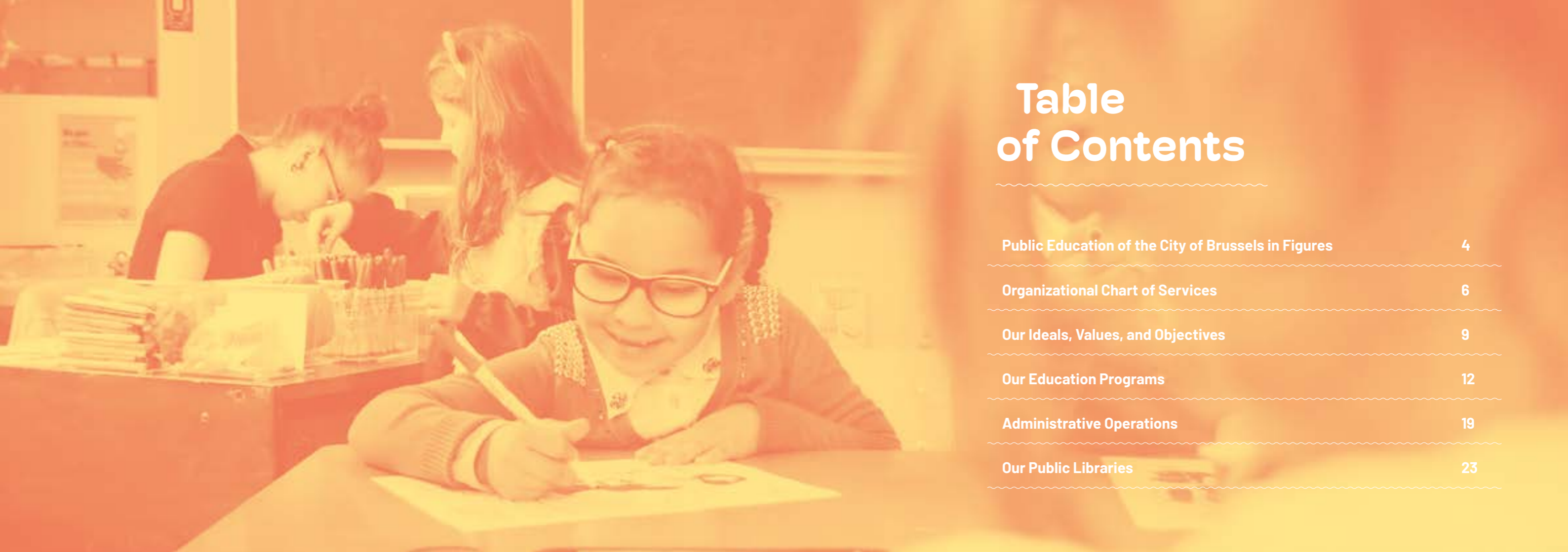




# Public Education of the City of Brussels

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Missions • Education • Administrative Functioning



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# Public Education of the City of Brussels in Figures

In addition to an operating budget of **€12,900,000**, the Public Education of the City of Brussels has an investment budget of **€47,500,000** (of which **€11,000,000** is subsidized) for the maintenance and renewal of

its extensive real estate and furniture portfolio. Additionally, there is an IT budget allocated to i-City, the City of Brussels' IT partner, which amounted to **€8,000,000** in 2024. Non-subsidized personnel costs

amount to **€46,500,000**. Salaries for subsidized staff, whose payment is covered by the federal entities, total **€195,000,000**.



## €106.9 million annual budget

Of which **€47.5 million** is for investment and **€8 million** is for the IT budget.



## Nearly 100 schools

offering preschool, primary, secondary, special education, higher education, social promotion, and part-time artistic programs.



## Nearly 6000 staff members

forming our educational, administrative, maintenance, healthcare, advisory, and support teams.



