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Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers

Country Note:

The French Community of Belgium

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This report is based on a study visit to the French Community of Belgium in June 2003, and background documents prepared to support the visit. As a result, the report is based on the situation up to that period.

The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the OECD or its Member countries.

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1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purposes of the OECD Review

1. This Country Note for the French Community of Belgium (FCB) forms part of the OECD activity on national teacher policies: *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*. This is a collaborative project to assist participating countries in formulating and implementing teacher policies leading to quality teaching and learning at the school level.

2. The activity was launched by the OECD Education Committee in April 2002. In their 2001 Communiqué *Investing in Competencies for All*, OECD Education Ministers placed great emphasis on teachers, drawing a clear connection between the challenges facing schools and the need to attract, develop and retain high-quality teachers and school principals.

3. The project's purposes, analytical framework and methodology are detailed in OECD (2002a).¹ The main objectives are:

- To synthesise research on issues related to policies concerned with attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing effective teachers;
- To identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices;
- To facilitate exchanges of lessons and experiences among countries; and
- To identify options for policymakers to consider.

4. The Activity is focused on primary and secondary schools. It encompasses vocational programmes that serve secondary students, and special education programmes that enrol students of school age. While the major focus is on teachers, the scope includes other staff working in schools and interacting with teachers within the framework of their educational roles.

5. The project involves two complementary approaches: an *Analytical Review* strand and a *Thematic Country Review* strand. The Analytical Review strand uses several means – country background reports, literature reviews, data analyses and commissioned papers – to analyse the factors that help to attract, develop and retain effective teachers, and possible policy responses. Twenty-five countries are involved in this strand. In addition, ten of the school systems have chosen to participate in a Thematic Country Review, which involves external review teams spending time in the countries concerned, visiting schools and organisations, and developing an external perspective of teacher policy.

6. The French Community of Belgium decided to take part in the Thematic Country Review and hosted a review visit in June 2003. The review team comprised a member of the OECD Secretariat,

¹. Reports and updates are available from www.oecd.org/edu/teacherpolicy

together with two educational researchers and a policymaker from Canada, Switzerland and Luxembourg (see list in Annex 1).

1.2 The Participation of the French Community

7. The French Community's involvement in the OECD activity is being organised by the Community's Project Co-ordinator, Mr Dominique Barthélémy, Director for International Relations in the French Community Ministry, and a Project Steering Committee established by the Ministry (see Annex 2).

8. An important part of the French Community's involvement was the preparation of a *Country Background Report* (CBR) on teacher policy. This was prepared by a team of researchers from the Department of Education and Training at the University of Liège, led by Professor Jacqueline Beckers (see Annex 2).

9. This excellent Country Background Report provides information, analysis and discussion in regard to: the national context; the organisation of the school system and the teaching workforce; attracting capable new teachers; training, developing and accrediting teachers; recruiting, selecting and allocating teachers; and keeping qualified teachers in schools. It also gives the views of key stakeholders on these facets of teacher policy.

10. The CBR is an important output from the OECD activity in its own right, as well as a significant resource for the review team. The analyses and issues discussed in the CBR are cited frequently in this Country Note.² We suggest that the two reports be read in conjunction since they are intended to be complementary.

11. After analysing the CBR and available background materials, the review team visited the French Community of Belgium from 9 to 17 June 2003. The visit was organised jointly by the OECD, the Project Co-ordinator and the Project Steering Committee. Details of the full and interesting programme are given in Annex 3. The review team held discussions in the Brussels and Ghent regions with a wide range of FCB education stakeholders, including ministers in charge of teacher policy, education authorities, representatives of school networks, teachers, school principals, pupils, teacher trainers, student teachers, unions, teachers' associations, parents' associations, employers and researchers. The review team also visited primary and secondary schools, adult education centres, a college of education (*haute école*) and a university.

12. This Country Note draws together the review team's observations and all of the background materials to which it had access, the main component being the FCB's Background Report. The visit was not a review of the FCB education system as a whole, but rather an analysis of the issues concerned with attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers in primary and secondary schools.³ This Country Note will be an input into the final OECD report from the overall activity. The reviewers trust that it will also contribute to discussions within Belgium's French Community on the role and place of teachers in the education system, and that it will help to inform the rest of the international education community about the French Community's policy initiatives, which could be of use in other education systems.

13. The review team is very appreciative of the welcome and hospitality shown by their hosts and everyone they met at what was a very busy time of the year for them. The educational community clearly

2. Unless indicated otherwise, the data in this Country Note are taken from the French Community Background Report.

3. The staffing of pre-primary education was considered as part of an earlier OECD review (see Bennett *et al.*, 2000).

attached great importance to the purpose of the visit and the fact that the review team brought an external perspective. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of information and analysis. The team greatly appreciated the quality of the documentation provided.

14. This Country Note is the outcome of discussions within the review team. We accordingly take full responsibility, and any errors or misinterpretations are our own.

1.3 Structure of the Country Note

15. The remainder of the report is organised into four main sections. Section 2 outlines the key contextual social, economic and educational factors shaping the teaching workforce and the teaching career in the French Community. The section also tries to draw out what is distinctive about the teacher policy in the FCB. Section 3 identifies what we feel to be the main strengths of FCB policies, but also the challenges that the FCB education system faces in terms of teaching and the teaching career. The discussion addresses eight broad areas: system governance; initial teacher education; continuing teacher education; the labour market for teachers; career structure and incentives; teachers in the workplace; school leadership; evaluation and accountability. Section 4 suggests priorities for future policy development. The suggestions draw heavily, but not exclusively, on promising initiatives that the team learned about during the visit and on projects that several players would very much like to see carried through. Section 5 has some concluding remarks.

16. From the outset, it is important to recognise that major reforms are already under way in the French Community's education system, initiated by the "Missions" Decree on 24 July 1997. The system is accordingly undergoing a radical process of change. This reflects genuine political determination to improve teaching and learning. Our policy suggestions acknowledge that process of change, recognise its value and relevance, and seek to promote and further it. At the same time, however, we are unable to assess the impact of this change: first, because many of the reforms are still under way, and student teachers and pupils have not yet completed the new training paths; second, because no systematic evaluation data are available on the process or its outcomes. We shall return to this last point later in this Note.

17. We are also aware of the difficulty facing any group of visitors, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the full complexity of the education structure in the French Community and the factors that need to be taken into account when formulating sound, promising teacher policies. The analyses, questions and suggestions set out in this Note are accordingly subject to the limitations of our approach. They are nevertheless an interesting contribution, partly because of the efforts by local players to provide detailed yet detached explanations, and partly because of the external, cross-cutting approach taken by the review team.

2: THE CONTEXT AND FEATURES OF TEACHER POLICY

2.1 The Structure of Government

18. Since 1970, Belgium has become a Federal State. It has a dual federal structure, combining regions and communities. Besides the Federal authority there are three regions: the Flemish Region (divided into 5 provinces), the Walloon Region (also divided into 5 provinces) and the Brussels Capital

Region. There are also three Communities, based on language: Dutch in the north (the Flemish Community, with some 6 million people), French in the south (the French Community, with some 4 million) and German in the east (the German Community, numbering around 70 000).

19. Like the Federal authority, the regions and communities have their own specific responsibilities and powers, which have been drawn up and distributed so as not to overlap. There is also a Court of Arbitration with the power to rule on cases of conflicting jurisdiction involving the Federal authority, the communities and the regions. Like the Federal authority, each community and region has its own government and parliament which pass “decrees” (whereas the Federal Parliament passes “laws”). The Federal authority has powers in the field of international relations, defence and justice, whereas the communities enjoy full autonomy with regard to social matters (*matières personnalisables*), i.e. culture, education, healthcare, social welfare, family/child policy and inter-community co-operation. Finally, the regions are responsible for the economy, employment, agriculture, water policy, housing, public works, energy, transport, the environment, land-use planning, rural development, nature conservation, credit, external trade, and overseeing the provinces, communes and groups of communes.

20. The Federal authority is involved in education but only to a very limited extent: it sets the beginning and end of compulsory schooling, the basic requirements for awarding qualifications, and the rules governing the teachers’ pension scheme. Besides the Federal, community and regional tiers, Belgium has 10 provinces and 589 municipalities. The French Community covers five of those provinces and some 300 municipalities, which also have some responsibilities in the field of education.

2.2 Economic and social context

21. Concentrated around major urban centres such as Brussels, Charleroi, Liège and Namur, the population of the French Community of Belgium is expected to remain stable over the next few decades, according to demographic forecasts. As in the rest of Europe the population is ageing, with a birth rate only slightly exceeding the death rate. The inversion of the age pyramid continues, as in other European countries, but immigration is slowing the process down to some extent.

22. In compulsory education in the FCB, for instance, 12.2% of pupils are foreign nationals. The figure has declined over the past decade, largely because of naturalisations. Some 30% of pupils in the Brussels Capital Region are foreign nationals, compared with only 7.6% in Wallonia. The foreign population is diverse, with almost half coming from the European Union and the remainder from North Africa (20%), other parts of Africa (11%), Turkey (8%) and other parts of Europe (9.5%).

23. Belgium is a relatively prosperous country. In the year 2000, its Gross Domestic Product per capita stood at around \$26 400, the 11th highest of the 30 OECD Member countries⁴. Belgium is a “small open economy”, i.e. it has narrow domestic markets, and high exports and imports for its size. By and large, the economic situation is characterised by a slowdown that has persisted worldwide since 2000. The leading economic forecasts for Belgium predict a slight recovery, with growth of between 1% and 1.3% in 2003, and between 1.8 and 2.3% in 2004⁵. As for the FCB, its annual growth rate over the past 40 years has been 2.2%, lower than that of Flanders (3.5%) (Vandenberghe, 2002:87).

24. In structural terms, the Belgian economy is facing two major problems: unemployment and the government deficit. Unemployment is high, at 11.5% for the second quarter of 2003. The hardest hit are

⁴ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in equivalent US dollars converted using Purchasing Power Parity exchange rates (OECD, 2003).

⁵ See “Evolution et perspectives de l’économie belge », Service public fédéral Economie, PME, Classes moyennes et Énergie, http://mineco.fgov.be/homepull_fr.htm

women and young people, in Wallonia and Brussels more than Flanders. According to Vandenberghe, unemployment among the low-skilled in the under-25 age group has been rising in recent years (Vandenberghe, 2002:11). The government deficit was very high until 1993. Following the introduction of major plans to stabilise public finances, the budget was balanced in 2002.

25. The economy and employment in the Walloon Region are characterised by strong expansion in the service industry, which accounted for 73.5% of jobs there in 1998. Education alone accounts for 10% of employment in the region.

2.3 The school system

26. Article 24 of the French Community Constitution stipulates that “Education is free (...)”, that “The community offers free choice to parents”, that “The community organizes neutral education ...”, respecting...“the philosophical, ideological or religious conceptions of parents and pupils” and that “Access to education is free until the end of compulsory schooling”. The education system therefore guarantees a high degree of freedom. To ensure some consistency, however, guidance and control mechanisms have been introduced with regard to school management and pedagogical freedom for teachers.

27. Parents are free to choose the school which they consider to be most suitable for their children. With demand so diverse, provision is understandably just as diverse and parents are free to choose from a vast range of schools, reporting to a variety of bodies.

28. Schools are organised and run by various bodies, known as *pouvoirs organisateurs* (organising authorities, or OAs). The organising authority may be the French Community Government or a public or private legal entity or entities. It is “the authority, natural person(s) or legal entity/entities assuming responsibility for a school”. Provided that an OA complies with the relevant standards and rules, it may set its own study programmes, subject to ministerial approval, and choose its own teaching methods and organisational arrangements.

29. Schools are organised into various networks, the main ones being:

- The French Community school network;
- The public grant-aided school network (municipalities or provinces);
- The private grant-aided school network (private denominational and non-denominational entities).

30. To ensure free education in both the public and the private sector, the French Community subsidises schools in the various networks by paying teachers’ salaries and providing operating and construction grants. To receive this funding, however, the schools in each network must meet specific requirements, ensuring for instance that their study programmes comply with decrees, that they meet the rules on minimum class sizes, and that they undergo inspection by the Inspectorate and the Audit Department.

31. The large number of organising authorities has generated a wide range of study programmes and methods. There is no common curriculum, no set list of textbooks, and little enthusiasm among teachers or parents for the type of central *baccalauréat* (secondary-school leaving certificate) found in France. Hence the risk of excessive disparities between schools in terms of attainment. This does appear to be the case,

judging by the FCB's performance on the PISA Programme⁶ (OECD, 2002b). To redress the situation, the French Community Government has introduced several measures to bring a degree of standardisation to study programmes and reduce inequalities between schools.

32. The most important of those measures is the "Missions" Decree (27 July 1997), which obliges schools to develop the competencies of their pupils and accredit proficiency at key stages in their schooling. Since 1999, for instance, the following have been developed:

- Competence thresholds (*socles de compétences*) in primary and lower secondary education;
- Final competencies (*compétences terminales*) and required skills for pupils on general and technological humanities courses, and by pupils on technical and vocational humanities courses;
- Training profiles (*profils de formation*) for pupils on technical diploma courses and vocational education courses.

