

DGS' Position Paper 2021

The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students (DGS) is a united organization for student- and course member councils at Denmark's STX-, HF- and IB-educations. DGS is an organization by upper secondary school students, for upper secondary school students. DGS should therefore be a community where all students and course members can meet for debate, exchanging experiences and change. DGS shall support the student councils, and together represent the students publicly, in the public debate and in political decisions that affect students and course members.

We are the experts of everyday life, and The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students must fight the students' battles - both big and small. But some agendas are more crucial than others, and this position paper therefore outlines the values that upper secondary school students and course members believe our education system should build upon. The overall guidelines that this position paper shows must always shine through in the daily management.

The upper secondary educations

The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students fundamentally believes that education has a value in itself and that it should be available for everyone, and we should invest in quality education for all young people. It is therefore a problem that ten thousands of young people never received a qualifying education, and that too many young people end up not finishing their education. A good education benefits both the individual and the community as a whole.

In The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students we believe that schools' and upper secondary courses' main purpose is to promote common knowledge and educate students so they participate actively in our society. We believe that teachers should have as much freedom as possible to teach within the academic goals, and at the same time should focus on the central idea that upper secondary educations are preparatory and qualifying to further education. It is therefore important that they live up to the same national quality standard.

We can only obtain education of the highest quality if we have a solid economic foundation. All education should be economically provided by the public sector, and investments will secure time to create good and inspiring education, proper feedback and guarantee a good learning environment both physically and mentally. We will not accept economic cutbacks in our education, as it decreases the quality, the well-being and our future potential.

Everyone shall become more competent during their education, and it is vital that our education motivates and challenges us no matter our academic level. We will furthermore secure the necessary support for people with dyslexia and dyscalculia, and also support and

spread programs and initiatives that give different students an opportunity to develop within their interests.

Upper secondary schools are made to educate students, not to compete with other upper secondary schools, for the quality and content should be the same in the entire country. DGS is therefore fundamentally critical towards the freehold reform (selvejereformen) from 2007. We do not wish that upper secondary schools should use resources on branding and attracting new students.

The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students strives to secure a sustainable future for our members. We believe that climate change and its consequences will be one of the biggest challenges for our generation. We will therefore in DGS fight for having the possibilities as the generations before us. Everyone should contribute to solving the climate crisis - that includes our education. We believe that a sustainable education is the premise for a sustainable future, and the climate crisis should therefore be a central part of our education.

Education for all

In The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students we believe that regardless of academic standpoint or social background, students should have the possibility to go to upper secondary school after grade school. This means that structural limits of who is to attend upper secondary education must be abolished. But the upper secondary educations are not necessarily for everyone and DGS are therefore fighting for students to have guidance offered to insure the right choice is made. The upper secondary school must follow the natural course of the academic level of grade school, it needs to be fit into the development to ensure the transition between grade school and upper secondary education is smooth. All knowledge and competency are valuable and no education is better than others.

Education needs to be designed, so it's possible for all types of young people to access them. One's background, sexuality, gender, religion, ethnicity or handicap must not become a hurdle to start an upper secondary education. Broad covering of education must secure equal access to education, no matter where in the country you are from. This is achieved by good transport options to and from the institutions, and also through a stable economic support and sustainable student foundation for all upper secondary schools in the country.

It can never become the parents' wallets that determine if you can finish an education. This is why we are fighting for a fair SU, that fits students' and course members' economical needs, and to abolish all student fees at the schools - both the obvious and the hidden fees.

In The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students we believe that the premise for graduating is that you are thriving both academically and socially. All young people must thrive at their education. Today we have a generation of young people, who are historically stressed and pressured. A big part of the pressure comes from the time and society we are living in, but also from important elements of the education system that pressures the students

and course members. It is okay that upper secondary school is challenging, but students and course members should not suffer. We will therefore rebel against the hyper focus on grades, on accomplishment and on moving forward.

Absence should not be used as a punishment, rather a tool to discover and help the students and course members, who are not thriving. As young people we can take responsibility for our own everyday life, but should there be evidence which indicates systematically opting-out of teaching, teachers or subjects, there should be an intervention. DGS furthermore believes that the grading system today is retrospective and focuses on mistakes instead of opportunities for improvement. Upper secondary school's evaluation system should instead focus on how we as students and course members can improve us in the future. Overall, grades should matter less and the formative evaluation should occupy more time in our education system. We demand that the upper secondary schools can offer help to students and course members who suffer from stress, loneliness and mental issues.

Student democracy and influence

Student democracy is the ground principle in The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students - and is the premise for good education. We are fighting for all students and course members to have influence on their education, and we believe that the change starts in the classroom and in the student council. It is a vital task for DGS to support the local student democracy with a strong anchored representation of all students from every team or class. The people who have their daily life in the institution, know what needs to be different. The student representatives shall therefore have a final say in the institutions committees and boards, that should be managed by internal and not external members.

The main purpose with the student democratic work is to give students and course members more influence on their own everyday life. We believe that democracy is more than just voting when there is an election. Therefore it is a key part that students and course members get activated and educated, so the new incoming generations get a democratic confidence and have faith that they can make a difference. DGS has an obligation to fight for students and course members' agendas in the street, in the media and to the authorities.

The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students fights students' and course members' cases through activities that organize, politicizes and represents. Our goal is a society with free and equal access to education and an education system where students and course members have an essential influence on their education and institutions. Education is fundamental for both the individual and society's development as a whole.