

# **Attracting, developing and retaining teachers**

## **Thematic Review - OECD**

**Background report for the Flemish Community of Belgium**

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## **FOREWORD**

This report is the background report drawn up in the context of the OECD project ‘Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers’ (2002-2004). It consists of two parts.

The first part contains a description of the current situation in Flanders regarding the recruitment, training, allocation and retaining of teachers. The first six chapters provide a picture of the education system in Flanders, teacher training, recruitment, salaries, the tasks and careers of teachers in primary and secondary education. This part is based on the regulations in education, existing documents and publications, and available data.

Chapter 7 summarises the vision of the most important stakeholders in education (government, school governing bodies and the trade unions) on this issue. This part is based on detailed interviews by the authors of this report with representatives of these stakeholders. These interviews took place in the period May-July 2002. This part contains an analysis of what they consider to be the most important causes for the shortage of teachers, and an evaluation of the most important measures, which have been taken or should be taken in this respect.

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## GLOSSARY

Acceptable qualifications (=out-of-field teaching): qualifications that usually concern the same level of the certificate included in the required qualification, though without taking the specialist area into account.

Amount of teaching hours: educational institutions are allocated an amount of weekly teaching hours which they can use to organise the tasks of the teachers. Depending on the number of pupils, schools therefore have an overall amount of teaching hours

Community education: one of the three educational networks in Flanders. This network is organised under the authority of the Flemish Community by the public body that is called Flemish Community Education. The constitution provides that community education must be neutral. This means that the philosophical, religious or ideological convictions of parents and pupils must be respected.

Competent authority: school board

Educational networks: in Flemish education schools and their school board are grouped into educational networks. In Flanders there are three distinct educational networks: community education, subsidised private-authority education (mainly catholic) and subsidised public authority education.

Group of schools: groups of schools act as regional school boards in the community education at the regional level. They group primary and secondary schools of a specific region. With the Board of the Flemish Community Education at the central level they form the governing body of the schools in this network.

Other qualifications (=out-of-license teaching): if there is a shortage of people with the required qualification or an acceptable qualification, the competent authority can appoint an applicant who only has an 'other' type of qualification. A minimum level has been set for these 'other' qualifications, amounting to a basic certificate or a minimum number of years of useful experience, but no certificate of education is required.

Required qualifications: clarifications that clearly describe which teaching qualifications are required to perform a particular activity. For the required qualifications, a basic diploma must have been achieved in the specialist area of the subject to be taught.

School communities: School communities are voluntary co-operative ventures between secondary schools which provide a multi-sectoral provision of education, consisting at least of general academic, technical and vocational education

Subsidised private-authority education: the largest educational network includes all the private school boards. Most of these school boards are catholic.

Subsidised public-authority education: this network includes the municipalities and provinces that act as school board

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASO	general secondary education
ACLVB	liberal trade union in education
ACOD	socialist trade union in education
BSO	vocational secondary education
CLB	student guidance centre
COC	catholic trade union in secondary education
COV	catholic trade union in primary education
GPB	certificate of education
KSO	secondary education in the arts
TSO	technical secondary education

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. TEACHER SHORTAGES**

Primary education is characterised by a shortage of teachers. During the period of 2000-2004 there will be a shortage of 1.722 teachers (5,7%). To cope with this shortage, nursery teachers are hired to fill in the vacancies (12% in March 2000). This even amounts to 28% in Brussels. Also 10% of the vacancies are filled in with applicants who teach out-of-field.

In secondary education there is a teacher shortage for specific subjects: Math, French, Dutch and Religion. In vocational education shortages are most dramatic. For certain technical or vocational subjects 40% of the temporarily appointed applicants are out-of-license teaching.

According to the representatives of the school boards and the unions there are three main causes of the teacher shortages:

- the economic boom since 1994,
- the low status of the teaching profession,
- the increased complexity of the teaching profession: higher expectations, new competencies, increased workload, increased assertiveness of parents.

The representatives of the school boards and the unions are reluctant about specific measures which deal with specific teacher shortages (e.g. increased salaries for teachers in regions or fields with high shortages). These stakeholders are more concerned about the quality than the quantity of the teachers. They stress the importance of a general approach and argue in favour of initiatives at different levels (pay, career, job design and differentiation, teacher training).

### **2. TEACHER SHORTAGES: POLICY INITIATIVES**

To deal with teacher shortages different policy alternatives can be considered.

The Flemish government created a new system for temporary replacements of teachers, called the replacement pool. The replacement pool tries to match new teachers looking for a job with schools that have to replace certain teachers on a temporary basis. With this initiative the government tries to increase career prospects for new teachers with security of employment and financial security. Both new teachers and the schools can enrol in the replacement pool. The teachers replace other teachers for a short term in a certain geographical zone. The teachers are appointed to a specific school until they have to replace teachers in other schools. In return the replacement pool employs the new teachers for a whole year. The minister and the representatives of the school boards and the unions evaluate the replacement pools ambivalent. They are beneficial for certain teachers and certain schools, but not for all. The weakest link of the replacement pools are ... teacher shortages.