33. Several Commissions have been set up to implement the Missions Decree and enhance school system management:

- The French Community Education System Management Commission (Decree of 27 March 2002, *Moniteur belge*, 17 May 2002), which draws its members from a variety of education bodies;
- Working parties to draw up benchmark skill frameworks (competence thresholds, final skills, training profiles);
- Programme Commissions to check that the curriculum complies with the legislation;
- Evaluation-tool Commissions to draw up evaluation matrices and accreditation tests.

34. Education system management is backed up with an inspection mechanism that may be either internal, with the onus on the principal to ensure that learning is in line with benchmark skills and accreditation testing is well organised; or external, in which case it is conducted by the Inspectorate with a mandate to check on curriculum delivery and educational attainment, regardless of the school network.

35. There is also an Accreditation Commission which is there to verify on a purely formal basis whether schools comply with the law and regulations. Its main remit is to issue Upper Secondary Education Certificates (*Certificats de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur*, or CESS).

36. The "Missions" Decree represented a significant measure for the reform of mandatory schooling. The current French Community Government has drawn up a Charter for the Future of the Wallonia-Brussels Community, adopted on 26 September 2001; the aim is to promote the knowledge society and "raise attainment throughout the population". The Charter for the Future includes an Action Plan with 17 priorities and supplementary initiatives with particular emphasis on teaching and teachers (see Beckers *et al.*, 2003).

37. In terms of educational return, the FCB has one of the world's highest rates of enrolment in higher education and a large share of higher education graduates (over 30%, compared with 26% in France

⁶ Programme for International Student Assessment.

and 24% in the Netherlands). The education system performs less well, however, when it comes to access to upper secondary qualifications: under 40% in the FCB, compared with 49% in France, 50% in the Netherlands and 65% in Germany (Vandenberghe, 2002). This means that there are more young people in the French Community leaving the education system with lower skills, i.e. a lower secondary qualification.

38. The second feature of the FCB education system, in terms of outcomes, is its disappointing performance in international student assessments. The findings of both the 1995 survey and the 2000 PISA assessment show average attainment among FCB pupils aged 14/15 in their own language, mathematics and science to be below the participating-country average. They also reveal a problem of equity, in that performance varies a great deal, and more than elsewhere, with a student's socio-economic background.

2.4 Initial teacher education

39. Initial teacher education in French-speaking Belgium has undergone change over the past decade, reflecting specific traditions and constraints (in particular financial ones), but also genuine political determination to keep up with broad trends in the education system (the Missions Decree and new study programmes) and international trends in initial teacher education.

40. The Belgian teacher education system has always been a dual structure with two separate routes: a “consecutive” university-based training route for upper-secondary teachers (*agrégés*), and a “concurrent” tertiary short-cycle route (in the education departments of the *hautes écoles* or colleges of education) for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary teachers. In addition to this dual structure, but smaller in numerical terms, is a third route via the adult education (or “social advancement”) sector, which trains technical and vocational teachers. However, this third sector was not affected by the recent decrees on teacher education (12 December 2000 and 8 February 2001).

41. International trends are towards university-based education for all primary and secondary education and the professionalisation of training and teaching. However, in its recent reform of initial teacher education the FCB has – for various reasons – maintained its dual education structure and refrained from making all initial education university-based. While it is never easy to unify structures that have long been separate, with their own culture and practices, financial considerations appear to have been the decisive factor here, preventing the integration of all teacher education courses into a single university-based route.

42. The FCB has therefore endeavoured to unify and organise its teacher education in other ways, rather than via an institutional approach. Every teacher education course, for instance, has been reviewed in light of 13 competencies common to all teachers and 6 facets of their profession (social player, researcher, teacher, person, practitioner and subject specialist). Table 1 summarises initial education in the *hautes écoles* (non-university tertiary level institutions) and in universities, in light of those six facets.

Table 1. Organisation of initial teacher education

Facets	<i>Haute école (educational science department)</i> « Concurrent » route	University «Consecutive » route	
	Teacher education diploma 3 years	Candidature and degree 4 years	Upper secondary teaching diploma (AESS) 300h
Social player	<i>Social and cultural skills specific to the profession</i> 165h		<i>Social and cultural skills specific to the profession</i> 30h
Researcher	<i>Scientific reasoning and research approaches</i> 60h		<i>Pedagogical skills</i> 60h
Teacher	<i>Pedagogical skills</i> 160h		
Person	<i>Social-emotional and interpersonal skills</i> 120h		<i>Social-emotional and interpersonal skills</i> 30h
Practitioner	<i>Know-how</i> 690h		<i>Know-how</i> 90h
Subject specialist	<i>Subject-specific and interdisciplinary knowledge</i> 880h (subject-specific and didactic knowledge) 165h (ICT skills, use of language)	<i>Subject-specific and interdisciplinary knowledge</i> Average of 2 000h	
	<i>Interdisciplinary work to develop professional identity</i> 120h		
	<i>Autonomy</i> 100 - 346h		<i>Autonomy</i> 90h
Total	2 465 - 2 711hours	Approximately 2 300 hours	

Source: Beckers et al., p. 54.

43. The new initial teacher education course for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary teachers, delivered by educational science departments in the colleges of education (*hautes écoles*), still lasts three years. Whether for pre-primary, primary or lower secondary teachers, training in these colleges of education makes the same demands on students and comprises the same number of hours. The number of hours given over to pedagogical training is the same. To develop professional identity, some courses now bring together students from all three sections. A variety of features – vocational training workshops with the participation of practical training instructors⁷, new, more progressive teaching-practice arrangements, payment (however inadequate) for teaching-practice supervisors⁸, and partnership agreements between the *haute école* and the school providing teaching-practice – reveal the emphasis on vocational skill development and a reflective approach to initial education. As for training content, the decree provides for an increase in the number of hours given over to French to improve teachers' knowledge of the language, training in didactics, as distinct from subject-specific knowledge, and new education courses that are compulsory for all student teachers and cover education technology, class management techniques, cultural diversity, education research and professional identity.

44. Initial education for upper secondary teachers is still university-based and consecutive. However, it is now longer, with greater emphasis on the teaching-practice component. Teaching practice falls into

⁷ Half-time primary or secondary schoolteachers who work with the college's psycho-pedagogical team within the framework of vocational training workshops. Their role is to increase the emphasis on the practical side of these workshops.

⁸ Primary or secondary schoolteachers who take student teachers into their class.

three categories: participant observation, actual teaching, and non-teaching activities relating to school life and interactions with school players. There are also study seminars to work on the links between theory and practice. As for teachers at the pre-primary, primary and lower secondary level, the education for upper secondary teachers now includes payment (albeit very small) for teaching-practice supervisors as well as partnership agreements between the university and the school providing teaching experience.

45. Until recently, subject specialists and didacticians were the only teacher-education staff in the *hautes écoles* who were not required to undertake special training for the job. To ensure that teacher trainers have themselves received initial training, the Decree of 17 July 2002 introduces and defines a teaching proficiency qualification for higher education, the CAPAES (*Certificat d'aptitude pédagogique approprié à l'enseignement supérieur*). The 210-hour course, leading to a certificate of proficiency rather than a diploma, provides staff in the *hautes écoles* with teacher education skills. It is run by universities and adult education facilities.

46. Besides the technical teacher-training departments in the *hautes écoles*, most technical and vocational teachers are trained in the adult education system, which awards a CAP (*Certificat d'aptitude pédagogique*) for teaching proficiency. This is a modular course based on the acquisition of credits and culminating in an "integrated test" to confirm proficiency in the core subjects.

47. Despite some variation in student teacher enrolment since 1991/92, the teaching profession is still attracting at least as many people as it did a decade ago. There has been a significant rise in enrolment for primary-school teacher education and adult education training since 1991/92 (see Beckers *et al*, 2003).

2.5 Professional development for teachers

48. In the FCB, continuing teacher-education practices have always varied considerably across school networks, and even across OAs. In pre-primary and primary education, the teaching inspectorate is involved in the organization of in-service training. In secondary education in the French Community school network, the inspectorate was a driving force in this field until the recent reforms. And then there are the teachers' associations (many of them subject-specific) that can help to promote networking between teachers at work, develop continuing training provision, and deliver relatively inexpensive courses geared to teachers' needs.

49. Only recently has professional development become a national concern and an education policy component. In 2002, continuing teacher education (6 half-days a year) became mandatory. It is now acknowledged as a right but also a responsibility and a professional obligation. In theory, the school's education team must draw up a training plan to lend a degree of coherence to in-service training and ensure it is relevant to school life.

50. The FCB is making inter-network education a priority. A Continuing Education Institute is accordingly being set up, with a dual remit:

- a) To enable teachers to develop and use the didactic and pedagogical practices promoted by the Missions Decree (skill-based approach, constructive learning-integrated evaluation, ICT use), and
- b) To continue the development of teaching skills begun with initial teacher education.

51. These developments, policymakers hope, should help to promote an increasingly de-compartmentalised form of professional development.

2.6 The labour market for teachers

52. In the school year 2001-2002, there were some 92 800 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts for teaching and non-teaching staff in FCB schools. The job breakdown was as follows: teaching staff: 84.8%; management staff: 2.8%; administrative staff: 1.6%; education support staff: 5.3%, “other” personnel: 5.5% (see Annex 4). Of the 78 655 FTE teachers, 43% were in pre-primary and primary education, 49% in secondary education and 8% in special education (see Beckers *et al.*). The breakdown of FTE teachers by school network was as follows: 47.8% were employed in private grant-aided schools (39.3% in pre-primary/primary and 55.2% in secondary education), 33% in public grant-aided schools (50.8% in pre-primary/primary and 18.6% in secondary education) and 19.2% in French Community schools (9.9% in pre-primary/primary and 26.2% in secondary education).

53. The teaching workforce is largely feminised, as 83.5% of pre-primary and primary teachers, 58.3% of secondary teachers and 63.4% of special teachers are women. A significant proportion of them (26.6%) work part time. Furthermore, the teaching workforce is gradually ageing. In 2002, the share of teachers aged 50 years and older was 22.8% in pre-primary and primary education, 36% in secondary education and 31.4% in the special sector, and the figures have been rising steadily since at least 1992 (when they were respectively 13.3%, 23% and 16.8%).

54. Organising authorities are responsible for the recruitment, selection and allocation of teachers, and the rules in each case (for instance the extent to which school principals are involved in the selection process) differ across OAs. Officially, teachers are employed by the OAs, although they are all paid centrally on the same pay scales. The diversity of their recruitment and promotion procedures is reflected in a high degree of administrative and legal complexity. Although it is the organising authority that recruits and dismisses teachers, school principals play quite a significant role in the process. First, many of them are directly involved in recruitment decisions. Second, to cover for absent staff they select temporary teachers whom they put forward to the OA for recruitment. They are also asked to conduct staff appraisals which may then set in train the dismissal process.

55. With regard to teacher status, there are three distinct phases: “temporary” (from a teacher’s first appointment), “priority temporary” (based on length of service and other requirements) and “permanent appointment” with public servant status (see Annex 4). One important point is that length of service in one OA is not necessarily recognised by other OAs when awarding permanent status, and this can be a real barrier to career mobility.

56. Owing to a lack of statistics on the main routes into teaching, there is very little information on teachers’ access to the labour market. The main route into the profession appears to be via initial education. However, there is no information on mobility between the various school networks. Moreover, few teachers enter the profession after a career elsewhere, possibly because the terms of employment are not very attractive (e.g. temporary status, little recognition for length of service).

57. With regard to teacher shortages, it would appear from our review interviews and from the evidence gleaned for the 2002 Teacher Shortage Action Plan that the problem lies mainly in the availability of replacement teachers during the school year – particularly in winter – but that it has little impact on recruitment at the start of the school year. This lack of replacement teachers is felt to varying degrees depending on the region (urban areas being the hardest hit), the subject (Germanic languages, science, technical courses, practical vocational courses) and the school (reputedly difficult schools, schools practising positive discrimination). However, there are no indicators enabling this to be measured with any precision. The new Future Staffing Unit (*Cellule de prospective de l’emploi dans l’enseignement*) was set up in 2002 to fill the gaps in systematic data. A further point with regard to trends in demand for teachers

is that a slight decline in the school-age population is forecast over the next few decades (enrolment down 3% within 10 years, see Annex 4).

58. The Teacher Shortage Action Plan was drawn up jointly in 2002 by a range of stakeholders in education (unions, OAs, parents' associations, ministries). It suggests a number of short- and medium- to long-term measures, but no decisions have yet been taken regarding their implementation (Beckers *et al.*).

59. The unions play a key role in negotiations on status and pay throughout the public services, including teaching. They are based on political orientation (socialist, Catholic and liberal) and type of school network (public or private). Wage moderation remains high on the agenda. An agreement under the 2001 refinancing project will raise the profile of the teaching profession with a 1% pay rise across the board by 2004. Other issues addressed during the latest negotiations in 2002 included: teacher shortages, bringing down network and status barriers, how the profession is organised, and social recognition.

