# Early school leaving in the Netherlands
# Policy and research

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# Problem statement

➡️ Lisbon European Council (2000):

  halve the year 2000 number of school dropouts by 2012

  ⬇️

Extensive policy in the Netherlands organized by 'projectdirectie voortijdig schoolverlaten' within the Ministry of Education

→ National target: halve the number of *new* early school leavers from 71.000 in 2002 to 35.000 in 2012  (and 25.000 in 2016)

  Note: denominator = all students in a given year

→ EU based target: 8% early school leavers by 2020

  Note: denominator = all people younger than 23 years old

→ This presentation:

| Dutch policy on early school leaving, *and* its effectiveness |
| --- |

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# Outline

A. What happened in the Netherlands?  --  Policy and effectiveness

      1. National registration
      2. Naming and shaming
      3. Regional accountability
      4. School accountability (monetary incentives for schools)
      5. Qualification Law (increased compulsory education age)

B. Accounting for economic influences in school dropout

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How do you know whether they left school (without diploma)?

→ Registration of students is the start of policy making

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# Dropout prevention
## Improved registration

➡ Basis Register Onderwijs Nummer (BRON)

→ Data set of *all* Dutch students at secondary education

→ Started in school year 2004/2005

→ Includes postcode of pupil, school number ('brin'), parental information (e.g., one-parent family), social situation (e.g., living in poor area)

→ Can be matched with data from Statistics Netherlands and municipal registration ('Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie')

→ Registration in BRON on October 1.

Early school leaver = A student younger than 23 who does not have a higher secondary diploma and is not enrolled in school on October 1, *while he/she was last year*

→ Note: still a lot of discussion on the definition, but at least a very good start

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# Dropout prevention
## Improved registration

We show, however, that data inaccuracy exists after a school-age of 18, suggesting a poor follow-up of post-compulsory students enrolled in secondary education but with retention in grade

– e.g. because of a lower sense of urgency to research or a bad connection with the student and/or parents;

Due to the lack of inaccurate data:

The data issues make evidence informed policy for this subgroup difficult!

→ there is, basically, no convincing evidence for this group!

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# Dropout prevention
## Naming and shaming

⟹ Using the BRON-data, the Ministry of Education applies 'naming and shaming'

      - Everyone can observe the early school leaving rate and its change in his/her municipality and even neighborhood

      www.aanvalopschooluitval.nl

      - Regions receive a letter with their (absolute and relative) performance

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# Dropout prevention
## Naming and shaming



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap

**VSV-Verkenner** *Zoom in op schooluitval*

| Home | Landelijke cijfers | RMC-regio's | Gemeenten | Scholen | Vergelijken | Help |

zoek

Uitgebreid zoeken

## Schooluitvalcijfers in beeld met de VSV-Verkenner

Jongeren mét een startkwalificatie op zak vergroten hun kansen op de arbeidsmarkt. Scholen, gemeenten en OCW gaan door met de 'Aanval op Schooluitval' zodat in 2012 het aantal nieuwe voortijdig schoolverlaters hooguit 35.000 bedraagt en in 2015 hooguit 25.000. We zijn op de goede weg, voor schooljaar 2009-2010 staat de teller op 39.557. Bekijk met de VSV-Verkenner de stand van zaken op landelijk niveau, per RMC-regio, gemeente of school, bekijk de resultaten van het voortgezet onderwijs en het middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, maak vergelijkingen tussen gemeenten en/of scholen en bekijk andere relevante informatie.
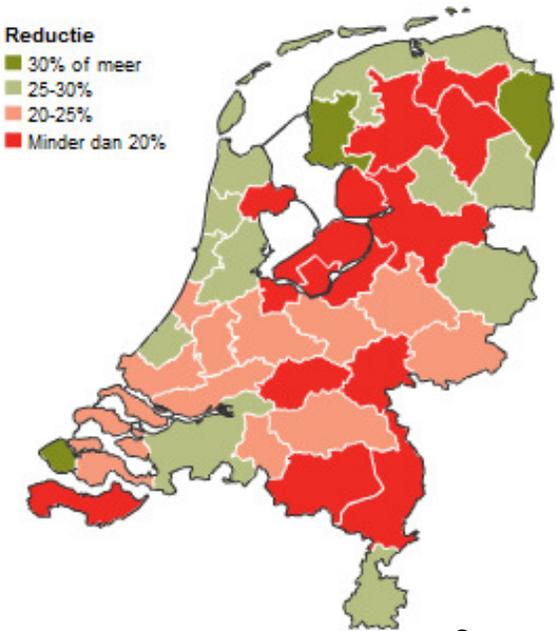
**Start de VSV-verkenner**