To deal with teacher shortages the retirement age of teachers was changed last year from 55 to 58. The unions responded very strongly and want to keep the retirement age at 55. Representatives of the school boards believe the increase of the retirement age to be justified. However, they would give burnout teachers the opportunity to retire provided they receive a lower pension.

Most stakeholders in education consider the use of out-of-license teaching in secondary education as a valuable alternative provided that applicants get a GPB certificate of education (adult education). More opportunities should be made to increase external mobility. A major issue is that people from outside education should be able to keep their seniority they built up in the private sector. According to the minister of education this would have serious budgetary consequences.

Also the minister raises the question about the applicants who already entered the teaching profession without keeping their seniority.

All stakeholders in primary education reject the engagement of nursery teachers because they didn't get the right training. An additional teacher training is necessary before they can be assigned to primary schools.

### **3. TEACHER TRAINING**

Many stakeholders interviewed for the Country Background Report are deeply concerned with the quality of the future teaching force in primary education. The low status of the teaching profession in primary education is closely linked to the decrease of the intake quality. Almost half of the students in primary teacher training had a technical secondary education. In general the students were not high performing in secondary education.

Remedies are not simple. The option to restructure the current bachelor teacher training for primary education into a master is not evident. The minister considers the introduction of a general teacher training for all levels (pre-school, primary, secondary level group 1), followed by specialised training for the different levels. The use of a modular system should improve flexibility and an increased mobility of teachers between different levels. Also she is in favour of "institutes for teacher training" in which current bachelor teacher education, academic teacher training and GPB education (adult education) should get a place.

With the reform of 1996 the Flemish government recognised the importance of in-service training and coaching for novice teachers. Flemish government wanted to encourage schools for the organisation of initial in-service training. However, schools don't receive extra financial support for this in-service training. The coaching of new teachers could be a new career opportunity for experienced teachers, but due to the lack of differentiation in the teaching profession, this is not possible. All stakeholders interviewed, including the minister, consider a new structure to underpin the in-service training of new teachers as a priority. The minister and the largest union in primary education are both in favour of a teacher career in which the new teachers' assignment includes less statutory teaching hours while a part of their time can be used for additional training and reflection.

### **4. FLEXIBILITY, WORK REDESIGN, NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

The work redesign of teachers has been a major policy priority of the Flemish government in the past decade. In order to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession, the Flemish educational authority has tried to introduce new career opportunities and changes in the workload and the roles of teachers. In

the past ten years the Flemish government has tried to introduce a more flexible job definition (the present teachers' workload is based on the number of weekly teaching hours) and to create more differentiation in the teaching profession (coaching of new teachers, student counselling, teacher leadership, ...). Most of these initiatives failed because of the unions' resistance. In 2001 negotiations between the Flemish government and the teacher unions about a salary increase and more financial flexibility in the teaching profession (a general increase or a selective increase, depending on different working conditions) resulted in a general salary increase of 3% and no flexibility.

All stakeholders are in favour of more differentiation in the teaching profession. Some are in favour of vertical (middle management) as well as horizontal differentiation (student counsellor, coach of new teachers). Others warn for too much new specialised positions and hierarchical levels. They stress that the best teachers must remain in the classrooms. Therefore they prefer a more flexible job design for all teachers, which can vary over time.

Differentiation is a complex issue. Most stakeholders believe that a differentiation in pay is only possible for positions with more responsibilities. They prefer a decrease in workload (smaller classes, less statutory teaching hours) for teachers in difficult working conditions (inner city schools, vocational education, ...). However, since last year the large catholic union active in primary education (and only this union) is in favour of different pay for positions with more responsibilities. Teachers with leading responsibilities deserve a higher salary according to this union. Almost all stakeholders, including the catholic union of primary education, are against higher pay for applicants in positions where teacher shortages are high.

## **5. SCHOOL AUTONOMY**

Although deregulation and the increase of the schools' autonomy are permanent priorities of the Flemish government since 1989, decrees, rules and regulations are still pervasive in Flemish education. This especially goes for all HRM-related issues. The decreased attractiveness of the teaching profession is to a certain extent the result of the centralised policy approach. The support of the school's policy capacity demands a fundamental increase of the school's autonomy in personnel policy issues and the introduction of professional training for principals. Increased autonomy in schools can only succeed if qualified school heads are professionally selected and trained. Also, shared decision making and participation of the teachers in the school's policy are essential.