2.7 Teaching careers and incentive schemes

60. At the moment, newly qualified teachers are not systematically given support when entering the profession. Broad support arrangements for teachers starting out on their careers feature in the plan to upgrade initial teacher education, but they have not yet been put in place⁹. Newly qualified teachers, who have temporary status, experience job insecurity. They are uncertain as to how their careers will develop, at least in the early stages, as they may have to wait at least ten years for a permanent appointment. This depends mainly on the type of school, the subject they teach and the school's location.

Box 1: A young teachers' handbook

Le petit guide du jeune enseignant is a small, 60-page handbook published by the Education System Management Department in the French Community Ministry, as one of a series of measures to support newly qualified teachers. There are three parts. Part One answers two questions: 1° Where, when and how can I apply for a teaching post in a school? and 2° When can I obtain a permanent appointment? Part Two addresses interviews with principals, contact with colleagues and workload management inside and outside the classroom. According to the handbook, the interview with the school principal should provide a young teacher with useful information on the broad educational setting, study programmes and subjects, activities inside and outside the classroom, and administrative procedures. The section on contact with colleagues encourages young teachers to assume their role in the school, in the education team and in the profession as a whole. There is also guidance on how to manage the workload inside and outside the classroom, with advice divided into three sections: managing groups, managing learning and managing relations. The third and final part, entitled "Broadening your horizons", is on in-service education and European exchanges. The handbook also contains practical information, including a glossary of common terms and some useful addresses for all young teachers.

61. For teachers with the necessary qualifications, wages are set out in pay scales that vary with the level of education (pre-primary and primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary) (see Annex 4). Currently, several ministerial Orders are being phased in to streamline the pay scales for pre-primary and primary schoolteachers (finalised in 2000), and for pre-primary/primary and lower-secondary teachers (to be finalised in 2005). Pay is largely determined by length of service. Primary teachers and lower-secondary teachers reach their highest pay levels after 27 years' service, and upper secondary teachers after 25 years. Allowances (e.g. household allowance, extra workload allowance) may also be granted subject to specific criteria, as may bonuses (e.g. for staff in special schools), but they do not represent a large share

⁹ One very worthwhile initiative has been the recent launch of an information brochure for teachers setting out on their careers. This publication, *Petit guide du jeune enseignant*, is available on the Internet at: <http://www.agers.cfwb.be/prof/info/ens/guidejeunens/index.asp> See Box 1 for further details.

of pay (see Annex 4). There was a slight fall in real wages from 1996 to 2001 (typically by 1 to 2%, see Annex 4), as a result of the FCB's financial difficulties.

62. Promotion prospects are confined to the post of principal, deputy principal, workshop manager and inspector. Those appointed to such posts usually have to leave teaching and the wage premium does not accurately reflect the additional responsibilities. A principal may earn only €150 more a month than an experienced teacher. And that teacher can always participate in the administrative side of education as a *chargé de mission* (representing the school in another capacity).

63. As well as having leave arrangements similar to those of other public service workers (annual leave, special and personal leave, sick leave, leave for union/political activities), teachers are also entitled to take leave to work in other education facilities or elsewhere, and leave to exercise other duties in the education system on a provisional basis.

64. Although some appraisal procedures may lead to dismissal, teachers on permanent contracts enjoy high job security. On the other hand, many newly qualified teachers leave the profession after only a few years, precisely because of the lack of job security.

2.8 Teachers in the workplace

65. Teaching in FCB schools is not subject to detailed regulations, nor is there any statement of teachers' job profiles and competencies. The FCB is one of the only education systems in Europe where a teacher's working time is still defined largely in terms of the number of class teaching hours (Eurydice, 2003). Apart from a few exceptions in the primary system, there is no regulation of overall working hours, time spent at school, or time spent on duties other than teaching.

66. Non-teaching duties are not defined either, with the exception of a few areas, i.e. cover for absent teachers, collaborative work on the school plan, interdisciplinarity, and internal evaluation (Annex 4). Other established features of a teacher's job such as research, pedagogical guidance, co-ordination, administrative assistance, meetings with parents, pupil supervision and induction for young teachers are not an institutional feature of teaching management in the FCB.

67. In terms of hours, teacher workloads vary with the level of schooling and decrease for older pupils. In primary schools, full-time teachers give from 22 to 24 fifty-minute classes a week, attend 60 meeting-periods a year and may be asked to supervise pupils; however, the total must not exceed 962 hours in any school year. In secondary schools, regulation is confined to the number of teaching hours. Full-time teachers in general or technical education have 22 to 24 fifty-minute teaching periods a week at lower secondary level and 20 to 22 periods at upper secondary level. Practical vocational teachers have to teach 22 to 24 periods a week at lower secondary level and 30 periods otherwise. The number of teaching hours is slightly above the OECD average (see Annex 4).

68. The resources allocated to individual schools depend on the level of education and on enrolment (number and type of pupils). Each primary school is given a "period-endowment" (*capital-périodes*) – each block of 24 periods constitutes one full-time teaching post – whereas secondary schools are allocated teacher-periods (*périodes-professeurs*). Primary schools are also allocated a number of managerial units for supervision purposes, while secondary schools receive six hours in addition to their teacher-periods, which can be divided up among teachers to cover staff meetings and educational co-ordination.

69. School principals and/or organising authorities have some flexibility in using the resources granted to them as a period-endowment or a number of teacher-periods. They can gear the timetable to the school's needs by transferring periods and, for instance, launching a French language class for beginners, offering a second language, introducing differentiated teaching, combating educational failure,

setting up a media resource centre or promoting school/community links, with the approval of the School Board and the teaching staff¹⁰. However, the amount of flexibility required of teachers in the FCB is among the lowest in Europe, according to a recent study (Eurydice, 2003)¹¹.

70. Each school is allocated a number of posts for education support staff (e.g. supervisor/teacher, supervisor/youth worker, social worker) and administrative support staff (e.g. bursar, typist, personal assistant, librarian/secretary, clerk), based on pupil enrolment. However, principals may use their period-endowment or teacher-periods as additional resources for educational or administrative support staff. The number of such posts varies substantially with the level of schooling, and there are far fewer in primary education. Primary schools have virtually no education support staff but have recently seen a sharp rise in administrative staff, although not to the levels found in secondary schools. As for “other” staff (psychological/paramedical/social staff, maintenance/operations personnel), numbers have risen in primary schools but are falling steadily at secondary level.

71. Resources also vary with the type of intake. Schools that practise positive discrimination and those that take in *primo-arrivants* (newly arrived refugee pupils) receive additional human and physical resources. Additional teacher-periods can be used to reduce class sizes, introduce differentiated teaching or set up French language classes for beginners. Physical resources can serve to provide meeting areas and libraries, develop school premises or improve poor working conditions.

72. The school environment in which teachers prepare and plan their lessons appears to be inadequate. Most teachers do not have their own office or computer, and the facilities are ill suited to staff meetings or meetings with pupils and/or parents. It is not surprising, for instance, that full-time teachers in private Catholic grant-aided schools do most of their non-teaching work at home – 64% of work outside the classroom is done at home, according to a survey of 3 600 secondary teachers in private Catholic grant-aided schools (Maroy, 2002)¹².

73. The average class size in the FCB is relatively small. In the primary sector, regardless of the network, the average is 20.5 pupils (compared with the OECD average of 22), while in the lower secondary schools run by the French Community it is 21.4 (compared with the OECD average of 23.8) (Annex 4).

74. To address pedagogical problems or meet the challenge of teaching mixed groups, there are rules and recommendations on support measures for teachers. In the event of pedagogical problems, support is provided mainly by principals, inspectors, pedagogical advisers or psychologists (Eurydice, 2003)¹³. To

¹⁰ Maroy (2002) gives the percentage of total teacher-periods given over to non-teaching activities in secondary schools in the private Catholic grant-aided network.

¹¹ This gives three factors of flexibility: job description (inexistent in the FCB), the breakdown of working hours into teaching and non-teaching activities (minimum flexibility in the FCB) and scope to extend teaching workload (which is feasible in the FCB where required, but with no extra pay).

¹² However, teachers' views on the infrastructure are fairly positive, at least among secondary teachers in the private Catholic grant-aided sector – where 61% find the premises in good condition rather than run down, 57% find them spacious rather than cramped, and 55% find them quiet rather than noisy (Maroy, 2002). But several mentioned dilapidated, cramped or noisy facilities (Maroy, 2002 and Beckers *et al.*, 2003).

¹³ There are four aspects to mixed class teaching in this study : pupils with special educational needs, migrant pupils, pupils with social problems (disadvantaged background, social misfits) and pupils with different learning abilities (backward or gifted).

address personal problems or cases of interpersonal conflict involving other members of the education community – pupils, parents and/or colleagues – no systematic support is available (Eurydice, 2003).

75. The additional instructional personnel made available to very mixed classes include the new post of *enseignant médiateur* (teacher-mediator) to promote the integration of pupils with special needs (Eurydice, 2003). This is in a setting that features very little scope for the diversification of tasks and responsibilities in the course of a teaching career within FCB schools. Apart from posts in management or as pedagogical advisers or inspectors, the recently created posts of *maître de formation pratique* (practical training instructor) and *maître de stage* (teaching-practice supervisor) are among the few other jobs available to schoolteachers. Other roles such as young teacher's mentor, in-service education co-ordinator within a school, or subject-group co-ordinator are not institutionalised.

76. One interesting point is that of all the relations between school players (pupils, teachers, parents, principals), it is communication and relations between management and teachers that appear to be the least satisfactory – 30% of teachers consider them to be rather poor at secondary level in the private Catholic grant-aided sector (Maroy, 2002). As for relations between other colleagues in the same school, according to the same study, 63% of the sample consider that mutual support outweighs individualism, but it is worth noting that the least positive aspect relates to the ability to work together: 44% say they are unable to work with others (Maroy, 2002). This is not surprising, given that the facilities are not conducive to teamwork, and insufficient time is set aside for collaborative work in secondary schools. In primary education, on the other hand, teamwork has become a must, with the advent of joint initiatives and *compagnonnage* (mentoring).

77. Finally, there is evidence that absenteeism among teachers is very similar to that in other occupational groups, that newly qualified temporary teachers and older teachers approaching retirement are not given lighter timetables, and that many temporary teachers have to work in more than one school, in some cases quite a distance apart.

2.9 School management, evaluation and accountability

78. The responsibility for managing schools lies with the organising authorities, which enjoy substantial discretion. However, the OAs usually delegate their powers and responsibilities to school principals, who are thus in a key position when it comes to leadership.

79. Secondary schools have one or more deputy principals, depending on the number of pupils enrolled. In pre-primary and primary schools, however, principals have no deputies and only a small administrative team, and they may be asked to do some teaching in addition to their managerial and administrative duties.

80. The principal's autonomy is restricted not only in terms of education but also in terms of staff management and recruitment. Furthermore, the inspectorate has a say in how schools operate and the principal must also take into account the views of the School Board (*Conseil de participation*). The provisions of the Missions Decree must be complied with, particularly with regard to education, and it is up to principals to enforce them in their schools. The Missions Decree also requires each school to develop its own plan (*projet d'établissement*) to meet its pedagogical and educational goals, making this another area in which principals enjoy some autonomy.

81. Each school has its own School Board comprising the principal, OA officials, elected representatives of teachers, pupils, parents' associations and technical/administrative staff, as well as members of the social, cultural and economic community. The Board's main remit is to approve the

school plan, which sets out the educational priorities that the education team, led by the principal, implements with the school's partners.

82. The School Board must also be consulted if the principal wishes to transfer teacher-periods in order to set up a media resource or cybermedia centre, for instance.

83. The reforms under way are designed to foster a culture that promotes management, monitoring and evaluation in the FCB education system. The management system created in response to the Missions Decree comprises the Education System Management Commission, working parties focusing on benchmark skills (competence thresholds, final competencies, training profiles), Programme Commissions and Evaluation-tool Commissions, all of which are there to help meet the Missions Decree goals.

84. The Education System Management Commission covers all of the school networks and its members include government officials, inspectors, pedagogical experts, OA officials and representatives of the unions and parents' associations, all elected for 4-year mandates. The Commission's remit includes (i) supporting, promoting and evaluating reform; (ii) providing the education system with a coherent set of indicators; (iii) co-ordinating pedagogical and evaluation tools; (iv) organising educational research and development and ensuring that schools benefit from the findings; (v) organising external evaluations; and (vi) shedding light on the situation and trends in the education system, the problems it encounters and any shortfalls in relation to forecasts.

85. The Charter for the Future, adopted by the FCB Government on 26 September 2001 along with an Action Plan (31 January 2002), has an agenda to promote an evaluation culture, reform of the inspection process (which is to cover all the school networks) and greater support for school principals, who will be given special status.

86. This broad raft of reforms is bound to change the culture, practice and impact of evaluation in the FCB education system. However, current practice is still well off target. Where whole school evaluation is concerned, there is no systematic approach. In the schools run by the French Community, the central FCB inspectorate provides education management in the form of pedagogical guidance and helps to draw up curricula and perfect teaching methods, but does so in an unsystematic and limited way. Under the new legislation, each school must submit an activity report on the previous year to the Management Commission.