Ga naar www.aanvalopschooluitval.nl voor meer informatie over de 'Aanval op Schooluitval'.
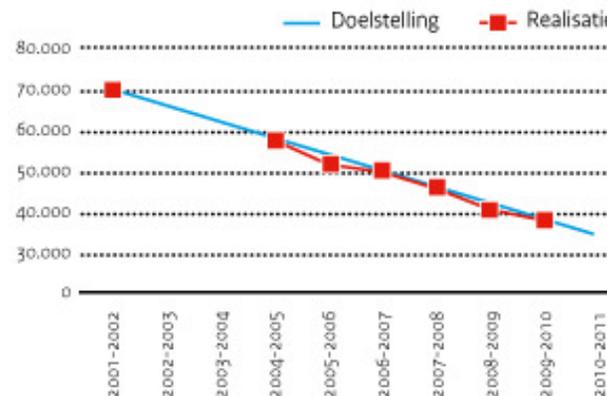
Reductie
- 30% of meer
- 25-30%
- 20-25%
- Minder dan 20%

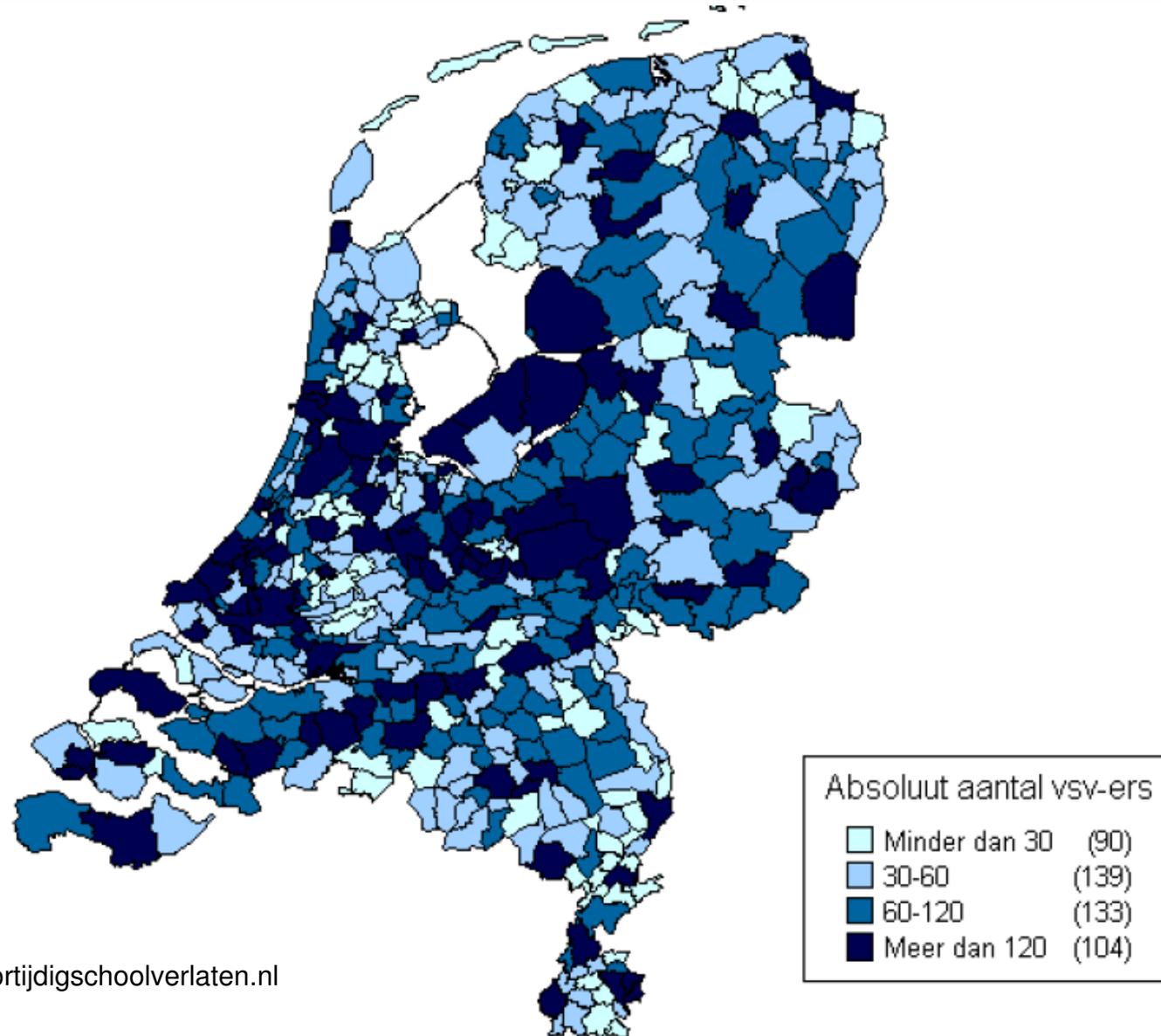Navigeer over de kaart om de reductie te zien van 2009-2010 t.o.v. 2005-2006.

