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70 YEARS

Secondary pathways and curriculum reform in Poland

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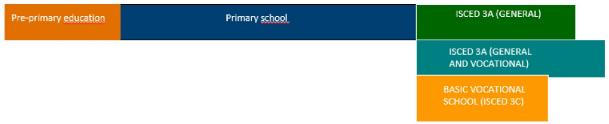
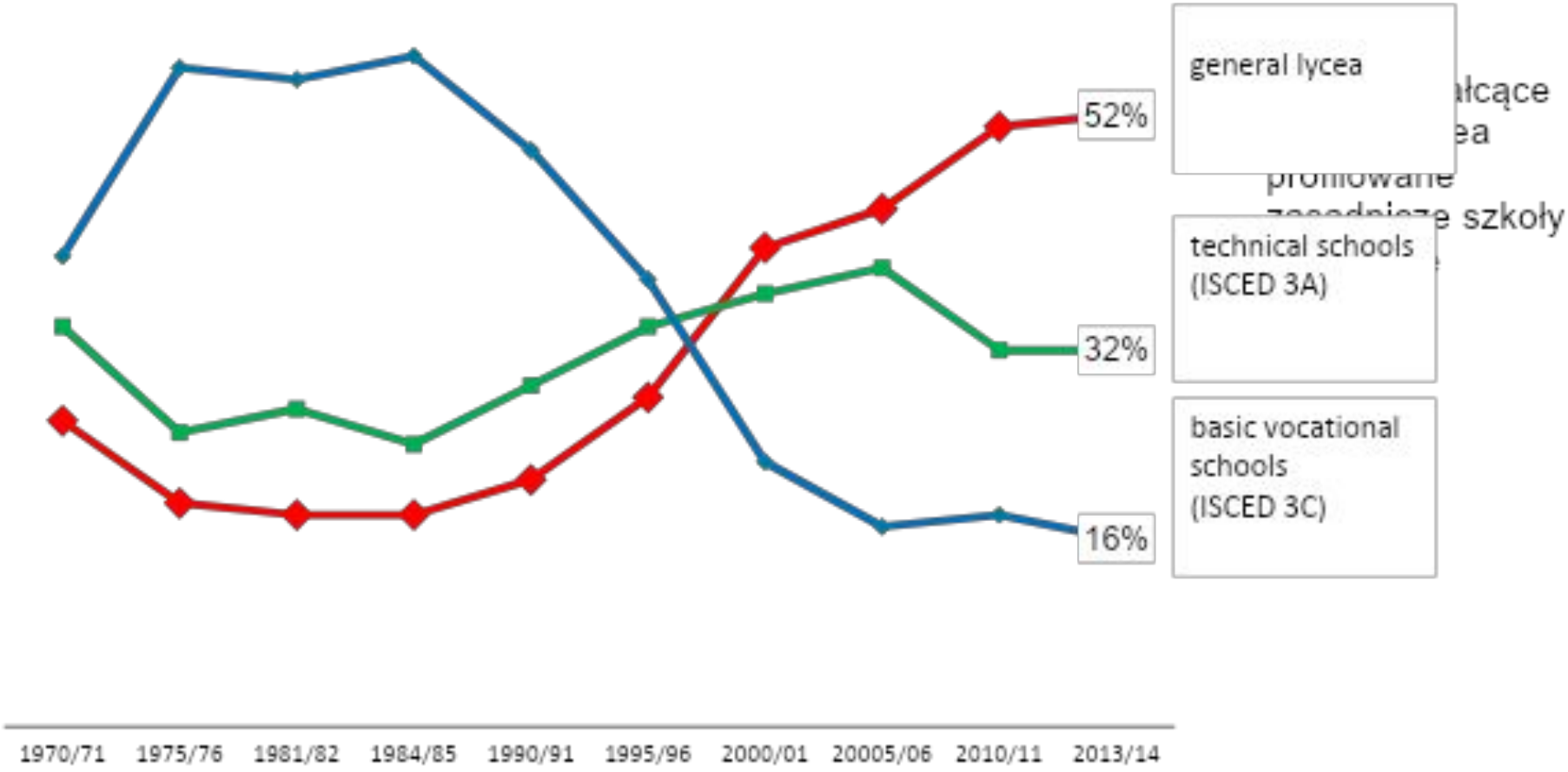