87. In the grant-aided sector, school inspection and evaluation take place at three levels¹⁴:

- a) The pedagogical aspects are evaluated by the organising authority's inspectorate, and practices may vary considerably across OAs;
- b) The French Community inspectorate sees to it that the school complies with requirements in terms of the curriculum, minimum number of hours, and level of education;
- c) A central auditing department monitors the proper use of French Community grants.

88. Under the Action Plan in the Charter for the Future, inspection services are to be reformed and this should facilitate their role as an intermediary with the Management Commission. The aim is to open up the inspection of compulsory education and broaden its cover to all of the school networks. This would make for more consistent, systematic pedagogical guidance and evaluation practices.

¹⁴ Pre-primary and primary education has its own inspection structure, with separate central services to inspect schools run by the French Community on the one hand and grant-aided schools on the other.

89. Also on the Charter's agenda is support for the work of principals, who would be given special status. Under the reform, principals would be given special training on the three main aspects of their remit: (i) the relational aspect: principals are responsible for relations with the education team, parents, pupils and the community; (ii) the pedagogical and educational aspect: principals are responsible for implementing the school plan, competence thresholds and – in conjunction with the Inspectorate – teacher evaluation and (iii) the administrative aspect: principals are mainly responsible for financial management and organisation in their schools.

90. There is currently no formal evaluation of the work of school principals. The reform now being introduced will propose that they undergo a constructive appraisal by the OA every five years. No sanctions should ensue, but the principal may have to undertake further training.

91. Teacher evaluation depends on the school network employing them and on their administrative status. In the French Community school network, the responsibility for evaluation lies mainly with the school management. A report on the performance of temporary or "priority temporary" teachers is drafted at the end of each contract but only where appropriate – typically when the teacher's performance is below standard. For teachers with permanent status, school principals may draft an annual appraisal, judging their performance to be "very good", "good" or "poor", but this is not common practice. Central services at the ministry keep files on each teacher, including their teaching appraisals, and a "poor" appraisal automatically leads to a further appraisal one school year later. The French Community Schools Inspectorate also has a remit to evaluate staff, but this is only mandatory for temporary staff without the necessary qualifications, hired when there are no more teachers in the recruitment pool. There is seldom much contact between inspectors and unqualified teachers.

92. In the grant-aided schools, responsibility for teacher evaluation lies with the organising authority, which generally uses its own inspection services. Here too the focus is on teachers without permanent status. Evaluation practices, like the principal's role, vary enormously across OAs. Furthermore, the French Community inspectorate is not authorised to assess staff working in grant-aided schools.

93. Regardless of the school network, any teacher without permanent status may be dismissed with up to three months' notice on the proposal of the school principal or the inspector in the case of French Community schools, and the organising authority official in grant-aided networks. Only in the French Community network may teachers with permanent status be dismissed if there is evidence that they are unfit to teach, i.e. if they have received three consecutive annual appraisals showing their teaching to be "poor". In each case, teachers have a right of appeal to the *chambre des recours* (board of appeal).

3. STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN TEACHER POLICY

3.1 Education system governance

94. The governance of the FCB education system has considerable strengths. One outstanding feature is the political determination to undertake long-term root and branch reform with well-defined goals, initiated by identifying issues from the outset. The Charter for the Future and its Action Plan reflect the French Community Government's priorities, particularly with regard to compulsory and non-compulsory education, up to 2010. The Missions Decree is truly revolutionary in that educational content

is defined in terms of a set of benchmark skills to be achieved at key stages in a pupil's schooling, thereby providing an indirect means of assessment as well as ensuring a more equitable system.

95. To achieve these reforms, the Government has set up the necessary legal framework and instituted a management system, with a Management Commission (*Commission de pilotage*) for schools run or subsidised by the French Community, to implement and monitor reform. The Government is also trying to involve a large number of players in the consultation and legislative process, in a deliberate move to capitalise on partnership and dialogue. The Management Commission, like the Round Table set up recently to tackle teacher shortages, are concrete examples of this.

96. Another of the FCB's strengths is the substantial amount of freedom and autonomy enjoyed all round, largely because there are so many organising authorities in charge of education. At the same time, the French Community is making a noticeable effort to make the system coherent and iron out glaring disparities. The benchmark skills framework introduced by the Missions Decree, and the establishment of inspection services covering all school networks – an Action Plan priority in the Charter for the Future – are in keeping with this.

97. Similarly, school funding and more specifically the positive discrimination mechanism are a way of assisting the schools that take in pupils from low-income backgrounds. And the Government's determination to keep schools on a human scale and class sizes down reflects its concern with preventing social conflict and ensuring some degree of social justice.

98. Finally, the funding method whereby schools are granted a period-endowment or total number of teacher-periods is a fair system which also gives organising authorities and principals substantial autonomy in running their schools and a good deal of flexibility with their timetables. This kind of funding also confers more direct responsibility on schools, based as it is on enrolment and hence the school's potential to attract pupils and parents.

99. However, freedom of choice for parents and competition between schools may also have adverse effects. Schools with a good reputation may be tempted to base enrolment on social criteria, to the detriment of pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Conversely, the schools that take in the disadvantaged pupils can find it hard to recruit teachers and may see their resource endowment eroded, in spite of the compensation provided via the positive discrimination mechanism.

100. Another adverse effect of an education system offering a good deal of freedom but dependent on a whole host of players lies in its complexity and the co-ordination problems that arise. Because there are so many organising authorities, it is not always clear to see where responsibilities lie, and so the system lacks transparency. Furthermore, the many different tiers of responsibility make it easy to blame others when dysfunctions occur. One question that springs to mind is whether co-ordination is enhanced when policy guidance comes from four different ministries.

101. Regardless of the beneficial impacts that the Government's drive for reform has had on the education system, there is nonetheless some distance between those who devise the reforms and those who have to put them into practice. Primary and secondary teachers do not always understand the case for reform, and there is a risk that they will "endure" them rather than contributing actively to the process. Furthermore, some group players such as teachers' associations, with pedagogical knowledge in their own disciplines, regret not having been consulted when the reforms were being drawn up.

102. As for consolidating and evaluating reform, there is evidence that the support and management arrangements are inadequate, given the scale of the reforms, and that there are currently no systems in

place to check the acquisition of the requisite competencies at key stages, particularly upon completion of upper secondary schooling.

103. Another fact to be faced is that it is very hard to introduce reform without additional funding, as the French Community Government plans to do. The result is a mismatch between the aims of the reform and the funding available for it, and schools sometimes have to be very imaginative in finding additional resources.

3.2 Initial teacher education

104. One of the most beneficial aspects of the reform of initial education for primary and secondary schoolteachers concerns the principles and guidance issued and endorsed by stakeholders. They include professional unity and the professionalisation of training, a clearer, streamlined teacher profile with 13 competencies common to all education courses, closer integration of education theory and practice, and the development of a reflective approach, formal partnerships with schools providing teaching practice, and recognition for the role played by working teachers in the delivery of teacher education.

105. Also worth highlighting is the reform now under way of upper-secondary teacher education (*agrégation*), which is to be longer, with more practical training – teaching practice and study seminars – and the introduction of a didactics course. Any reform of secondary-teacher education is difficult, given the many players involved, strong traditions in individual disciplines and the autonomy enjoyed by universities, and requires genuine political will on the part of the authority behind the reform. Hence the importance here of acknowledging the effort that has been made.

106. The introduction of the CAPAES for teaching staff in short-cycle higher education is also a significant way of improving training at that level, particularly in the educational science departments of the *hautes écoles*.

107. All of the changes under way in the various teacher education routes are part of a broader, key reform of pre-primary, primary and secondary education. One concern is to tie in the teacher education curriculum with the competence thresholds introduced at primary and lower secondary level, and the emphasis on the professionalisation of teacher education is consistent with the reform of school study programmes.

108. Another strength of initial teacher education is the system of interconnected pathways within the *hautes écoles* and between universities and the *hautes écoles*. In the same vein – promoting de-compartmentalisation, mobility and flexible pathways – the opportunities for people from other branches of activity to enter teaching via adult education are interesting and deserve to be promoted and evaluated in order to grasp their full implications and their impact on youth motivation and learning.

109. Observational and analytical work by the review team has also singled out the following challenges for attention.

110. As mentioned above with broad reference to all of the changes now under way, reforming teacher education without granting additional resources, at least during the introductory phase, often poses problems. Hence the large classes in the *hautes écoles*, and the low remuneration for supervising students on teaching practice. And it explains why universities are only tentatively expanding into educational and pedagogical science, as they have to shoulder the full cost.

111. The new teacher education course provided by the *hautes écoles* is segmented into small units and appears to give student teachers a large number of small tasks, assignments and examinations. There is a risk that they might lose sight of the overall picture, absorbed as they are in rushing to attend lectures,

hand in assignments and revise for examinations. One reason for this is the way the education curriculum has been put together, encouraging students to adopt short-term strategies rather than viewing their education as the development of high-level, long-term professional skills.

112. Subject-specific education for lower secondary teachers is still specialised and does not make for the necessary versatility. What is more, there is no bridge between lower and upper secondary education.

113. In spite of the reform, the *agrégation* (upper secondary teaching diploma) still poses several problems: relatively few hours are given over to teaching practice; there is also strong subject specialisation and little versatility or interdisciplinarity; the curriculum appears to be divided into separate subjects, with few joint activities to help develop professional identity among secondary schoolteachers; finally, education science plays a very minor role.

114. Also worth pointing out is the lack of training for special education trainers. And in the adult education sector, no qualifications are required for teachers on CAP (teaching proficiency) courses. The impression is that this sector, like special education, has been overlooked in the reform.

115. Finally, no systematic evaluation of teacher-education programmes appears to have been incorporated into the reform or the necessary follow-up. Consensus-building around the reform has no doubt taken up much of the energy available, and the introduction of systematic evaluation mechanisms has been somewhat overlooked and postponed, as is often the case.

3.3 Continuing teacher education and transition to the labour market

116. It is important to highlight recent developments in continuing teacher education; the policy statement that such training is now both a right and a responsibility for anyone in the teaching profession is of symbolic importance. Similarly, the newly established Continuing Education Institute, covering all school networks, should definitely make for better implementation of the curricular reform now being introduced; it should also promote a continuing education culture throughout the system, strengthening professional identity in all those attending such courses.

117. The pilot project (action research) in which more experienced teachers support their younger colleagues also acknowledges the importance of the transition to work, while at the same time exploring the most promising developments in this field.

Box 2: An experimental system of transition to work (University of Liège, Department of Education and Training)

This pilot project, with its action research approach, explores two interdependent avenues. The first consists in work with young teachers who have been qualified for one or two years and have had at least one temporary contract. The work takes the form of monthly meetings, in which the group can begin finding answers to their questions, with or without the presence of resource persons.

Three types of meeting have been held during the first year of this trial scheme:

- Information meetings (discussion evenings), with speakers who have some experience of the issues addressed; time is always set aside for young teachers to ask questions.
- More education-orientated meetings to develop target skills within a given period of time. Examples include an Internet session for beginners, focusing on teaching-related websites;
- Projects selected by small groups of primary and lower-secondary schoolteachers.

The second avenue consists in gathering information from all the players in the education system to identify the initiatives they are already taking with regard to the transition to work, and the role they could see themselves playing under new arrangements. A questionnaire-based survey has been carried out among school principals, and individual interviews have been conducted in the Inspectorate, continuous education facilities, initial education institutions and teachers' associations. The research report on these experiments has not yet been published.

118. The review team was also struck by the vitality and commitment of teachers' associations in the field of continuing education, in spite of scarce resources. As well as a large pool of skills, there is an impetus for networking that is an asset worth promoting, as part of a move to encourage teachers to take some responsibility for their own continuing education; this in turn should step up the professionalisation of teaching.

119. Several aspects of continuing training appear to be problematic. First, our observations and limited but convergent discussions with a wide range of stakeholders suggest that a genuinely supported and managed transition to work varied with the school and players (management and teaching colleagues). In this area, practices did not appear to be sufficiently institutionalised or widespread to provide reassurance about the conditions in which young teachers are entering the labour market.

120. Second, there is evidence of time-lags and delays in developing in-service education for the 1997 reform (competence thresholds) across school networks. While this is acknowledged to be a major and complex reform, delays in delivering training to enable teachers to implement the changes in a co-ordinated, cost-effective manner is posing problems. Without the right support at the right time, there is a risk that goodwill and openness to change on the part of teachers might turn into rejection and resistance, or resignation. Genuine change involves a learning curve, and that often calls for additional training.

121. Understandably, pupils should not have to pay the price for the in-service education given to teachers during school hours. Any teacher attending in-service education should therefore be replaced. This seems to pose numerous problems in several schools. These problems with teacher replacement during working hours suggest that there is little in-service training and that a genuine training "culture" is not very prevalent in any of the school networks or OAs.