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# Dropout prevention
## Naming and shaming



Absoluut aantal vsv-ers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Minder dan 30 | (90) |
| ☐ | 30-60 | (139) |
| ■ | 60-120 | (133) |
| ■ | Meer dan 120 | (104) |

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Figuur 3: RMC-regio's, realisatie reductie nieuwe vsv'ers in 2009-2010 t.o.v. 2005-2006
Bron: DUO

Reductie

- 30 % of meer
- 25 - 30 %
- 20 - 25 %
- minder dan 20%

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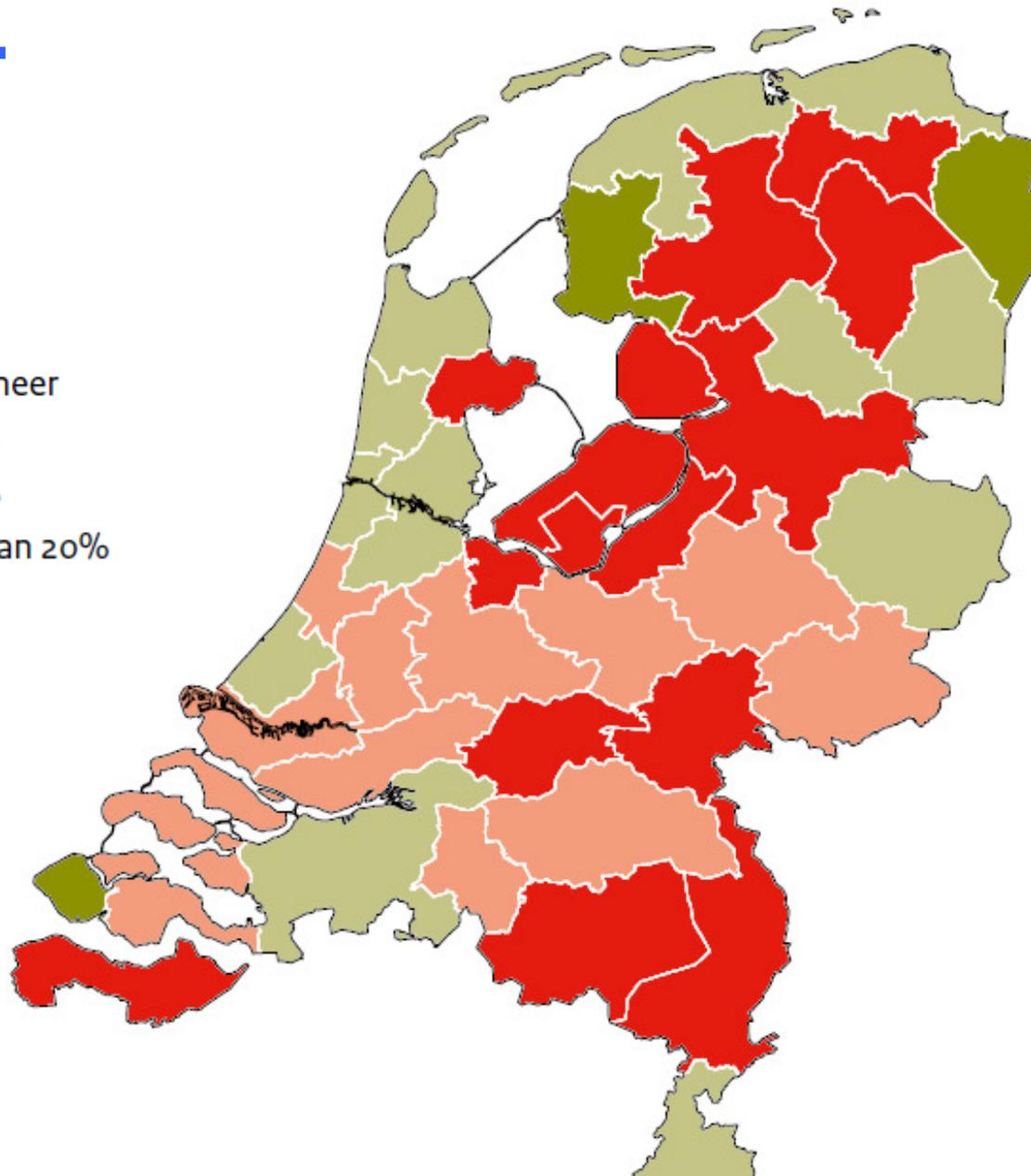
# Dropout prevention
## Naming and shaming