## 17 libraries

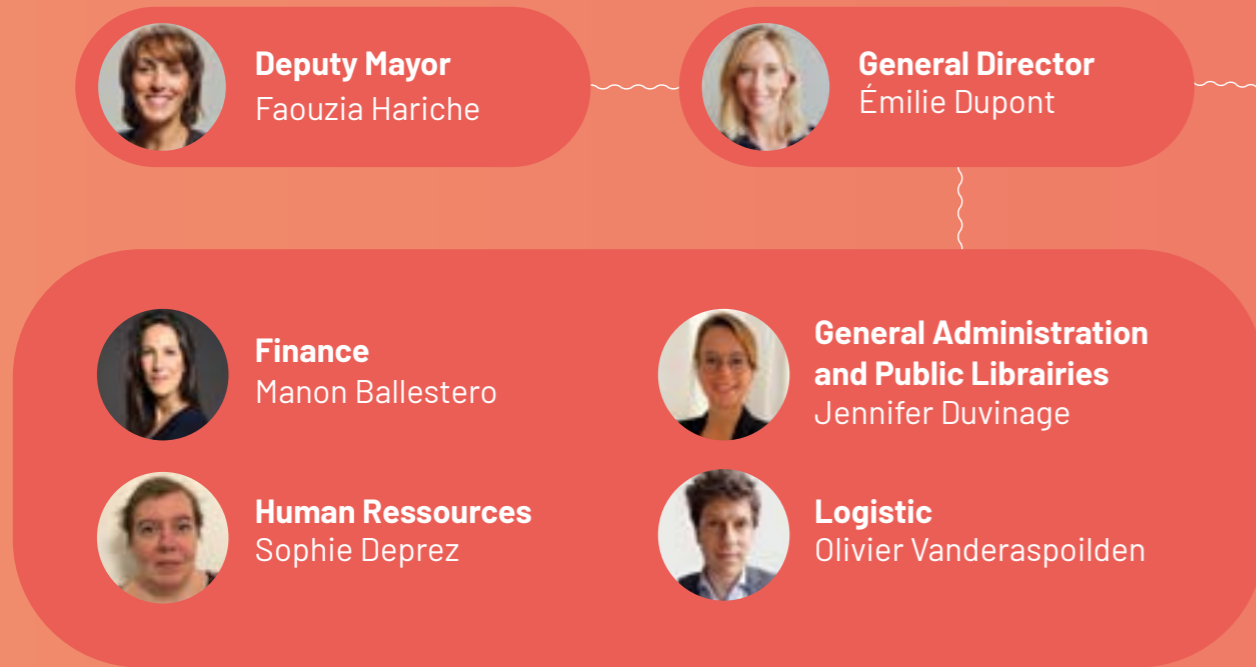
General and specialized, including a comic book library and a game library.