122. Similarly, the fact that working time is viewed as time in the classroom and that teachers are not required to remain on school premises outside teaching hours is not conducive to the expansion of professional development. So there is little recognition or status to be gained from continuing education: it has no impact on pay and seldom leads to additional qualifications.

123. Finally, the fact that education in the FCB is so decentralised and compartmentalised makes it hard to gain a true picture of continuing education practices there. It is hard to see, for example, whether the training initiatives that do take place are based on identified teaching needs or a school development strategy, or whether they are just a case of people trying to make the most of any opportunities that arise. There is no broad inventory of training practices, no monitoring, no information or dissemination of outcomes in schools, no impact assessment. Highly decentralised or traditionally compartmentalised education systems can only be properly managed if systematic use is made of information tools on actual teaching and management practices, and how they affect learning. Otherwise, the system is so opaque that it is beyond the reach of any form of regulation that might work.

124. To complete this map of the information gaps in continuing education practices, there is some doubt as to who the training "providers" actually are. Education departments in the *hautes écoles* and universities appear to be absent from the field, or marginal and with few resources to intervene in this area. Yet there is no doubt that continuing education for school staff should be a priority whenever a radical change in practices is planned.

3.4 The labour market for teachers

125. Pedagogical freedom and a high degree of autonomy in the education sector are beneficial to the labour market for teachers. First, multiple employers broaden teacher choice: the wide range of education

projects undertaken by OAs enables teachers to find the employer best suited to their skills. Furthermore, the schools run by some OAs are directly involved in their own staff recruitment. Thus posts can be filled more effectively, in that schools can recruit teachers more closely in line with their policy to develop a specific identity. Finally, the fact that parents are free to choose their children's schools, and that school funding is based on enrolment, helps to give schools the right incentives to recruit effective, motivated teachers.

126. As for the issue of teacher shortages, the Government has set up Round Table, as mentioned above, but another major initiative has been to establish a Future Staffing Unit that will help to pinpoint future teaching-staff needs and, to some extent at least, prevent teacher shortages and surpluses in each discipline and level of schooling.

127. Another strength in terms of teacher management is the probationary period for newly qualified teachers, varying in length depending on the network and level of schooling. This helps the system to screen out early those least suited to the demands of the profession.

128. Furthermore, thanks to certification mechanisms such as the CAP, the labour market for teachers remains open to people from other branches of the economy. This ensures a degree of professional mobility between education and other economic sectors.

129. While the labour market for teachers does have its strengths, it also faces a number of challenges. First, recruitment procedures are not always transparent. There is a lack of visibility regarding job vacancies, for instance, as publication is not always mandatory. The recruitment process may therefore be informal and candidates have no scope to appeal. Furthermore, information exchange between players in the education system is not always co-ordinated. Information on job vacancies, for instance, does not necessarily circulate amongst OAs and the various networks.

130. Seniority, as the main criterion for recruitment and promotion among teachers, creates a mismatch between job supply and demand. On the one hand, too great an emphasis on seniority in the teacher selection process restricts choice rather than focusing on a candidate's excellence and skills. On the other, the lack of recognition for length of service in other school networks and even other OAs restricts teacher mobility and creates a mismatch between supply and demand. There is also evidence that the lack of recognition for service outside teaching is a major barrier when attempting to attract people who have gained experience in other branches of the economy.

131. The shortage of teachers is not very widespread but more noticeable at specific levels of teaching (lower secondary), in specific subjects (mathematics and sciences) and in specific areas (urban). However, the shortage is most keenly felt when replacement teachers have to be found during the school year. The education system still has no automatic answer to this problem. There is no pool of replacement teachers that can rapidly and efficiently provide the staff that schools require.

132. There is also a lack of flexibility with regard to incentives that prevents the system of monetary and non-monetary rewards¹⁵ from adjusting to the situation on the labour market, for instance via bonuses for posts that are hard to fill (disciplines or levels of schooling hit by shortages, or schools located in problem areas).

¹⁵ Throughout this report, the term "reward" covers all of the mechanisms used to compensate a teacher's work, pay being one of many components (including leave, in-service training opportunities, sabbatical leave, bonus hours).

133. Finally, there is no long-term recruitment strategy that could serve as a basis for policy analysis, reflecting factors such as the teaching age pyramid and demographic change, thus looking beyond the start of the next school year and even reviewing prospects across all school networks. One worthwhile initiative here is the new Future Staffing Unit, set up in 2002, which will give a better picture of future teaching needs and prevent, to some extent at least, teacher shortages and surpluses in each subject and at each level of schooling.

3.5 Career structure and incentives

134. Compared with other OECD countries, teachers' pay in the FCB is fairly high, particularly in upper secondary schools (Annex 4). Although pay is often lower than in the private sector, other benefits such as more vacation days and greater job security for teachers with permanent status keeps the teaching profession competitive. It is worth noting, however, that teachers have lost some of their purchasing power in recent years (Annex 4), and this is giving considerable cause for concern.

135. Careers remain very flat but there is some scope for diversification, by taking on other duties within the school (e.g. running the media resource centre, or co-ordinating school/community links), or more responsibility (e.g. a managerial or inspection role). Some forms of leave also allow teachers to work in other education institutions or outside teaching altogether.

136. There is evidence that job security varies substantially in the course of a career. At the outset it is very low. Many temporary teachers work in several different schools in one school year, move home too often and have no job security until they obtain permanent status. Teaching hours are allocated primarily to permanent staff, while temporary teachers are mostly there to cover the remainder. Once teachers obtain permanent status, the situation changes radically. They then have jobs for life, and pay increases with years of service, although promotion prospects are still limited.

137. The factors shaping teachers' pay are limited and comprise qualifications, level of schooling and length of service. Consequently, other major factors do not enter the equation: (i) teaching performance; (ii) other duties performed by teachers; (iii) new skills acquired in the course of a career; (iv) the context in which teachers perform their duties (e.g. schools in problem areas).

138. The incentives structure is also too heavily based on pay and does not include other forms of recognition for a teacher's work, such as continuing education opportunities or sabbatical leave. What is more, there do not appear to be any policies targeting the more experienced teachers who are approaching retirement. Such policies could highlight their skills and experience, or allow them to remain in the profession beyond retirement age.

3.6 Teachers in the workplace

139. As mentioned at several points throughout this report, the pedagogical freedom enjoyed by teachers, combined with considerable leeway in organising their work, is an asset. This is clear from the survey conducted among secondary teachers in private Catholic grant-aided schools (Maroy, 2002): (i) individually, teachers have by far the greatest say in choosing classroom teaching methods; and (ii) collectively, teachers rank highest regarding the criteria for pupil appraisal and the organisation of extra-curricular activities. They are also heavily involved in the school's education policy and disciplinary issues.

140. Strengths are also apparent in the support structure for both teachers and schools: (i) secondary schools appear to be fairly well endowed with both administrative and education support staff; (ii) teachers are given pedagogical support (by inspectors and pedagogical advisers) and, in some cases, support to cope

with mixed classes; and (iii) positive discrimination arrangements make it possible to take on more staff, ease teacher workloads and develop school plans to tackle problem situations.

141. Some initiatives have a particularly beneficial impact on the amount of communication in schools, e.g. dialogue between the various partners on the School Board, or the two hours that primary schoolteachers must spend working together.

142. In spite of these strengths, there are still a number of challenges to be met. One major challenge is the lack of any clear framework for a teacher's work at school, as there is no statement of teachers' job profiles and competencies. All that has been specified is actual teaching time, which is inadequate given the host of duties required of teachers today. In practice, teachers are also asked to undertake activities that are incompatible with their level of skills, including school fund-raising activities, administrative work or pupil supervision.

143. Some of the additional tasks required of teachers stem from a lack of support staff. This is particularly clear in primary schools, which have virtually no education support staff and still only a limited number of administrative staff, in spite of recent improvements. So it is not surprising that teachers appear to be concerned about bureaucracy and paperwork (a concern mentioned to the review team), and about some of the roles they feel they should not be playing, e.g. supervisor, social worker, psychologist or facilitator (Maroy, 2002).

144. Another significant conclusion is how little diversity there is in a teacher's work and responsibilities, from an institutional standpoint, given the challenges facing today's schools. Apart from managerial posts, or appointments as teacher-mediators and practical instructors, there are no jobs formally available in schools as mentors for newly-qualified teachers, in-service education co-ordinators, subject heads, project co-ordinators or student counsellors, for instance.

145. We also found that teachers do not generally have proper facilities to work at school outside teaching hours. They do not have their own offices, access to information technology geared to their needs, or the facilities to ensure that collaborative work is productive. Consequently, teachers do not generally remain on school premises when they are not teaching – except in primary schools. This affects team spirit, which is underdeveloped. Teachers do not spend enough time working together, particularly in secondary schools, and collaborative work is often done on a “voluntary” basis or as “overtime”.

146. There also appears to be room for improvement with regard to communication within and between schools and with the outside environment. One point worth highlighting is that there is no teachers' committee – as an institution – to act as interlocutor with the principal, and no formal system of parent/teacher meetings. What is more, curricular reform has not percolated down very far into schools (particularly secondary schools), hence a problem with “ownership” of the reform, stemming from the complexity of the new study programmes.

147. Finally, the particularly difficult conditions under which some temporary teachers – most of them beginners – exercise their profession should also be described as critical. Young teachers are not given a lighter workload, their timetable is often split between schools, they have to teach in more than one school in the same year, usually have to change schools every school year, receive a very different welcome when they arrive depending on the school, and generally have to wait for many years to acquire some job stability – usually when they obtain permanent status.

3.7 School management and leadership

148. One stimulating aspect of the school management system in Belgium's French Community is the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by schools, allowing principals – particularly in secondary schools — to play their leadership role to the full.

149. Because schools can be flexible in using the resources allocated to them – as a period-endowment or teacher-periods – principals can place the emphasis wherever they deem appropriate and may, for instance, reduce class sizes on some courses and, provided there is an educational case for it, increase them on others¹⁶.

150. The school management support structure is, at least in secondary education, fairly substantial and may include one or more deputy principals, as well as administrative and technical staff. Some principals have the resources to go beyond administration and address their educational remit. They have the scope to build their vision of what school should be and provide leadership in implementing the school plan which, in other respects, we found to be an integral feature of school life.

151. The work done by principals is accordingly respected and acknowledged. During its visits, in any case, the review team encountered strong, credible and committed management teams, and found no evidence of strongly hierarchical relations with teachers.

152. A special new status for principals, promoted by the Charter for the Future, and recognition of the need for training to improve their relational, educational and administrative performance should further raise the profile of school principals.

153. Teachers can play some part in school management through their involvement in the school plan, through joint activities in primary education and, in secondary education, through teacher-periods given over to staff meetings, class leadership and co-ordination work.

154. By the same token, principals, pupils and school partners alike can participate in school management decision-making through their representatives on the School Board. This structure, found in every school, is a sound initiative that encourages each partner to become more involved in school life and learn more about the problems faced by the school. Like the School Mediation Service and the Commission on Positive Discrimination, School Boards have a role to play in preventing violence in schools.

155. While there is a School Board, principals often appears to be alone at the helm. They have a very predominant role and shared management does not appear to be a very widespread notion. It seems hard to mobilise parents to play an active part in school life, at least in secondary education.

156. Another reason for the predominant role played by principals is the host of other players – ministries, organising authorities, inspectors, pedagogical advisers – whose roles are not always clearly defined. Co-ordination problems may arise, particularly between principals and inspectors, and between principals and organising authorities. Understandably, then, when faced with a lack of strategic management on the part of the organising authority, a principal who is called upon to manage school problems on a daily basis is bound to be in a strong position.

¹⁶ The survey by Maroy (2002) shows that decisions regarding the allocation of teacher-periods are made largely by principals, with the participation of the teaching staff.

157. The emphasis placed by the Charter for the Future on reforming the status of school principals is crucial, as there is still no job description for such a post. Initial education for principals varies considerably across school networks, and is often provided when they have already taken up their post. There is no systematic in-service education. Furthermore, the selection criteria for school principals are not transparent, their performance is not assessed and mobility is possible only within the same organising authority. The fact that they are appointed for life also makes it hard to replace those whose performance is not up to standard.

158. While principals are in a very strong position, they often run into problems that prevent them from achieving their school vision. They do have some say in the selection of temporary staff, but very little in the case of permanent appointments which are awarded on the basis of seniority. They find it hard to put together a longstanding teaching team, for instance, as they are never sure of keeping the same temporary teachers from one year to the next. On the other hand, because staff with permanent status enjoy special rights, principals find it almost impossible to part with teachers who show little enthusiasm for the school vision they are promoting.

159. Finally, pay is not commensurate with a principal's responsibilities and this does not make such posts very attractive, particularly in pre-primary and primary schools where principals appear to receive inadequate support from their staff.

3.8 Evaluation and accountability

160. A number of significant measures aimed at fostering an evaluation and accountability culture have already been launched. The FCB is taking part in a series of international studies to measure its performance against common benchmarks (e.g. PISA). Furthermore, awareness of the need for evaluation at several levels is reflected in concrete measures such as the new structure to manage the education system, and the Action Plan initiatives featuring in the Charter for the Future, including a reform of inspection services and the development of indicators to monitor the system. This series of measures, a crucial step towards better management of the education system and the teaching profession, appears to be firmly grounded and will indeed be beneficial in terms of efficiency and equity, provided it is properly implemented on the ground.