⟹ 'Meten is weten'  ('Measuring is knowing')

Having good data is the very start

- For policy

- For schools

- For policy evaluation

Despite discussions on the definition and despite the absence of stopouts, a national registration is important

→ note that stopouts are often registered in municipal datasets along with truancy (so-called 'absoluut verzuim')

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# Outline

A. What happened in the Netherlands? -- Policy and effectiveness
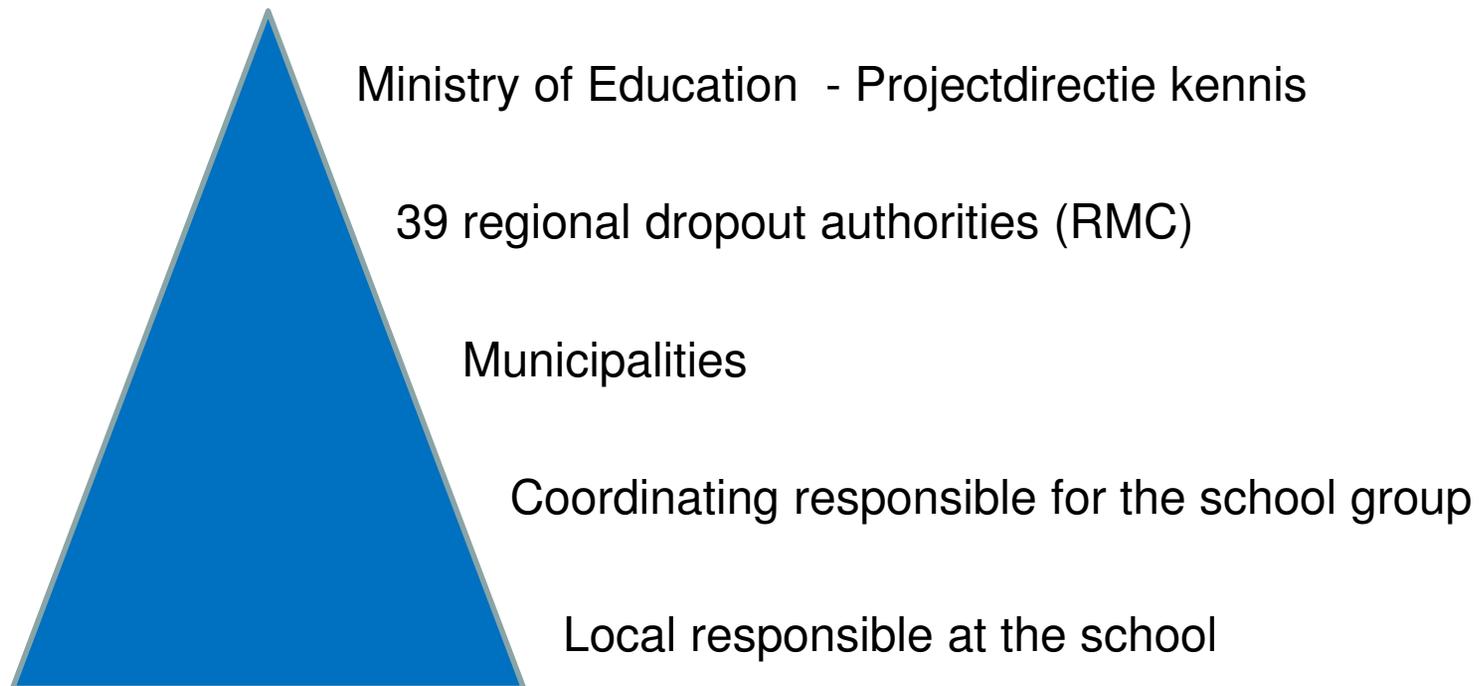
      1. National registration
      2. Naming and shaming
      3. Regional accountability
      4. School accountability
      5. Qualification Law