Changes in the educational choices in upper secondary education

Share of students in the first grade of secondary/upper-secondary schools

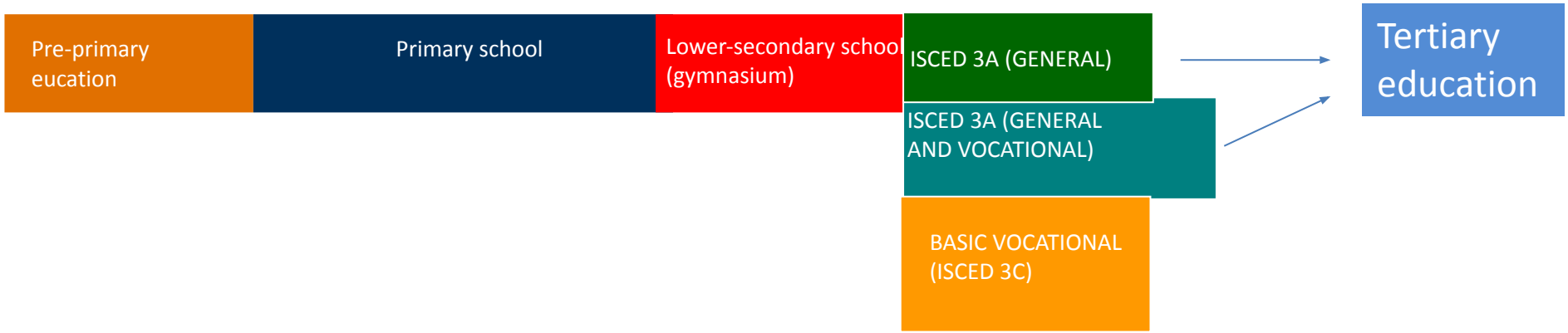


These trends were influenced by the crisis of vocational education and expansion of higher education (number of HE students increased from about 400 thousands in 1990 to about 2 million of students).

