provide a reasonable level of assurance that the measurement is adequate.



Learning society



Initiatives of the “**innovative school**” type **prove effective** and need serious attention.



<http://data.cii.gateway.bg/>