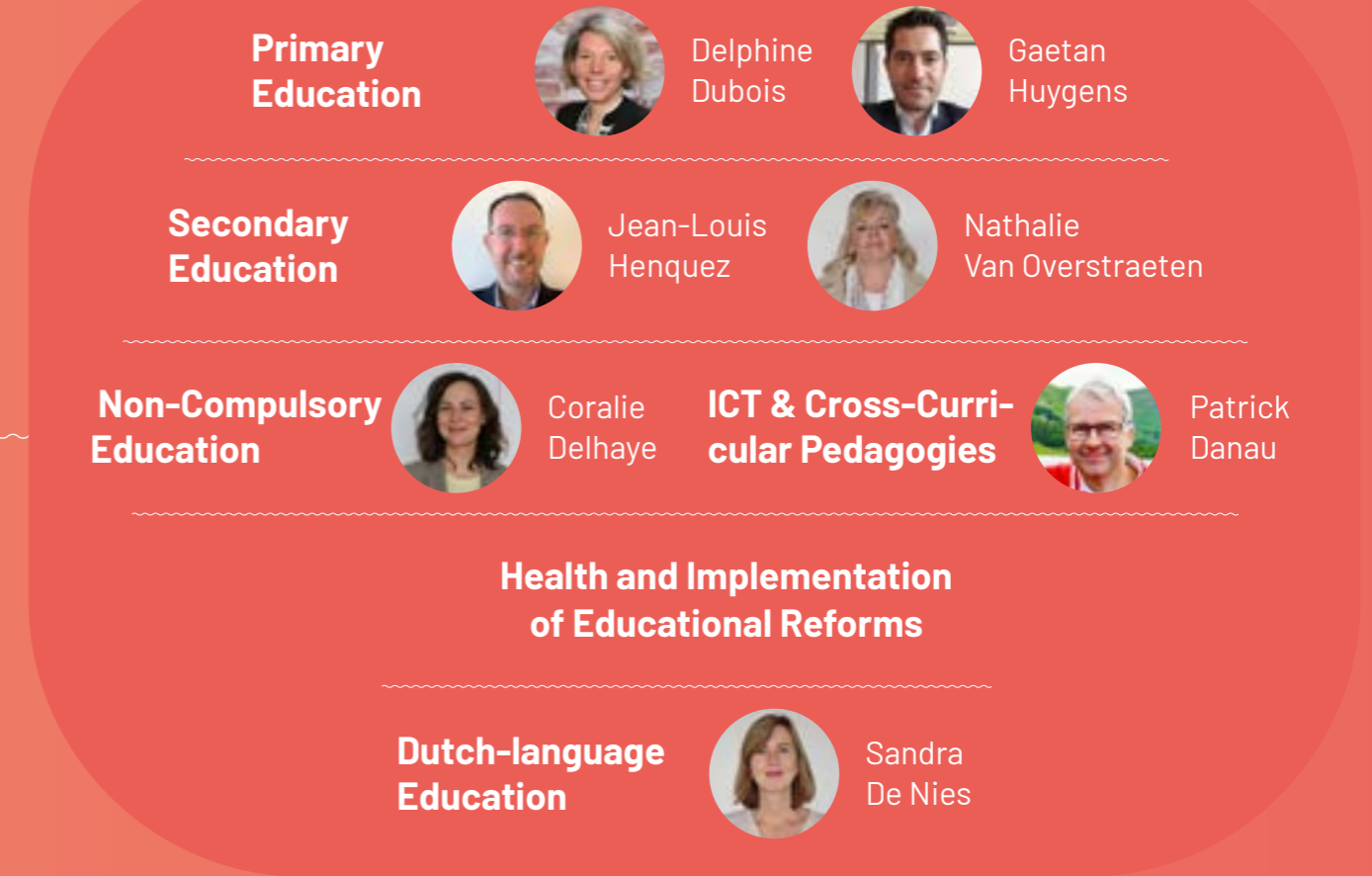
## 8 healthcare institutions

including 5 psycho-medical-social centers, a Health Promotion in Schools center, a department that focuses solely on mainstream education, and a mental health service that also serves the population residing in the City of Brussels.

# Organizational Chart of Services



## Pedagogical Inspection



# Our Ideals, Values, and Objectives

As a bilingual autonomous educational authority, the second largest in terms of schools in the country, the City of Brussels extends its educational action to **preschool, primary, secondary, higher, part-time artistic secondary education, and social promotion.**

The education provided by the City is part of the publicly subsidized official network and is non-denominational. Through its daily action with **more than 35,000 learners**, the City of Brussels acknowledges the essential role of education in building a democratic, fair, supportive, and respectful society for all. The City believes that schools must **shape individuals**

**who are the architects of their own development and of a just, open, and harmonious society.**

To carry out this societal project, the City offers an education based on the founding principles of a democratic society. In this context, the City of Brussels ensures every child's fundamental right to education and learning. To achieve this, the City also focuses on developing pedagogical methods and projects aimed at continuously adapting its education to the evolving needs and demands of an ever-changing society: particular attention is thus given to language learning, sustainable development, and the use of new technologies.