B. Accounting for economic influences in school dropout

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# Dropout prevention
## Regional accountability

➡ A decentralized implementation of policy

    -- Adapt policy to the local needs and student group

    -- Combined with significant accountability (naming and shaming, 'effect rapportages', monetary incentive)

Ministry of Education  - Projectdirectie kennis

39 regional dropout authorities (RMC)

Municipalities

Coordinating responsible for the school group

Local responsible at the school

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# Dropout prevention
## Regional accountability

➡ Dropout prevention in the Netherlands (total budget of 313 million euro in 2008)
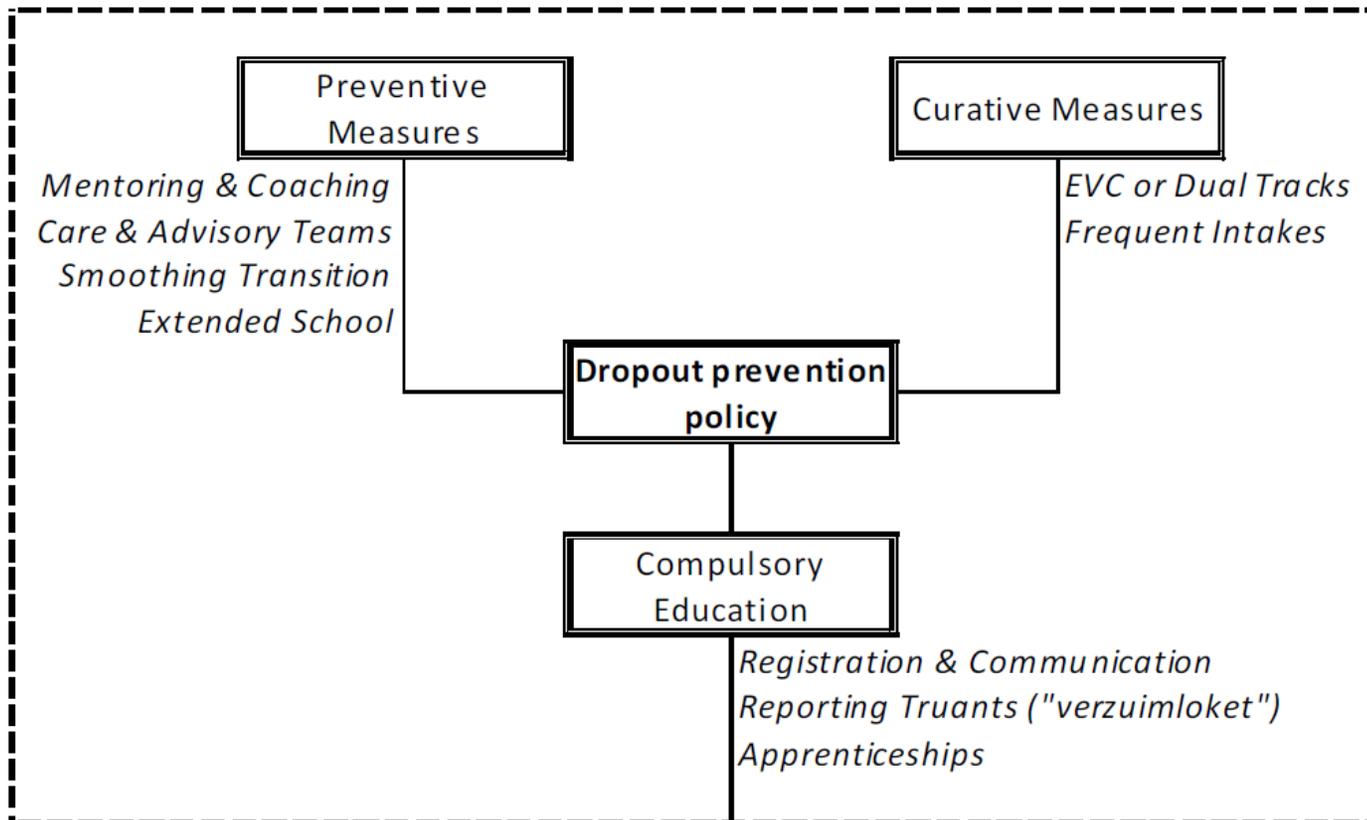
Regional accountability