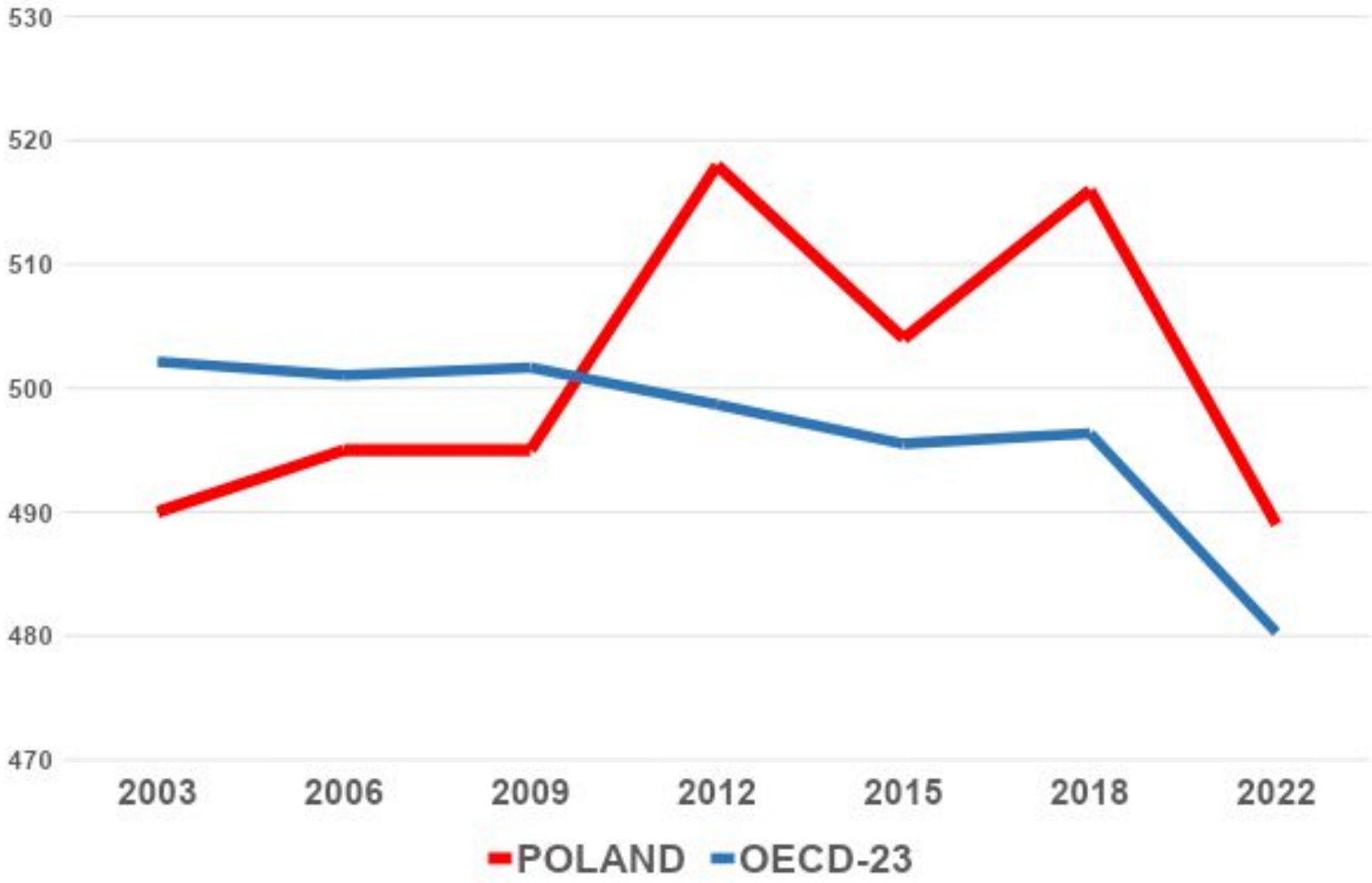
New school type - ISCED 2 was introduced in 1999 and general (comprehensive) education was extended by one year – this was reversed in 2017

School structure before 2000 (and after 2016)