**The City of Brussels guarantees equality for all in access to its education, ensuring equal access** to enrollment based on the principles of fairness, transparency, and objectivity, promoting equal opportunities and success for as many students as possible within its schools, and minimizing the financial burden on parents. Although access to education is free, school-related costs represent a significant portion of family budgets, and the City seeks to reduce this burden through concrete actions (free school kits, swimming lessons, daycare, extracurricular activities, and hot meals).

These goals cannot be realized without highly qualified staff, supported by an extensive offer through continuous training, the implementation of new frameworks and educational programs, as well as through a series of actions aimed at fostering strong involvement

of the educational teams in relation to the challenges of their missions.

The goal is also to offer a high-quality school environment. This focus is reflected through **numerous renovation and construction projects for schools, with a sustainable perspective aimed at promoting the well-being of students and school staff members.** Special attention has been given to the renovation of playgrounds and restrooms, as well as the establishment of libraries within classrooms and the creation of spaces for children with specific needs.

To measure its actions and achieve the ambitions of the majority, the Department has implemented a Strategic Plan focused on **three main areas of action (pedagogy, personnel, and infrastructure—both furniture and buildings)** through

several major initiatives: ensuring success for all, developing participatory education adapted to the needs of society, strengthening education tailored to the needs of each individual and accessible to all, promoting sustainable development, expanding the use of new technologies, while ensuring management in line with the principles of good governance.



# Our Education Programs

The education system of the City of Brussels is built around the principles of equality and social justice, the democratic principle, **the principle of neutrality, and the principle of equal opportunities and diversity.**

The Public Education Department aims to ensure equal opportunities for all students. Its pedagogical methods seek to **make the student an active participant so that everyone engages in their learning** and becomes a «global citizen.» Its education is based on humanist and free-thought training. It promotes critical thinking, especially with regard to the media, the development of objective thought, the discovery of otherness, language practice, exposure to reality through experimental practices, the gradual deve-

lopment of the scientific approach, and awakening to artistic forms of expression.

In line with its educational and pedagogical project, the City of Brussels offers a range of education that is accessible to all, without any distinction based on socio-economic, cultural, philosophical criteria, or related to the physical autonomy of students, sexual orientation, medical conditions, or cognitive potential. **It provides maximum chances for success and personal development for everyone.** Each student is encouraged to succeed according to their aspirations and potential. Any form of selection is strictly rejected.

The City ensures the organization of a diverse education offer that

covers the entire territory of the City and ensures that every student is welcomed.

## Compulsory Education

The French-language compulsory education is organized in **44 preschool, primary, and fundamental schools, as well as 18 secondary schools.** Dutch-language education is offered in eight preschool, primary, or fundamental schools and two secondary schools. This education is diversified in terms of pedagogy: whether in the city center, Laeken, or Neder-Over-Heembeek, parents can choose a school offering varied pedagogies that meet their children's needs, including inclusive schools, Dutch immersion schools, active pedagogy schools, and more.

The City also provides **specialized education within five schools for children with specific needs**. In 2023, it opened a school in the city center dedicated to children with certain forms of autism. The schooling of hospitalized children at the University Children's Hospital - HUDERF (and across eight other locations) is also part of this highly specialized educational offering. Every day, nearly 14,000 students are welcomed in these schools.



With 18 French-language schools and 2 Dutch-language schools, our secondary education extends across the entire territory, offering **a wide range of general, technical, artistic, and vocational programs**.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, secondary education welcomed nearly 10,080 students. The range of core study options and teaching approaches is extensive, with specialized programs such as active pe-

dagogy, enhanced mathematics and science courses in the seventh year, and a dedicated unit for children suffering from school phobia. The City of Brussels also offers a dual-immersion program in Dutch and English. In vocational secondary education, the City provides **a wide selection of programs aligned with the evolving needs of the Brussels-Capital Region**. It offers dual-track education in both French and Dutch and oversees two Advanced Technology Centers specializing in computer graphics and electricity, accessible to students from all educational networks. Students attend these centers with their own teachers and are supported by the CTA staff. To date, nearly 9,000 students have benefited from these facilities.