161. However, evaluation practices in the FCB are still in an embryonic state. The considerable autonomy enjoyed by FCB schools has not been combined with formal and systematic evaluation – the school project and its development strategy are monitored only in exceptional cases. Similarly, it is not current practice to monitor, support or evaluate the work of school principals. Supporting and evaluating teachers is perceived as the responsibility of school principals. Yet they themselves maintain that they have very little time available for such work. A survey among secondary schools in the private, Catholic grant-aided network (Maroy, 2002) reveals that the monitoring of individual teachers is ranked second out of a list of 17 tasks to which principals devote the least amount of time. In the same survey, teachers ranked the monitoring of their work lowest on the list of their principal's 11 priority tasks (Maroy, 2002). This considerably restricts the school management's ability to identify the areas in which teachers need to upgrade their skills. The lack of formal evaluation also prevents the introduction of incentive schemes, monetary or otherwise, based on teacher performance.

162. The inspectorate plays a limited role which is sometimes perceived as negative. This emerges from the survey conducted among principals of grant-aided Catholic schools, showing that the work to which they devote the least amount of time involves contact with the inspectorate (Maroy, 2002). The French Community inspectorate in particular plays two roles that do not necessarily go together, in that it provides support and guidance but also conducts inspections. In the grant-aided sector, too, the fact that

there are two categories of inspector (French Community and OA), sometimes giving off conflicting signals, can have a destabilising effect.

163. One major problem area is the lack of an evaluation culture. Evaluation is still perceived as a “punishment” rather than a source of improvement, despite the part played by pedagogical advisers, acknowledged to be a good means of enhancing teaching skills. And a culture of self-or peer-evaluation is virtually non-existent. Teachers seldom sit in on a colleague’s class. Furthermore, any continuing education there may be is not the outcome of an assessment of teachers’ needs, based on an evaluation of their work. The choice of training courses does not reflect a strategy to promote school development on the basis of teacher training needs.

164. A series of other factors makes it hard to establish evaluation and accountability practices. First, the system does not yet offer systematic evaluation tools that may be of use to school principals. Second, given the many tiers of responsibility in the system, it is not always easy to identify who should be held accountable when things go wrong. At every level, there is also a critical lack of data that could be used for a more objective assessment of practices in the system. Finally, the system finds it very hard to respond properly to situations in which specific teachers have been found to be performing poorly and there is no more room for improvement.

4: PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

165. The suggestions that follow are intended to help the French Community of Belgium’s school system to meet the challenges of attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. These suggestions are based on the review team’s observations, discussions and reading, especially the policy discussions in the country background report. They are offered for evaluation and debate. Some suggestions are based on initiatives already under way, are adapted to the prevailing culture and are therefore feasible in the near future. Other suggestions radically question established ways of thinking, and the review team is aware of that it would be difficult to adopt them in the short term. The objective is to encourage the social partners to engage in forward thinking that might lead to innovative approaches in the longer term.

4.1 Improving co-ordination and ensuring implementation of the reforms

165. Given the deep attachment of all of the French Community’s education players to a diversified system, characterised by great freedom, way forward is not to reinforce centralising power, but rather to improve co-ordination between the various responsible bodies¹⁷.

166. Following this line of thought, steps must be taken to define more clearly the fields of co-operation between networks and, in the case of grant-aided networks, to create structures that will promote greater co-operation between the various organising authorities. In this regard, given the large

¹⁷ As Vandenberghe has pointed out (2002: 63-64): “Given the multiplication of decision-making centres, the role of the centre is to ensure that they are complementary and to guide them by setting a number of general objectives and rules of procedure to be respected. The centre must also evaluate the system from a distance by keeping informed of its situation and the spontaneous changes occurring. There is a virtually generic rule that a system that is decentralising must be able to produce plentiful, high-quality and cost-free (or minimum-cost) information on the situation of the system”.

number of responsible bodies, the scope of responsibility of the various players must be made more transparent so that action can be better targeted if a problem arises.

167. Regarding the reform process currently under way, there can be no doubt that the work undertaken by policy-makers is impressive in its scope. Nevertheless, in order to improve the implementation and impact of the various reforms, it might be preferable to conduct feasibility studies through pilot projects before extending the reforms to the system as a whole. This approach would allow those responsible to anticipate the obstacles that they can expect to encounter and ensure that resources are adequate. A less ambitious policy for managing change may produce better results since it can be supported and evaluated more easily.

168. With few exceptions, any large-scale reform requires, at least in its initial stages, additional resources of various kinds (such as time to learn and consult with players, educational tools and funds to cover training costs). The FCB's curriculum reform affects core aspects of the teaching profession, such as instructional planning and teaching itself, which must be rethought in terms of the skills to be developed in pupils. This reform can only be implemented and achieve its objectives if support is given to the front-line players – teachers and school administrations – in developing the new competencies required by the reform.

4.2 Implementing the reform of teacher education

169. It seems essential to maintain the major principles and orientations of the reform of primary and lower secondary teacher education by monitoring and evaluating the difficulties and problems encountered in its implementation.

170. The players must be given the resources that they need to implement the reform of teacher education successfully. Resources are required to consolidate partnerships with schools in the field of practical training, to assess the real value of the work done by teaching-practice supervisors, to provide continuing education of teachers in *hautes écoles* and universities and to equip education institutions with the training tools they need.

171. Those responsible for the curriculum in *hautes écoles* should contribute to this effort by making current teacher education less fragmented into many small tasks, work assignments and examinations. Authorisation to introduce flexibility into the curriculum and better co-operation between trainers might ensure the overall professional coherence of teacher education and lessen students' impression of a fragmented curriculum geared to accumulating units and meeting deadlines.

172. The reform of the upper secondary teaching diploma (*agrégation*) is a promising start; this reform should be continued in the following fields: teaching practice, to which additional hours could be added; interdisciplinarity and versatility; the teaching of education sciences; and inter-university co-ordination to ensure a certain harmonisation of curriculum. Activities common to all future teachers should also be increased so that a professional identity can develop.

173. It would be desirable for all teacher education students to participate in teaching practice in a wide range of school situations and socio-economic and socio-cultural settings so that they could experience and be prepared for the real and diverse conditions of the profession. For example, in major urban centres the teaching profession is becoming increasingly complex and now includes aspects that were formerly less significant; pupil populations also appear to be increasingly diverse and varied in their attitudes toward learning and school as an institution. In initial teacher education, it is important to ensure that all future teachers have at least some contact with these diverse realities so that they can demystify certain aspects widely covered by the media and assess their professional values and their reactions.

174. Some skills appear to be very important in the more general framework of the implementation of the Missions Decree and competence thresholds. In particular, we are thinking of mastering teamwork skills in the course of training and those involving interdisciplinarity, which are the conditions for genuine collective ownership of the new curriculum policies and for coherent and consistent pedagogical and didactic practices. On the basis of the comments made to us, there is also much concern about the ability to manage social problems (violence, rudeness) and perform “administrative tasks”, and it would be a positive step for all these skills to be more effectively incorporated into training.

175. Currently, no reform of the CAP seems to be envisaged. For the sake of the overall consistency of teacher education policy, steps should be taken to incorporate the CAP into the current developments taking place within the system and to define the diploma required to teach in this system. This would be a far from negligible factor for improving the professional status of teachers in the adult education sector.

176. Lastly, steps should be taken to develop a system for evaluating the new teacher education programmes that will both guarantee the equivalence of diplomas and ensure that they incorporate the thirteen competencies required to be a teacher. This system might include a mechanism that would simultaneously include a form of self-evaluation – to give players, including students, a chance to express their views – as well as an outside assessment. The evaluation of teacher education programmes should ultimately lead to the development of plans to improve this training developed by the players involved.

177. It is essential to develop a system for ensuring the transition to work of young teachers in all networks, organising authorities and schools. Various forms of mentoring by experienced teachers, combined with an approach in which young teachers are gradually introduced into full-time teaching duties, would contribute significantly to making the first steps in the profession less difficult and stressful. It would also be important for school administrations to introduce new teachers to administrative tasks and familiarise them with the specific characteristics of the school.

178. Even if it is decided to create the Continuing Education Institute, much remains to be done to ensure that it develops and, most importantly, that it is successful with the main stakeholders, i.e. teachers. To this end, it is important that they be consulted regarding the basic parameters of continuing education, such as when it will take place (during or after class hours, during holiday periods, Wednesday afternoon, etc.), the venue (inside or outside schools), the objectives pursued (defined by the teacher, the school team, the institutional project, the organising authority, the network, etc.), compliance with the guidelines of the 1997 reform (competence thresholds, final competencies), the players and providers responsible (the role of the inspectorate, pedagogical advisers, teachers’ associations, etc.) and how it is recognised (salary increase, diploma). These are some of the components of a genuine continuing education policy that remain to be implemented in the FCB.

179. The Continuing Education Institute will be all the more effective if it succeeds in incorporating a broad range of players: inspectors, pedagogical advisers, teachers’ associations, etc. Furthermore, to make it easier for serving teachers to participate in continuing education, it is necessary to rethink the concept of working time so that it not only includes teaching time in class, but also the time when teachers must be at school to perform various activities, such as meetings with other teachers, being available to meet with pupils, continuing education, extracurricular activities, etc.

180. Major work must also be undertaken to ensure that continuing education can reconcile the requirements of curriculum reform, the priorities of schools and the various expectations of teachers. Ultimately, the diversity of situations and approaches must be respected and an effort must be made to ensure that they are incorporated into broader, system-wide training issues. If there is to be genuine change, it must begin within schools. To be successful, this change must take root in the realities and problems of schools. Seen from this point of view, curriculum reform will be much more likely to succeed

if the players in the field consider it to be useful for solving the problems identified by schools. For this to be possible, teachers, administrators and those responsible for continuing education must work together to link these broad areas of concern (learning in class, schools and their dynamics and curriculum reform). This will only be possible if teaching teams feel that they have collective ownership of their profession and are therefore responsible for changing it.

181. The development of the Institute, and more broadly, of a genuine continuing education culture, will be greatly assisted by better dissemination of rapid and regular information on the supply of continuing education available to teachers and principals.

182. More specifically, in the case of technical and vocational schools, the development of continuing education will necessarily involve partnerships with the private sector. In the case of general secondary schools, it is important to offer training programmes that develop interdisciplinary approaches and skills.

183. Lastly, a genuine continuing education policy must provide for a system of monitoring, feedback and evaluation. This kind of training entails costs and makes demands on teachers, whose working time is limited. What is more, if this training is not appropriate, of high quality and appreciated by teachers, it could well have adverse effects by causing teachers to have negative attitudes towards curriculum reform, failing to stimulate interest in other training programmes, prompting teachers to revert to established practices, etc. It is therefore important to ensure that continuing education really meets the needs of serving teachers and that they are given an opportunity to evaluate the training that they receive.

4.3 Diversifying careers and increasing the flexibility of the labour market for teachers

184. In order to respond to the problems emerging on specific submarkets of the labour market for teachers, the incentive structure might be used more flexibly. For example, differentiated salaries for fields in which shortages are more acute, bonuses for teaching in disadvantaged areas, transport grants to promote mobility and grants to compensate for the higher cost of living in certain urban areas are tools that policy-makers should consider in developing future policies. The review team is aware that the social partners have always been reluctant to introduce differences of this kind into a system based on a strict principle of equal treatment. Despite the influence of this tradition, the current situation may warrant calling this fundamental principle into question. It might be advisable for the authorities of the French Community to engage in forward thinking on this subject. A system of specific incentives to the teaching force might prove to be a decisive step towards establishing a better match between teachers' characteristics and competencies, their working conditions and the overall rewards (monetary and non-monetary) that they receive. This approach might lead to a concept of equal treatment different from the current one. In the present situation, the incentive structure can be better adjusted to the stratified nature of the labour market for teachers by creating various non-monetary incentives. For example, teachers in disadvantaged areas might be offered reduced work loads.

185. A possible solution for alleviating the problem of shortages would be to enlarge the pool of potential applicants. This could be done, for example, by opening up the teaching profession more broadly to people who have acquired adequate experience outside the education sector. This would require implementing a system of incentives that would make it possible to recognise qualifications, competencies and seniority acquired outside the education sector. The flexibility provided by the CAP is of special interest in this regard.

186. The problem of replacing teachers during the academic year can be alleviated by setting up pools of replacement teachers along the lines of those found in the Flemish Community and Britain. This mechanism has the two-fold advantage of matching teacher supply to demand more effectively and of meeting needs more rapidly. In an initial phase, given the current compartmentalisation of teachers' status

depending on the education network to which they belong, specific pools might be set up for each network. In a second phase, it would be interesting, in our view, for the authorities of the French Community to think about developing a system in which all replacement teachers would be placed in common pools available to all organising authorities. The introduction of a common pool would be facilitated by the voluntary participation of the organising authorities.