    → 39 regions to coordinate dropout prevention measures

    → Regions can select policy measures out of a list suggested by the Ministry of education ('the covenant')

        → Chosen 'covenant items' are published on the website



*Overzicht RMC-regio's Nederland*
Bron: DUO

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Regional accountability: the 'convenant'



```
┌─────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────┐
│   Preventive    │                    │ Curative Measures│
│   Measures      │                    └─────────────────┘
└─────────────────┘
Mentoring & Coaching                   EVC or Dual Tracks
Care & Advisory Teams                  Frequent Intakes
Smoothing Transition
Extended School
              ┌────────────────────┐
              │ Dropout prevention │
              │      policy        │
              └────────────────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┐
              │    Compulsory      │
              │    Education       │
              └────────────────────┘
                   Registration & Communication
                   Reporting Truants ("verzuimloket")
                   Apprenticeships
```

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# Dropout prevention
## Regional accountability

➡ Which of the prevention measures go along with lower dropout?

→ Quantile regression controlling for regional fixed effects, a time trend, student and parental characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, and school type (note: correlations, not causal effects due to the lack of a control group)

| Impact of dropout prevention | 0.25 quantile | | | 0.5 quantile | | | 0.75 quantile | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initial implementor | 0.001 | 0.001 | | -0.001 | 0.001 | | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.962 |
| Number of implemented prevention items | 0.004 | 0.001 | *** | 0.005 | 0.001 | *** | 0.004 | 0.001 | 0.001 *** |
| Care and advisory team | 0.000 | 0.004 | | 0.000 | 0.005 | | 0.002 | 0.004 | 0.683 |
| Mentoring and coaching | -0.008 | 0.002 | *** | -0.008 | 0.003 | *** | -0.006 | 0.002 | 0.009 *** |
| Changing subject | -0.003 | 0.003 | | -0.006 | 0.004 | * | -0.005 | 0.003 | 0.119 |
| Optimal track or profession | -0.001 | 0.002 | | -0.003 | 0.002 | | -0.006 | 0.002 | 0.008 *** |
| Apprenticeship | -0.005 | 0.003 | * | -0.005 | 0.003 | | -0.006 | 0.003 | 0.037 ** |
| Frequent intakes | -0.007 | 0.003 | ** | -0.007 | 0.003 | ** | -0.003 | 0.003 | 0.298 |
| Extended school | -0.011 | 0.003 | *** | -0.011 | 0.004 | *** | -0.010 | 0.003 | 0.003 *** |
| Reporting truants | -0.008 | 0.002 | *** | -0.005 | 0.002 | * | -0.001 | 0.002 | 0.489 |
| Curative projects | -0.005 | 0.002 | * | -0.008 | 0.003 | *** | -0.010 | 0.003 | 0.000 *** |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | | | Yes | | | Yes | | |
| Region fixed effects | Yes | | | Yes | | | Yes | | |

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# Dropout prevention
## Regional accountability

⟹ Main difficulty:

Due to the decentralization of policy implementation, and due to the variety of potentional policy measures, only the local level knows which policy measures are implemented

→ Difficult for measuring policy effectiveness and follow-up

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# Dropout prevention
## school accountability

→ Monetary incentive for school of 2,500 euro per dropout less in comparison to base year 2005-2006

Note that the incentive is unfair if
- Some schools had dropout prevention schemes before 2005
- Background characteristics of the students differ

→ We tested the latter for the difference in school dropout between Amsterdam and Rotterdam; and for disadvantaged municipalities in Flevoland (e.g. Almere and Lelystad)

Conclusion:

If not properly accounted for the student characteristics, the monetary incentives are unfair.