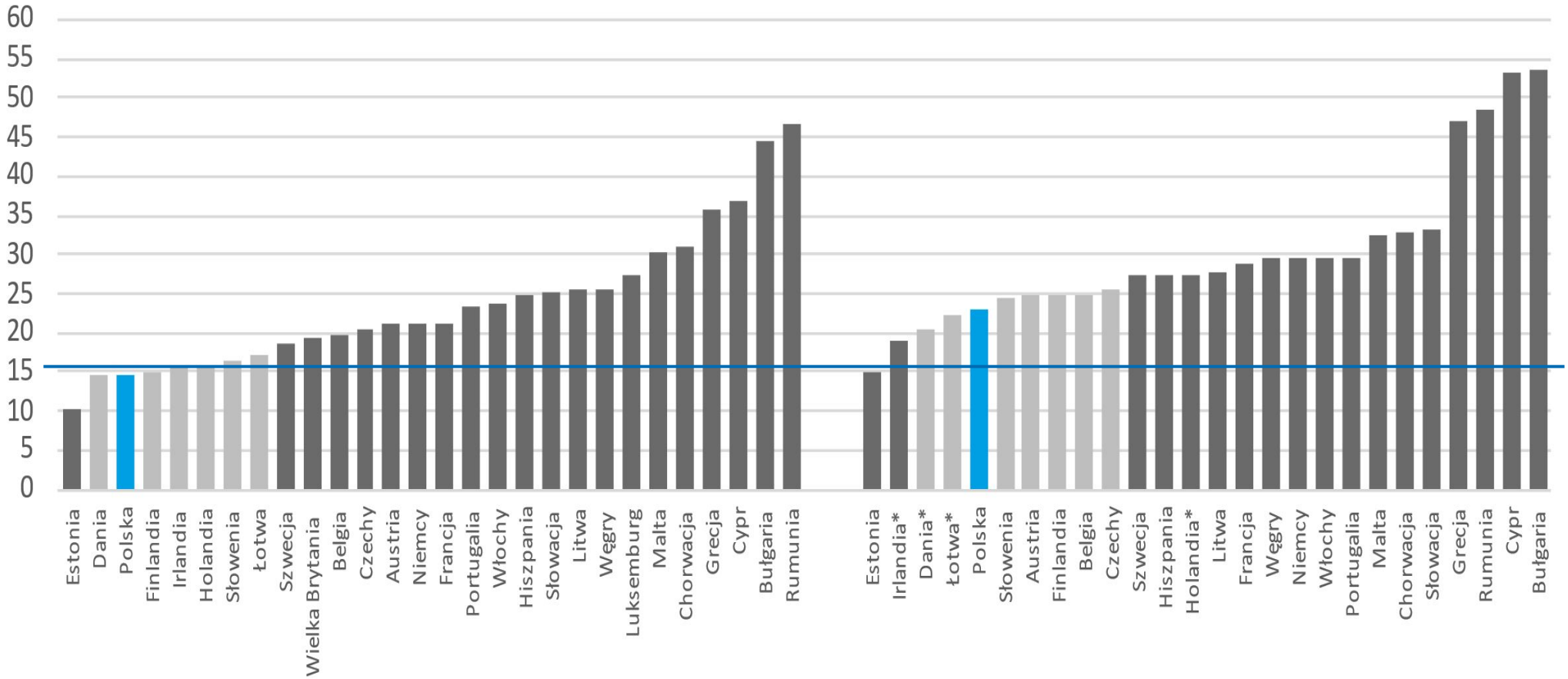
School structure between 2001 and 2016



Changes in average math scores of 15 year olds' (PISA 2003–2022)