187. It is also important to have a system capable of making accurate forecasts of the real needs for teaching staff over a period of years. Demographic changes and immigration, the age pattern of teachers, enrolments and the impact of a possible change in the retirement age and the tasks performed by teachers are all factors that influence needs. It is important for accurate data to be available to policy-makers. Medium-term forecasts will also enable young people starting their higher education to select the programmes leading to various types of teaching careers on the basis of sound information. The task facing the Future Staffing Unit is therefore of key importance and there is every reason to believe that its work will make a far from negligible contribution to teacher recruitment policies.

188. In order to make recruitment procedures more transparent, vacancies should be published, including informally (for example, on Internet), in order to make recruitment more efficient. In addition, co-operation initiatives between organising authorities in the field of recruitment should be promoted. In particular, it is indispensable for progress to be made regarding the mutual recognition of seniority. This will be a fundamental step towards increasing teacher mobility, which is necessary for the labour market to function more effectively. Factors other than qualifications and years of experience, which are more related to the real aptitudes of teachers, such as the theoretical and practical knowledge of new graduates, should be introduced into selection criteria.

189. With regard to the availability of information, it would be desirable to introduce mechanisms to facilitate the communication of information on teacher supply and demand. A useful initiative would be to encourage schools to publish job vacancies, to develop one or more Internet sites and/or magazines that would publish job vacancies and to provide documentation to employment agencies on the availability of jobs in teaching. Furthermore, teacher education programmes should take into account mismatches between supply and demand in specific sectors of the labour market for teachers.

190. The difficulties pointed out regarding the career development and incentive systems for teachers call for a number of initiatives. Firstly, even though there is little flexibility for a substantial salary increase, it is possible to diversify the various elements used to encourage particularly deserving teachers. Professional development activities available to teachers, bonus hours, sabbatical leaves, diversification of assignments and rewards for high-quality teaching are measures that might prove particularly effective. It is also important to give serious consideration to improving all forms of rewards for principals and newly qualified teachers, including in terms of salaries.

191. It might also prove useful to introduce elements defining the level of salary (and other rewards) other than academic qualifications and years of experience. An important measure to consider in future discussions with the social partners regarding greater differentiation within the profession would be to adjust teachers' salaries to each teacher's responsibilities. In particular, the career structure might benefit from introducing new roles associated with specific tasks and qualifications. For example, the role of mentor to young teachers might be institutionalised and continuing education activities might be linked to career advancement. As in other countries, it would no doubt be advantageous to launch a discussion on establishing a relation between certain elements of the package used to compensate teachers – not necessarily salaries – and an evaluation of their performance.

192. The issue of unequal job security throughout careers can be addressed by considering the possibility of changing the nature of all teachers' contracts or, at least, those of newly qualified teachers. In

particular, a system of fixed-term contracts granted according to the stages in a teacher's career might be established. This would ensure that the profession adapted to the need for greater flexibility, better selection of its members and greater responsiveness to problems. Similarly, the hiring of young teachers would stand to benefit from reducing the importance of seniority in defining teachers' careers.

193. Given the large proportion of teachers aged 50 and over and the value of their experience and the existing shortages in certain fields, it would be important to develop specific policies in this regard. Such retention measures might, for example, include reducing the tasks that they perform or relieving them of teaching duties in order to diversify their roles in schools (for example, taking responsibility for supervising new teachers). In order to give schools greater flexibility in managing their teaching staff, it would also be useful to give teachers the possibility of teaching additional courses with a corresponding increase in pay.

4.4 Managing the teaching profession and promoting teamwork among teachers

194. With regard to managing the teaching profession and improving the quality of teachers' work, it appears that six fields should be given priority for future policy development – a statement of teachers' job profiles and competencies, support staff, diversification within the profession, conditions enabling teachers to work in schools outside class hours, communication and newly qualified teachers.

195. The first challenge concerns the development of a statement of teachers' job profiles and competencies or "profile of the profession", which might give a precise definition of the work done by teachers in schools. It is essential to give a formal definition of the tasks, roles and responsibilities of teachers in schools. This would make it possible to clarify the tasks that teachers are not required to do. Furthermore, the total working time, and not just teaching time, should be defined. However, it is important that this formal description of teachers' work not be excessively prescriptive, as this might jeopardise the autonomy of teachers in the FCB and the flexibility that they need to do their job.

196. Secondly, it seems important to give the same importance to support staff resources in primary and secondary schools. The efforts made in recent years to increase the number of administrative staff in primary schools should be supported. A considerable effort must also be made to provide primary schools with considerably more education support staff and to increase the number of social assistants, psychologists and paramedical staff for all levels of education. The use of staff hired under the Professional Transition Programme seems to be a highly successful initiative. In order to keep the extra tasks of teachers to a minimum, it is also important to rationalise bureaucratic and administrative requirements.

197. Thirdly, given the large number of task performed by teachers in schools, there would seem to be an opportunity to diversify the roles and responsibilities that teachers have in schools. The recent creation of posts of teacher-mediators and practical instructors is a first step towards a diversification of the profession that should be expanded in the future with new posts, such as mentor to newly qualified teachers, in-service education co-ordinator, subject heads and guidance counsellors. This diversification is a possible way of making the profession more attractive. It would be desirable to launch a broad-based discussion of this subject among the players of the education system of the FCB.

198. A fourth priority should be to develop infrastructure in schools that would enable teachers to work productively at school. This would enable teachers to prepare courses, correct pupils' work, co-ordinate projects, consult documentation and organise co-operative activities at school. As a result, teachers could stay at school longer or even be required to be present for a certain number of hours outside teaching hours. This would facilitate teamwork and communication inside and outside the school and would strengthen teachers' sense of belonging in the school.

199. Fifthly, it would be important to introduce mechanisms to facilitate internal and external communication. Regarding communication inside schools, in addition to the longer presence of teachers at school and the infrastructure allowing the group work mentioned above, it might be useful to strengthen the school administration's informal support for teachers' work and to forge closer contacts between teachers regarding their approaches to the challenges that they face in their work. With regard to external communication, in order to strengthen teachers' sense of ownership of reforms, there should be greater presence in schools of pedagogical advisers and inspectors.

200. Lastly, it is particularly important to address the issue of the highly precarious situation of teachers at the start of their career, which is a source of great discouragement among newly qualified teachers. A series of policies should be considered by the competent authorities in this regard:

- a) reducing the number of hours taught by teachers at the beginning of their career;
- b) creating replacement and recruitment pools that would enable beginners to have a job for a definite period and prevent their work from being overly fragmented;
- c) provide more formal and systematic support by a mentor designated in the host school;
- d) provide greater stability by giving new teachers fixed-term contracts before they are given permanent status.

201. Given the dominant role played by principals in a diversified school system that relies on the autonomy of the various institutions, the institutional status of their position should be strengthened, as specified in the Charter for the Future. In this context, a profile of the duties of principals should be defined, together with a professional development plan concerning the initial and in-service education, transition to work, evaluation and mobility of principals. Principals should be provided with more extensive and higher level training, monitoring mechanisms should be created and thought should be given to limiting the duration of their appointment and increasing their salaries.

202. The question of whether management teams should be expanded might also be raised. Similarly, in order to give greater responsibility to the various school partners, school boards might be given a more important role. The dialogue between the various school partners can also be reinforced by providing more frequent, informal and direct means of dialogue between them, for example, between parents and teachers, parents and organising authorities and the school administration and representatives of the community in which the school is located. The strengthening of these structures would make it possible to forge closer ties between parents and their children's school and prepare pupils for democratic citizenship, as provided for under Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Missions Decree. Giving greater responsibility to the various school partners will make it possible to create a culture of dialogue, to solve problems through discussion and thereby reduce violence in schools.

203. In a diversified school system like that of the French Community of Belgium, the various networks, or at least the various organising authorities, should initiate the long-term strategic management of the schools under their responsibility. In this regard, the role of the various players in the field of school management – the organising authorities, principals and inspectors – should be clarified. This clarification seems particularly important regarding the role of the inspection authorities, whose precise responsibilities are not clearly identified and who are apprehensive that these will be reduced even further by the Charter for the Future. Since one of the inspectorate's remits is the pedagogical supervision of teachers, close co-operation with the Continuing Education Institute should be reinforced. Similarly, the responsibilities of inspectors and principals with regard to teachers and the implementation of the curriculum should be better defined.

4.5 Supporting the management of the education system and building an evaluation culture

204. As indicated above, a structure for managing the education system of the French Community in Belgium has already been established. Its principles, objectives and system seem to have been established on solid foundations, following broad-based debate. In implementing this system, in the light of the current difficulties in the field, special attention should be given to the aspects enumerated below.

205. Firstly, emphasis should be placed on whole-school evaluation rather than an individualised evaluation of the various players in schools (administration and teachers). This evaluation should be carried out in a context of the strategic development of schools. The action of the inspectorate and pedagogical advisers should be focused on supporting schools and avoid an approach that penalises teachers and imposes sanctions.

206. A second promising principle is the implementation of a stage-by-stage evaluation aimed at supporting schools and teachers individually. The evaluation would begin with an appraisal of the situation by players within a school (self-evaluation) followed by an analysis from an outside perspective (external evaluation), leading to an improvement plan, combined with the necessary resources. A complementary tool to be encouraged is peer evaluation, which can be conducted at lower cost and on an informal basis.

207. A third approach that may prove to be worthwhile is to make a distinction between the evaluation exercise and the evaluation of support by assigning these missions to different bodies. This would make it possible to clarify each role and gain the trust of the players and institutions being examined. It could also promote the development of an “improvement-oriented” evaluation culture.

208. Fourthly, support for teachers must be more systematic, consistent and substantial. To achieve this, it is essential for principals to have better means of supporting their teaching team. Principals should have more administrative support in order to give them extra time for more education management activities, such as assessing and supporting teachers and preparing continuing education strategies. Principals also need specific training in the methodology of assessing teachers and responding to identified needs. It is also important to strengthen the role of pedagogical advisers, but in harmony with the role of the school administration.

209. Fifthly, teachers’ continuing education activities should reflect the areas where improvement is needed identified by their evaluation. To attain this goal, principals should be given a clear mandate to organise the continuing education activities of the teaching staff in line with the results of evaluations and interviews with teachers on the basis of a clear development strategy for the school.

210. Lastly, tools for managing the evaluation process must be developed, while ensuring a clearly structured and systematic approach. This should be done by involving stakeholders, i.e. teachers’ professional organisations, unions, principals, inspectors, pedagogical advisers, organising authorities and the authorities of the FCB.

5: CONCLUDING REMARKS

211. Through all the reforms initiated in recent years, the FCB has clearly shown the importance that it attaches to primary and secondary education and its players. These reforms, which have been the result

of broad-based social debate and reflect a consensus, at least as regards their aims and objectives, have not all been completed. Considerable work remains to be done. In some case this will involve consolidating the changes already implemented and in others it will entail initiating a process that has barely been defined. This being the case, the creation of the Management Commission is likely to be a strategic decision of great importance.

212. The FCB is not experiencing serious teacher recruitment problems, except for replacements during the year and in certain subjects. Nevertheless, to address this difficulty, teacher pools should be established. The purpose of this system would be to make available to schools a group of young teachers who could perform many functions for all networks. Supervised by experienced teachers, having a fixed-term renewable contract, young teachers would be able to enter the profession and become familiar with its many facets with relative security in terms of their contracts. In a sense, this would be a win-win situation, as it would enable schools to solve one of their problems while allowing young teachers to enter the profession with greater security and better supervision.

213. The recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers is dependent on a complex set of factors, of which this report has studied the following: the quality of the initial and continuing education of teachers; support for the initial years of professional practice and schemes that support young teachers' transition to work: a clear and agreed statement of job profiles and competencies; a hands-on school administration able to implement the school project; and the possibility of diversifying work during careers and ensuring professional development through varied and relevant continuing education activities. We have also addressed the role of the inspectorate and teaching support and the issue of evaluation, designed as a tool for improving practices. Lastly, focussing on the issue of the system of rewards and incentives for teachers has made it possible to stress the need to recognise, both through monetary and non-monetary means, the quality of work and the professionalism of teachers. This report makes suggestions to the FCB on all these elements that could support the reforms under way – at least, it is hoped that this will be the case.

214. Many-faceted, wide-ranging reforms can sometimes cause differing reactions among those who must implement them, despite the time that has been devoted to prior consultation with players of the education system representing broad interest groups. These reactions can include difficulty in understanding the purpose of the change, a feeling of incompetence to implement it, discouragement because of the rapid pace of implementation, criticism because of inadequate resources, a feeling of loss of ownership and of increased outside control, resistance and withdrawal, etc. In part, this may be inevitable, but it is essential to be aware of this problem and respond to it appropriately. To this end, this report stresses the importance of continuing teacher education, systems that make it easier for teachers to work together in schools, and the need for school administrations, inspectors and teaching advisers to act as intermediaries during a period of change.