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# Dropout prevention
## school accountability

→ Truancy, truancy reporting and truancy policy (using quasi-experimental evidence)

- Based on Amsterdam data:

  Truancy increases the probability of early school leaving by 3.9 percentage points

  cfr. Early school leaving percentage in the municipality of Amsterdam amounts to 7.8% (2005-2006) and 6.8% (2007-2008)

- Improved truancy reporting does induce lower dropout, but not significantly different from 0

  Only for better general schools (vo), we observe a significant effect

- An active policy on truancy reporting (e.g., visiting the truant and his parents at home for an extensive discussion) creates a lower school dropout

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# Dropout prevention
## school accountability

→ Truancy, truancy reporting and truancy policy

Controlling for age of the student:

- For school-aged students enrolled in vocational education or training the dropout risk of truants compared with regular school attendees is accelerated with as much as 37.4 percent by age of 17;

- Unauthorized truancy is less of a problem in higher ability levels than is the case for low ability levels.

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# Dropout prevention
## Qualification law

⟹ Qualification law (2007):

    ⟹ Students have to obtain a 'starter qualification' (= higher secondary diploma)

        → In practice: increase in compulsory education age for vwo and mbo students

        → 'RMC verzuim' = Truancy reporting for students younger than 23 who did not obtain a qualification yet

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# Dropout prevention
## Qualification law

⟹ Thanks to qualification law:

Decrease of early school leaving by 2.52 percentage points,
but effect is mainly driven by non-liable pupils leaving school (i.e., groenpluk)

Policy has adverse and unexpected effects

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# Policy versus economy

Early school leaving rate (left figure) is heavily influenced by the economic cycle.