### Extracurricular Offerings

The City of Brussels offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, either free of charge or at very affordable rates, within its compulsory education schools.

It also organizes supervised study sessions and remedial courses outside of school hours.

### Continuing Education

The City offers a wide range of vocational and qualification-based training programs. The City's Continuing Education system is organized across multiple schools, providing **a diverse array of study tracks at both the secondary level (leading to secondary education diplomas) and the higher education level (leading to bachelor's degrees)**.

These programs cover fields such as languages, industrial techniques, mechanics, construction and interior design, jewelry and personal care, photography and visual arts, IT and web development, among others. The City also preserves the teaching of traditional craft professions that remain unaffected by automation and artificial intelligence, making it one of the last governing bodies to offer specialized training in these fields. The education provided in the

City's seven Continuing Education Institutes is widely recognized for its expertise, both nationally and internationally, and grants diplomas that open access to professions experiencing labor shortages—something that general training programs do not always provide.

In addition to this extensive Continuing Education offering, **the Elisabeth Carter Training Center**, managed by the Department of Culture, Youth, and Sports, provides young people aged 17 and older with the opportunity to train for careers in youth work and animation.

### Higher Education

The City's higher education offerings are designed to meet the demands of the Brussels job market, particularly in fields such as healthcare and education. The City ensures that its programs evolve in response to societal needs by offering flexible schedules and introducing new courses.



**The Royal Academy of Fine Arts** grants bachelor's and/or master's degrees in 14 artistic disciplines. Meanwhile, **the Francisco Ferrer University College** unites five departments—Education, Technical Studies, Paramedical Sciences, Economics and Social Studies, and Applied Arts—offering a wide range of programs with imme-

*diate societal applications.*

Each academic year, more than 4,000 students enroll in these higher education institutions.

### Artistic Education with Flexible Hours

Public Education offers artistic education with flexible hours in both French and Dutch, through its **two Art Academies. These programs are taught in schools throughout the City** and in certain specific locations. This education covers all forms of artistic expression (music, dance,



theater, visual arts) with a wide range of classes available for both adults and children, starting at age 5.

### After School Institutions

Public Education plays a central role in coordinating after-school institutions dedicated to the well-being and health of students attending its schools. These institutions are organized under a coordination committee called SPOS (Prevention, Orientation, and Health Service), whose mission is to support, in partnership with schools, the humanistic dimension of education. This cross-functional service coordinates the actions of four key entities:

**The Psycho-Medical-Social Centers (PMS)** provide support to students, their parents, and schools, assisting with guidance issues while ensuring essential medical-psycho-social prevention.

Meanwhile, the **School Health Promotion Service (PSE)** focuses on

public health missions for students. It oversees vaccinations, medical check-ups, and offers health promotion programs on topics such as healthy eating, addiction prevention, and education on relationships, emotional well-being, and sexual health (EVRAS).

Additionally, as part of the Pact for Excellence in Education, **the Alexis Sluys Territorial Hub of the City of Brussels** was created to support the inclusion of children with specific needs into mainstream education by mobilizing necessary resources and assisting schools in this process.

Finally, the **multidisciplinary mental health center SESAME** provides valuable support not only to students in schools but also to the entire population of the City, contributing to an accessible and inclusive care network.

### Public Education and the Spotlight on New Technologies

To enhance the learning of all the potential associated with new technologies, the Public Education invests nearly **€8.4 million per year** to manage its IT infrastructure. In this context, training sessions on internet usage are organized in schools for students, in addition to the teaching activities provided by the curriculum.

Most classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards (700) and are involved in projects using tablets (3000). To ensure everyone has access to a computer, more than 1600 desktop PCs have been distributed since 2020, and each student enrolled in 4th year of secondary school or higher receives a laptop if requested. Five «ICT» educators have been hired to assist secondary school students in mastering these tools (usage and cybersecurity). **Teachers have also been specifically trained in coding to integrate these new**

**skills into their teaching curriculum.**

In this context, Public Education organizes numerous activities (teacher training, educational resources, robotics competitions, etc.). Training sessions are also held for parents to enable them to access the IT tools necessary for monitoring their child's progress at school (Smartschool, Teams, etc.) and for their administrative tasks (e-Gov, e-health, Itsme, etc.).