215. Lastly, the FCB's concern with obtaining indicators and systematic tools for analysing the teaching and learning taking place in primary and secondary schools will help make the current system more transparent to its players, and to French-speaking Belgian society as a whole. These are important tools for ensuring high-quality democratic debate on education in the FCB.

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ANNEX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE REVIEW VISIT

Tuesday 10 June, Brussels

- 09:00 Dominique Bathélémy, Co-ordinator for the French Community of Belgium
09:30 Jacqueline Beckers, Steve Jaspar, Marie-Catherine Voos, authors, Country Background Report
10:30 Steering Committee
14:00 Education and Training Council
14:30 Representatives of networks: French Community Network; Education Council of Communes and Provinces (CECP) ; General-Secretariat of Catholic Education (SEGEC); Council of Organising Authorities of Official Non-denominational Grant-aided Education (CPEONS).
17:15 General Administration of Education and Scientific Research (AGERS); General Administration of Education Staff (AGPE).

Wednesday 11 June, Brussels

- 09:00 *Institut Diderot*, Brussels: Secondary school of the Brussels Capital region practicing affirmative action.
Discussions with the school administration and a group of teachers; Guided visit to the school.
12:00 Working lunch with the Inspectorate General.
14:00 *Institut Supérieur Pédagogique Galilée*, Brussels, Teacher training, *Haute Ecole – Pedagogy* Department, free grant-aided network.
Discussions with administrators, teacher trainers and students.
17:30 Meeting with civil service unions: *Centrale générale des services publics* (CGSP) and *Syndicat libre de la fonction publique* (SLFP).

Thursday 12 June, Namur

- 08:00 *Institut Technique Félicien Rops*, Namur: Technical and vocational education school in the French Community network.
Discussions with the school administration and a group of teachers; Guided visit to the school.
10:45 Municipal school of Rhisnes: Primary school in the municipal network
Discussions with the school administration and a group of teachers; Guided visit to the school.
14:00 *Institut Saint-Berthuin*, Secondary education, Catholic network, Malonne
Discussions with the school administration and a group of teachers; Guided visit to the school.
15:30 Saint-Berthuin primary school, Catholic network, Malonne
Discussions with the school administration and a group of teachers; Guided visit to the school
18:00 Meeting with a trade union organisation: *Centrale des syndicats chrétiens* (CSC)

Friday 13 June, Brussels

- 10:00 Free University of Brussels, teacher training, *agrégation*.
Discussions with the Directorate of the *agrégation*, teacher training instructors and students.
14:15 Minister Françoise Dupuis, Minister for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Adult Education.
15:30 Teachers' Associations: *Coordination des Associations pluralistes de professeurs* (CAPP); *Société belge des professeurs de français* (SBPF); *Fédération des professeurs de géographie* (FEGEPRO).

16:30 Business Associations: *Union wallonne des entreprises (UWE)*; *Fédération des entreprises de Belgique (FEB)*.

Saturday 14 June, Namur and Brussels

08:30 *Institut d'enseignement de promotion sociale de la Communauté française de Namur*, initial teacher training institution.

Discussions with the Directorate responsible for the *agrégation* and teacher training.

11:30 Federation of parents' associations: *Union des fédérations des associations de parents de l'enseignement catholique (UFAPEC)*

12:30 Federation of French-Speaking Students: *Fédération des étudiant(e)s francophones (FEF)*

Sunday 15 June, Brussels

09:30 Group work by review team

Monday 16 June, Brussels

09:00 Chief of Staff of Minister Demotte, Minister for the Budget, Culture, Sports, Civil Service and Youth

10:00 Forum of education researchers: Marcel Crahay (University of Liège); Christiane Blondin (University of Liège); Jacqueline Beckers (University of Liège); Marie-Catherine Voos (University of Liège); Steve Jaspar (University of Liège); Branka Cattonar (Catholic University of Louvain); Léopold Paquay (Catholic University of Louvain); Pol Dupont (University of Mons-Hainaut); Robert Deschamps (University Faculties of Notre-Dame de la Paix, Namur); Bernadette Charlier (University Faculties of Notre-Dame de la Paix, Namur); Alexis Deweys (General Administration for Education and Scientific Research); Martine Herphelin (General Administration for Education and Scientific Research); Bernard Rey (Free University of Belgium).

12:00 General Administrator for Teaching Staff

14:15 Minister Pierre Hazette, Minister for Secondary and Special Education

15:00 Chief of Staff of Minister Jean-Marc Nollet, Minister for Childhood responsible for Primary Education

17:30 Group work by review team

Tuesday 17 June, Brussels

09:30 Minister-President of the French Community of Belgium, Hervé Hasquin

10:30 Representatives of school principals: *Association des directeurs de l'enseignement fondamental catholique*; *Association des chefs d'établissement de l'enseignement secondaire de l'enseignement officiel*.

14:00 Steering Committee – the review team's initial impressions and the comments of the Steering Committee.

16:00 Secretary-General, Ministry of the French Community.

ANNEX 4: COMPARATIVE INDICATORS ON TEACHERS

	French Community of Belgium (FCB)	OECD country average	Ranking of FCB ¹
Expected enrolments between 2001-02 and 2011-12 (2001-02=100), Source: Beckers <i>et al.</i> (2003)			
Primary education	96.5 ²	--	--
Secondary education	97.7 ³	--	--
Average class size (public schools, 2001)⁴			
Primary education	20.1	22.0	=13/23
Lower secondary education	21.4	23.8	16/22
Distribution of school staff by personnel category, in FTE (full-time equivalent) (2001-02), Source: Beckers <i>et al.</i> (2003)			
Pre-primary and primary			
Teaching staff (%)	90.9	--	--
Management staff (%)	4.4	--	--
Administrative staff (%)	1.6	--	--
Education support staff (%)	0.2	--	--
“Other” staff (psychological, paramedical, social, maintenance/operations staff) (%)	3.0	--	--
Secondary			
Teaching staff (%)	81.8	--	--
Management staff (%)	1.6	--	--
Administrative staff (%)	1.8	--	--
Education support staff (%)	9.2	--	--
“Other” staff (psychological, paramedical, social, maintenance/operations staff) (%)	5.6	--	--
Distribution of teachers by age group (percentage aged 50 and over, 2002), Source: Beckers <i>et al.</i> (2003)			
Pre-primary and primary	22.8	--	--
Secondary	36.0	--	--
Distribution of teachers by gender (percentage, 2002), Source: Beckers <i>et al.</i> (2003)			
Pre-primary and primary	83.5	--	--
Secondary	58.3	--	--
Type of professional status of teachers (Lower secondary, 2000), Source: Eurydice (2003)			
Civil servant (%)	74.7	79.1	8/11
Permanent contract (%)	--	51.3	--
Fixed-term contract (%)	25.3	14.3	1/12
Net teaching time, hours per year (2001)⁵			
Primary	717	792	18/26
Lower secondary	720	714	9/25
Upper secondary, general programmes	661	656	9/25

	French Community of Belgium (FCB)	OECD country average	Ranking of FCB ¹
Specific tasks that may be legally required of teachers without reduction in teaching time (Upper secondary, 2000-01)⁶, Source: Eurydice (2003)			
Supervision of pupils between classes (except during the midday lunch break)	∅	16/24	
Supervision after classes (i.e. after school hours)	∅	9/24	
Replacement of absent colleagues	√	16/23	
Support for future and new teachers	∅	9/23	
Teamwork to define the school project, interdisciplinary activities, curriculum development	√	21/24	
Teamwork during the internal evaluation of the school	√	19/24	
Annual teacher salaries, (with minimum training, 2001)⁷			
Primary – starting salary (US dollars)	23 430	21 982	12/29
Primary – 15 years experience (US dollars)	31 984	30 047	15/29
Primary – top of scale (US dollars)	38 380	36 455	14/29
Primary – ratio of salary to GDP per capita after 15 years experience	1.19	1.31	16/29
Lower secondary - starting salary (US dollars)	23 865	23 283	14/28
Lower secondary - 15 years experience (US dollars)	33 684	31 968	15/28
Lower secondary - top of scale (US dollars)	41 264	38 787	13/28
Lower secondary - ratio of salary to GDP per capita after 15 years experience	1.26	1.34	14/28
Upper secondary (general programmes) - starting salary (US dollars)	29 741	24 350	6/28
Upper secondary (general programmes) – 15 years experience (US dollars)	43 328	34 250	5/28
Upper secondary (general programmes)- top of scale (US dollars)	52 263	41 344	8/28
Upper secondary (general programmes) - ratio of salary to GDP per capita after 15 years experience	1.62	1.43	9/28
Ratio of salary after 15 years experience to starting salary (2001)			
Primary	1.37	1.37	12/29
Lower secondary	1.41	1.38	11/28
Upper secondary (general programmes)	1.46	1.41	10/28
Number of years from starting to top salary (lower secondary level, 2001)			
	27	25	=12/27
Salary per hour of net contact (teaching) after 15 years experience (2001)⁷			
Primary (US dollars)	45	37	6/26
Lower secondary (US dollars)	47	45	14/25
Upper secondary (general programmes) (US dollars)	66	52	7/25
Ratio between the hourly salary of upper secondary and primary school teachers	1.47	1.38	9/25
Real trend of teacher remuneration (between 1996 and 2001) (1996=100)⁸			
Primary – starting salary (US dollars)/ with minimum training	98	110	=20/22
Primary – 15 years experience / with minimum training	99	109	=18/22
Primary – top of scale / with minimum training	100	109	=17/22
Lower secondary – Starting salary (US dollars)/ with minimum training	98	110	=20/21
Lower secondary – 15 years experience / with minimum training	98	109	=18/21
Lower secondary – top of scale / with minimum training	99	110	19/21
Upper secondary (general programmes) – starting salary (US dollars)/ with minimum training	98	107	=18/21

	French Community of Belgium (FCB)	OECD country average	Ranking of FCB ¹
Upper secondary, general programmes – 15 years experience / with minimum training	99	106	=16/21
Upper secondary, general programmes – top of scale / with minimum training	99	107	=16/21
Adjustment of teachers' basic salary in public schools (2001)⁹			
Holding a diploma higher than the minimum qualifications required to teach	∅	15/29	
Exceptional performance on qualifying examination	∅	3/29	
Holding an education diploma in several subject matters	∅	3/29	
Successful completion of professional development activities	∅	9/29	
Administrative responsibilities in addition to teaching activities	∅	22/29	
Holding a diploma higher than the minimum qualifications required to teach or obtaining a diploma during teaching career	∅	13/29	
Exceptional performance in teaching	∅	11/29	
Teaching specific subjects (such as mathematics or science)	∅	6/29	
Teaching pupils with specific educational needs (in non-specialised institutions)	∅	14/29	
Teaching more classes or a longer schedule than provided for by a full-time contract	∅	21/29	
Special activities (such as sport or drama clubs, homework supervision, summer school)	∅	15/29	
Special tasks (training future teachers, counselling pupils)	∅	16/29	
Teaching in a region that is disadvantaged, remote or with a high standard of living (bonus for geographical location)	∅	18/29	
Family status (such as marital status and number of children)	∅	12/29	
Age (irrespective of number of years of teaching)	∅	6/29	
Other	√	12/29	

Sources: All data from OECD (2003) unless otherwise indicated and specified in tables.

Notes:

1. “FCB ranking” indicates the FCB’s position when countries are ranked from the highest to the lowest value for the corresponding indicator. For example, for the indicator “Average class size”, the 13/23 ranking indicates that the FCB ranks 13th highest among the 23 OECD countries for which the indicator is available. The symbol “=” means that at least one other country is ranked at the same level as the FCB.
2. Average of indexes for 5 different hypotheses.
3. Average of indexes for 3 different hypotheses.
4. Calculated by dividing the number of pupils enrolled by the number of classes. Excludes education programmes intended for pupils with special educational needs and sub-groups of pupils established outside of regular classes.
5. Calculated on the basis of the annual number of weeks of instruction multiplied by the minimum/maximum number of periods that a teacher is supposed to spend teaching a class or group, multiplied by the length of a period in minutes and divided by 60. Excludes breaks between lessons and days when schools are closed for holidays.
6. A “√” indicates that teachers may be required to perform a specific task without a reduction in teaching time, while the symbol “∅” means that teachers may not be required to perform a specific task without being compensated by an adjustment in teaching time. The column “OECD country average” indicates the number of countries for which specific tasks may be required of teachers without reduction in teaching time in relation to the 23 or 24 countries for which the information is available.
7. Expressed in US\$ converted using purchasing power parities (PPP).
8. Index of the variation in teacher compensation between 1996 and 2001, converting 1996 salaries to 2001 price levels using GDP deflators. This index is calculated as follows: teacher compensation in 2001 in the national currency * 100 / teacher compensation in 1996 in the national currency * the GDP deflator. The salaries taken into account for 1996 are those of Belgium as a whole.

9. OECD (2003) provides information on the authorities responsible for the granting decision. A “√” indicates that there is a specific system for adjusting teachers’ basic salary in public schools, while the symbol “∅” signifies that there is not such a system. The data specified in the column “OECD country average” indicates the number of countries that have such a system in relation to the 29 countries for which the information is available.