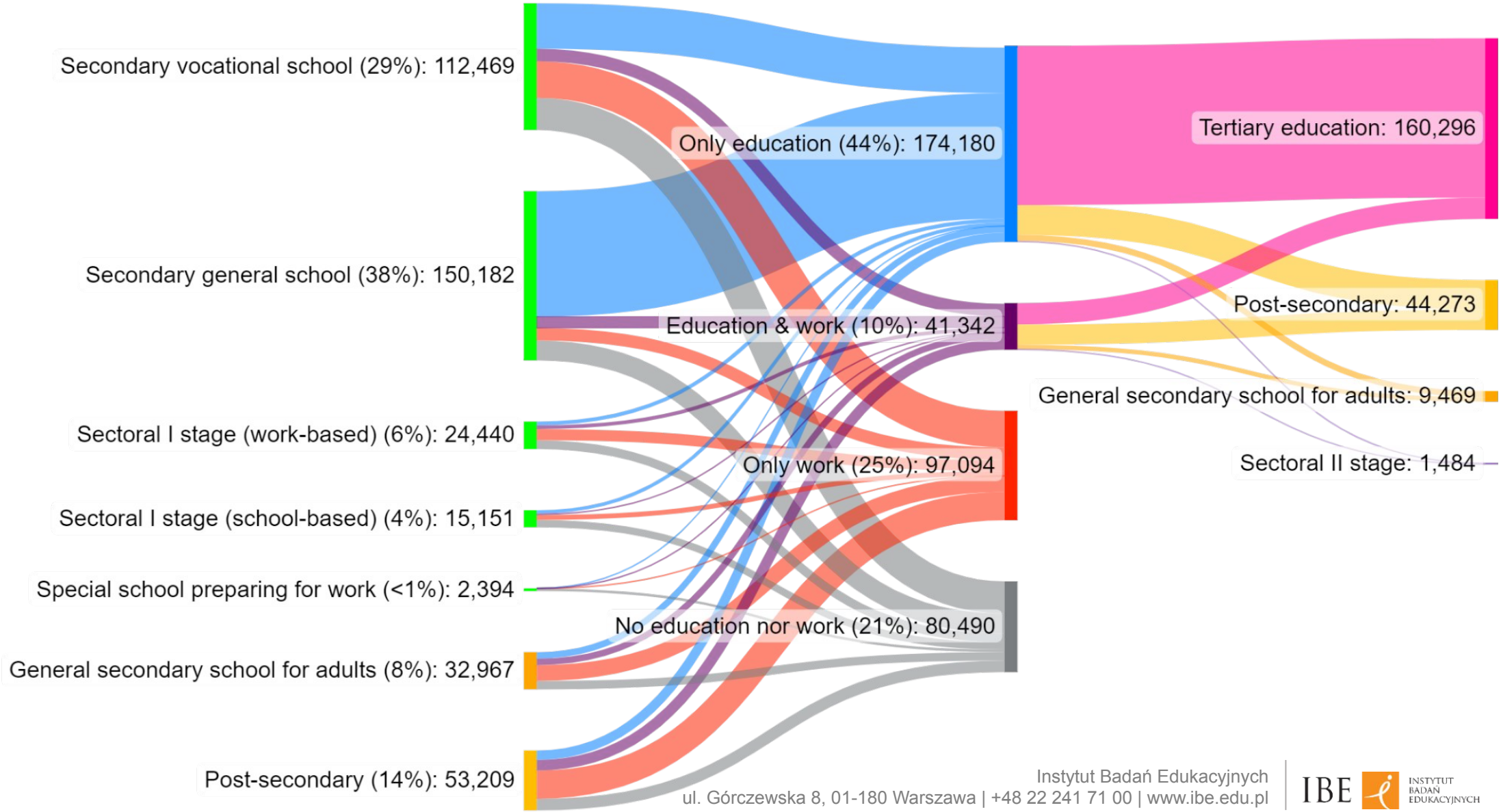


% of students below Level 2 in PISA 2018 and 2022



Students in ISCED 3C (basic vocational) schools are below or at level 2 in mathematics (PISA 2022)

2020 graduates 6 months after graduation



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2020 Graduates' portrait based on administrative data

	Sectoral vocational school – stage I	Secondary vocational school	Secondary general school
Number of years (typical age of graduation)	3 years (18)	**5 years (20)**	4 years (19)
% of the first grade students of secondary schools	**17%**	39%	43%
% of women among first grade students	32%	38%	**63%**
National exam after primary school	Language: **– 0,97 sd** Math: **– 0,84 sd**	Language: **0** Math: **0**	Language: **+ 0,73 sd** Math: **+ 0,59 sd**
Professional and educational status 6 months after graduation	Only in education: **16%** Education and work: **11%** Only work: **36% (40% vs 29%)** **NEET: 36%**	Only in education: **36%** Education and work: **10%** Only work: **29%** NEET: **25%**	Only in education: **75%** Education and work: **6%** Only work: **7%** NEET: **12%**

Curriculum reform

- Challenges
  - Low foundational skills among vocational school students
  - Schools teach subjects/professions for which they have teachers
  - Too many professions, but some are missing
  - Graduates are older than in most EU countries

- Opportunities
  - Improving teaching and motivation in vocational schools
  - Labor market + administrative data
  - Evidence-driven curriculum reform and monitoring
  - Measuring foundational and vocational skills

Ambitious research plans

- Policy but also practice-oriented
- Large-scale monitoring surveys and assessments
- Administrative data
- LLM models analysis of labor market data
- Randomized Control Trials and meta-analyses
- International cooperation

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