Finally, the Public Libraries organize

**numerous training sessions aimed at combating the digital divide** within our Digital Public Spaces (EPN). The goal is to ensure that no one is left behind in the face of the growing digitalization of public services.



# Administrative Operations

## The Pedagogical Inspection

Based on the educational and pedagogical project adopted by the City for its education system, the Pedagogical Inspection oversees the pedagogical and material organization of schools and extracurricular institutions. **It coordinates school leaders while ensuring compliance with legislation, quality of education, and satisfaction of the public.** Inspectors have the authority to oversee the pedagogical and material organization of education and educational and extracurricular institutions, each within their area of responsibility. They ensure the execution of laws, regulations, and

decisions made by the organizing authority. They actively participate in implementing the objectives of the Public Education Department within schools.

## Human Resources

The Human Resources department ensures **the full career management of staff in schools and extracurricular institutions (both francophone and dutch-speaking), from recruitment to retirement**, while optimizing HR processes to guarantee the quality of the service provided to schools. This department consists of seven specialized teams responsible for managing careers, from recruit-

ment to retirement, for each level of education and/or language regime. The department is unique in that it manages its human resources independently from the City: the majority of the staff is subsidized primarily by the Flemish Region and the French Community of Belgium. Therefore, an evolving and specific legal framework applies to these staff members. For this reason, the department has established a separate HR service, consisting of experts in these matters, organized by educational level and language regime.

Apart from the salary payments handled by the federal entities, the entire career management of teachers and other similar staff is overseen by Public Education. The Department is working on optimizing procedures (modernization, digitalization, streamlining, creating and monitoring management indicators).



In addition to managing subsidized staff, the Department also manages the non-subsidized personnel of its institutions (including payroll). This includes more than 1,000 individuals (librarians, health service staff, administrative assistants, auxiliaries, etc.).

Among the department's objectives are the improvement of processes, enhancing recruitment, and combating absenteeism.

### General Administration

The General Administration **coordinates transversal missions in service of schools and extracurricular institutions across various fields.**

This service ensures the smooth functioning of the joint bodies necessary for maintaining constructive social relations.

The communication unit facilitates the flow of information and ensures the reflection of innovation and the

richness of the achievements of the schools and libraries of the City of Brussels (IntraIP, newsletters, websites, social media, etc.).

The legal unit ensures compliance with the law and procedures for all initiatives within the Department. The General Administration also includes a unit dedicated to developing and supporting innovation through **civic, cultural, artistic, sports, reflective, philosophical, and multilingual projects.** It ensures safety around schools and coordinates relations with BRAVVO and the police.

This service also consists of a unit working on the **well-being of staff members, working in synergy with the SICPPT.** It ensures collective and individual follow-ups of staff members and conducts surveys measuring well-being within schools and extracurricular institutions to identify needs and develop targeted actions. It also aims to offer projects, activities, and/or training to improve the school climate. The General Administration supports schools in

the implementation of their management plans, in achieving their objectives by setting up a monitoring system, and in analyzing their results. It also aims to develop the tracking of management indicators, supporting the support services and the inspection service to guarantee the quality of services provided to the institutions of Public Education.

### Finance

The Finance service **supervises the budget management, the control of expenses and revenues of the Department, relations with the funding authorities (CFWB, VG, VGC, COCOF, etc.), as well as the management of school finances** (i.e., the management of finances entrusted to schools but controlled by the Department, along with administrative and accounting support to each school in managing subsidies). It is also in charge of a Payroll service that ensures the payment of staff directly managed by the Department (i.e., non-subsidized staff in schools (excluding maintenance staff),

librarians, and personnel working in health institutions).

