

Press Release, Friday, October 14 2022

AcadeMedia comments on the incoming government's agreement concerning schools

In relation to the agreement made by the incoming government (Tidö Agreement), AcadeMedia submits the following comment:

- We welcome many of the proposals in the Tidö Agreement and look forward to the proposals being investigated and implemented. Many of the proposals AcadeMedia has developed over the years are included here, says AcadeMedia's CEO Marcus Strömberg.
- We think it is very good that the work that we have called the Independent school reform 2.0, is now actually getting underway. In the proposals, there are very good opportunities to develop long-term rules for the sector and to create conditions for the independent schools to continue being an important part of developing the school system.
- The proposal to limit dividend during the first years only concern new openings and new acquisitions. The proposal thus does not concern the existing operations of AcadeMedia or other independent actors. Historically, AcadeMedia has contributed to the creation of new educational places through the opening of new schools. These units generally run at a loss in the first years, which is why the proposal is not expected to affect AcadeMedia's plans to continue contributing to the creation of new educational places.
- The focus in the Tidö Agreement when it comes to raising the pupils' results, a study-friendly environment in school, the right to choose a school, raise the status of the teaching profession and improve the teachers' working conditions are things that will improve equality and raise the quality in Swedish schools, says Marcus Strömberg.

The Tidö agreement contains the following proposals concerning a new independent school law and the queue system

Supplementary directives to the existing investigation are drawn up regarding:

- *Tightened ownership checks when starting or buying/taking over a school. The school company and its owners must have such stable finances, including equity, that there is little risk of the company ending up insolvent. Requirements are introduced for long-term ownership for at least owners with a controlling influence over the school. The investigation must take into account conditions that make it possible for non-profit organisations to start and to run independent schools with a long-term perspective.*
- *Financial guarantees. Clearer protection against students' schooling being at risk if the principal organizer of the school ends up in financial difficulties, for example through demands for a bank guarantee.*
- *Refund of school vouchers in case of, among other things crime. New legislation for repayment of school vouchers when a representative of a school principal organizer has been convicted of financial or other serious crime, or when it appears that the school voucher is used to finance other activities in addition to school activities.*
- *Dividends for new independent schools. Dividends must not be paid in the first years after a school is started or bought by a new owner. In order to achieve this, during the period in question, the regulations may need to take into account the conditions of various principal organizers, for example in terms of company structure. The purpose is to guarantee long-*



term ownership and that whoever starts or acquires an independent school must have financial strength. In order to achieve this, an inquiry will be initiated.

- *Sanction ladder. A sanction ladder with increasing fines and penalty fees, limitation on dividends in the event of quality deficiencies in relation to transparent quality standards, as well as a change of management or compulsory administration will be introduced.*
- *Increased transparency. Better transparency is needed in independent schools, both legally, financially and pedagogically. Since the principle of publicity is not suitable for smaller independent schools, it should be clarified in a principle of transparency that applies to independent schools and becomes the equivalent of the principle of publicity for municipal principal organizers.*
- *Compulsory school choice with better information and shorter allowed queuing. The system for how families get to choose school and how pupils are admitted will be reformed. There is a need for a regulatory framework for a school choice that is based on common and mandatory school choice, better information for parents and students and reasonable and predictable admission criteria. For independent schools, queue time should be included as a possible selection basis. The longest possible queue time must be shortened significantly compared to today.*

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About AcadeMedia

AcadeMedia creates opportunities for people to develop. The 18,800 employees at our 700 preschools, compulsory schools, upper secondary schools and adult education centres share a common focus on quality and development. Our 192,500 children and students are provided with a high quality education, giving them the best conditions to attain both learning objectives and their full potential as individuals.

AcadeMedia is Northern Europe's largest education company, with locations/facilities/presence in Sweden, Norway, Germany, and Netherlands. Our size gives us the capacity to be a robust, long term partner to the communities we serve. More information about AcadeMedia is available on www.academedia.se.

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