→ We 'removed' economic influences, institutional differences and population differences from the gross figure (based on Eurostat data)
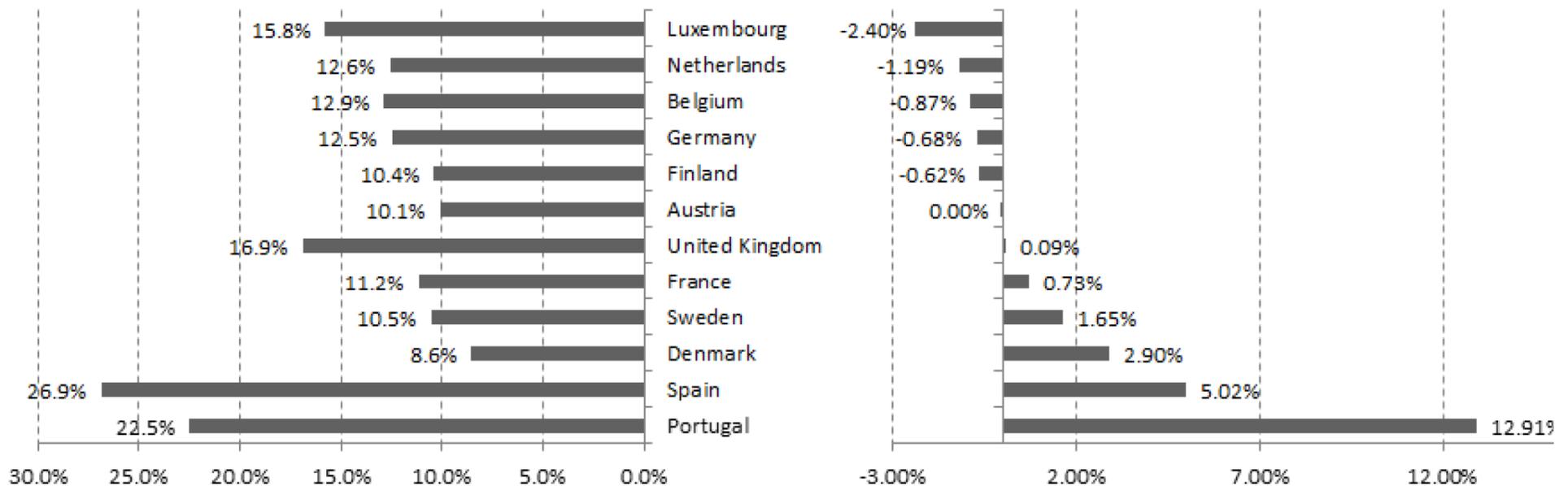
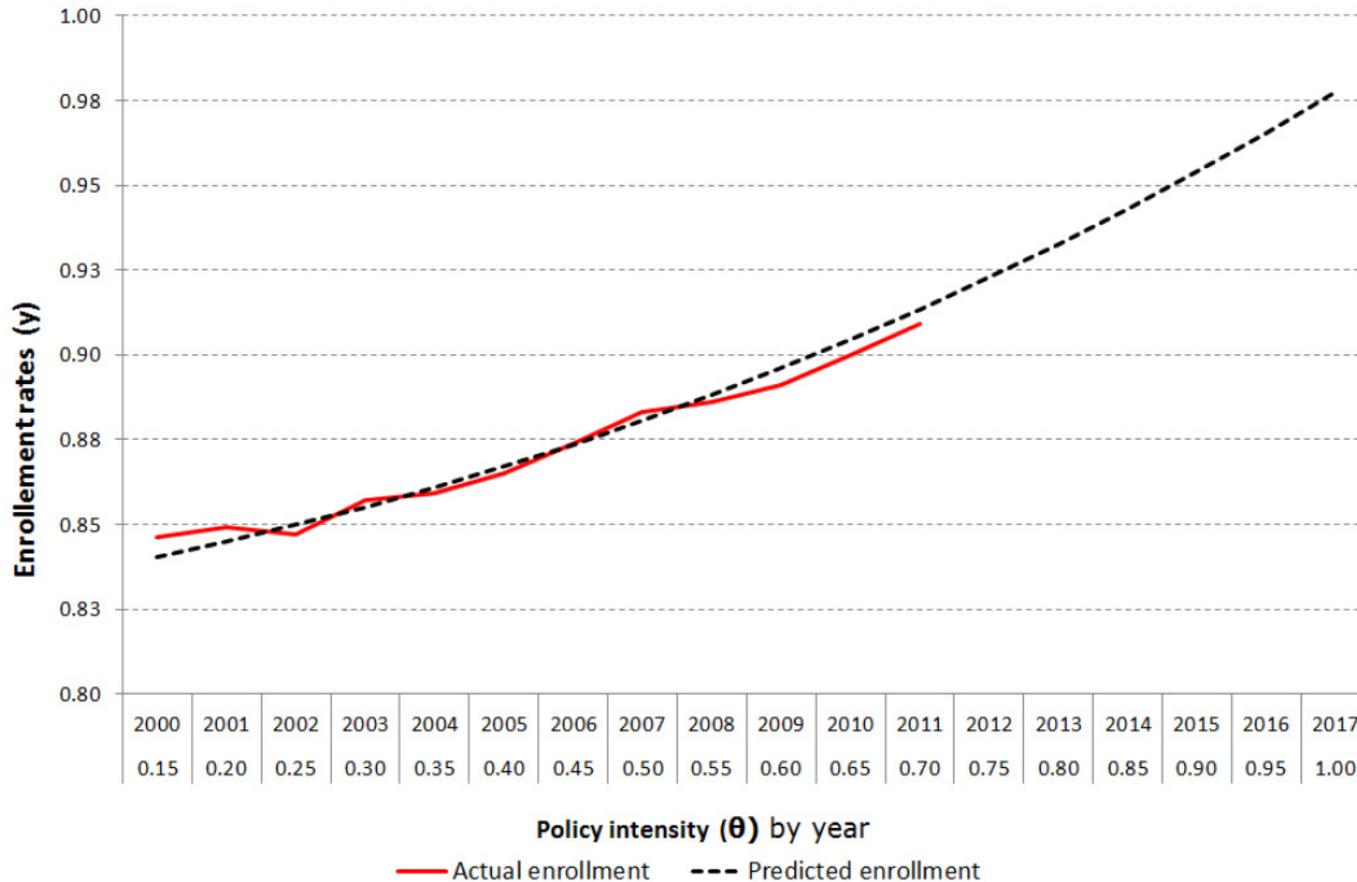→ Result (right figure): 'net' policy effect



Figure 3: Naming and shaming based on policy influences

# Policy versus economy

Using predictions on a theoretical model, we predict the early school leaving rate from the Netherlands.

→ The underlying data are from 2005-06, but allow us to predict esl-rates before and after this point in time.



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# Costs for esl reduction

Using predictions on a theoretical model, we predict the early school leaving rate from the Netherlands.

→ We show that every 5 percentage point increase in school enrollment rates, costs about 29 million euro.

→If Dutch policy makers would like to reduce esl to close to 0%, this would require an annual budget  574 million euro (i.e., 0.10% of GDP)

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# Conclusion

There is much to learn from early school leaving policy in the Netherlands

Caution should be taken:

- Some structural differences in educational system (e.g., two levels of three years, strong ability tracking, central exit exam).
- Not all measures are effective

Advice in setting-up policy:

Make sure that policy can be evaluated. Do not implement a policy in all schools at the same time, but allow for an experimental and evidence based set-up!

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# Early school leaving in the Netherlands
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