The Furniture/Public Procurement service plays **an interface and support role between the schools and the central purchasing unit** for any request related to public procurement of supplies and equipment. It also coordinates a large furniture renewal plan and organizes, with the roadworks service, the needs in terms of relocation, disposal, and provision of specific equipment. Its role is also to assist schools in purchasing materials needed for pedagogical activities.

### Logistic

The Logistics of Public Education primarily **deals with the real estate matters of Public Education.** The service ensures the provision of adequate living and working spaces for users (schools, libraries, PMS).

Within this service, the Architecture Unit handles the programming and monitoring of architectural pro-

jects, including the expansion of the educational offer and the renovation of existing infrastructures. These architects ensure that the needs on the ground are defined and work in synergy with the Public Heritage Department. In this regard, the City was a pioneer in managing demographic growth. Indeed, **in 12 years, Public Education has created nearly 5,500 places (including more than 2,800 in secondary education) through 17 projects for the expansion or creation of new schools.** Other expansion projects are forthcoming and involve significant collaboration between the City's departments.



**The Proximity Unit** consists of real estate managers who ensure the quality, maintenance, and safety of spaces, and the CIL, a team of versatile workers who refresh and brighten spaces with small interventions.

**The Sustainable Development Unit** is responsible for raising awareness of energy savings, the development of active mobility, improving waste management, better water resource management, and the development of circularity. The team also focuses on the development of biodiversity, greening spaces, supporting sustainable food practices and urban farming, as well as raising awareness of climate change.

**The Well-being at Work Unit** is responsible for raising awareness about the importance of safety, providing explanations on various work-related well-being topics, and advising users on their organizational management of safety.

## Our Public Libraries

The 14 French-speaking libraries of the City of Brussels, managed by Public Education, offer a rich collection of 828,000 books. **With a staff of about one hundred employees, they serve 23,600 active users** (including 8,400 registered in 2023) and record more than 350,000 annual loans. Additionally, there are 3 Dutch-speaking libraries and 3 partner institutions: Espace Magh, Espace Césaire, and Club jeunesse des Tanneurs.

In addition to managing an extensive network of local libraries, the City oversees specialized libraries (technical, artistic, and educational libraries) and coordinates the regional library network as a support operator. It also has a youth literature center.

The City Libraries pursue the following transversal objectives:

- Defend an open, barrier-free, imaginative, and creative approach to culture.
- Stimulate a lively relationship between books, reading, and the population.
- Support abundant and diverse creation around reading.
- Maintain and animate a dynamic network of cultural spaces, events, and initiatives.
- Promote inclusion.
- Cultivate openness to the world and cultural cooperation at the City, regional, national, and international levels.

A library places its action at the heart of the population's life and is not limited to its opening hours and loan statistics: **libraries are also cultural venues where conferences, exhibitions, symposia, reading and writing workshops, literary meetings, storytelling performances, reading clubs, and philosophical workshops take place.**

These activities add value in terms of the attractiveness of the various locations. In 2023, the total number of events organized by the libraries was 2,800, attended by 43,500 participants. Among them, 1,500 specific events were held in the City's schools (storytelling, creative workshops). Thanks to the Public Digital Spaces (EPN) and the widespread free WIFI in all libraries, users can access the internet and receive help and connected tools to complete their administrative procedures.

The public also has access to a series of training programs (literacy, learning to use digital tools, support for school learning). Communities (neighborhood associations, in particular) have access to quality infrastructure through the Libraries of the network, enabling them to organize their internal activities smoothly. The libraries also loan quality books to other institutions such as nurseries, schools, and nursing homes.

More recently, **some of the City's libraries have developed an «Open+» offer**, which provides automated access (without staff presence) to reading rooms outside regular hours and in the evening. This system allows the student population to have access to appropriate and connected study spaces.





**ip.bruxelles.be**

R.E : Public Education of the City of Brussels• 4 rue des Halles, 1000 Brussels  
Have a question ? Write to us at [instructionpublique@brucity.education](mailto:instructionpublique@brucity.education)