## CHAPTER 1: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

### 1.1 The education policy in Flanders: policy priorities and developments

#### 1.1.1 *School autonomy and regulation*

1. As a result of the revision of the Constitution in 1988, the Flemish Community has been responsible for the organisation of education in Flanders since 1989. Since that time the Government of Flanders has constantly aimed to achieve greater autonomy for schools, linked to the promotion of local participation, deregulation and restricting the government to its key tasks. In the 1989 government manifesto of the Government of Flanders (XXX, 1989: 7) the following policy lines were formulated:

- to increase the autonomy of schools;
- to increase democracy in policy by establishing structures for participation;
- to simplify the administrative instructions;
- to optimise the use of the available means;
- to improve the attraction of the teaching career for teachers.

2. These policy lines are reflected in the policy of the Government of Flanders for the last ten years. The starting point is that the government has rethought its role in relation to the key tasks of the provision and distribution of funds and quality control and quality assessment. The schools themselves are responsible for providing high quality education and must develop a policy to make this possible. In this context, the 1991 Inspectorate and Pedagogical Counselling Decree fundamentally changed the role of government with regard to quality control. As a result of this decree, it is no longer the teachers who are inspected and supervised individually, but schools are inspected by a team of the Community Inspectorate.

3. The attention devoted to making the teaching career attractive is a striking aspect of the 1989 government manifesto. In this context, the government proposed making the teacher's job description more flexible (no longer expressed in the number of lessons to be taught) and differentiating the teacher's duties in terms of performance and individual duties (Coens, 1989). According to the government, this would only be possible in a decentralised administrative system in which schools had greater autonomy with regard to their staffing policy. In the last ten years, the Government of Flanders has aimed to make it possible for schools to differentiate the duties of teachers, to break down the one-dimensional career and therefore make the career more attractive. Although several attempts were made and numerous negotiations were conducted with the competent authorities and trade unions (Devos, 1995), few fundamental changes have been made with regard to the duties of teachers and their career. One essential element in this respect was the point of view of the trade unions, which have always insisted that the legal position of all teachers should remain the same.

4. In its policy for greater autonomy for schools the government also aimed to strengthen local organisations to encourage participation. The establishment of local councils and participation councils in the early 1990s, was a new step towards a school policy with greater local participation.

### **1.1.2 Increase in scale**

5. In order to achieve greater autonomy for schools, the government also considered that a fundamental increase in scale between schools was necessary in education. This increase in scale was introduced first and in the most far-reaching form in higher education in 1994 when 164 higher institutions merged and formed 29 schools. In secondary education, this process was significantly more difficult because this had to continue to guarantee the freedom of education (cf. Chapter 2). In order to guarantee the freedom of choice for schools between and within the public-authority education system and the private-authority subsidised system of education, it was impossible to achieve a far-reaching increase in scale throughout Flanders. This sort of operation would have reduced the number of public authority schools in some regions of Flanders to such an extent that there would no longer be any question of a real freedom of choice with regard to schools. In the end the 1998 decree determined that secondary education should be reformed by encouraging schools to form “school communities”. School communities must make agreements about the educational provision of all the schools in the school community. They can also conclude agreements about the staffing policy, the financial policy and the policy on equipment. Therefore this is not a compulsory expansion of scale, but a policy which attempts to stimulate schools to co-operate more within their own region and to reach agreements together. In order to achieve this goal, the government has introduced certain incentives for school communities such as more favourable rationalisation norms, the free transfer of teacher’s hours within the school community and awarding an additional job as a head (from September 2002).

6. In primary education the increase in scale is not compulsory either, but the minister encourages co-operation between schools on a voluntary basis. This co-operation creates opportunities for new roles and positions. It can result in better working conditions for the management, teaching and administrative staff (Vanderpoorten, 2002).

### **1.1.3 Reforms of teacher training**

7. With the 1996 decree on teacher training and in-service training, the Flemish education authorities have introduced a number of structural reforms and above all reforms in terms of content in teacher training (Aelterman, Rots & Van Petegem, 2001). The decree introduced an updating of the training provisions. The new requirements imposed on teachers are drawn up in job profiles and basic competencies. The job profiles are based on an emancipated and pupil-oriented vision of education, which emphasises active, constructive, co-operative and self-monitored learning, broad and harmonious training and the extension of care.

8. The decree also places a greater emphasis on the initial monitoring and professional development of the teacher in his career. The decree encourages schools, in accordance with the principles of accountability, to take responsibility for the organisation of the initial supervision of probationary teachers. However, schools are not given any extra funds for this. They can use the funds allocated for in-service training. For a number of years, the government has provided financial incentives for in-service training programmes for mentors of probationary teachers. During the school inspection, schools are inspected by the education inspectorate with regard to the organisation of the initial supervision.

9. With this decree, the government also breaks away from the supply-oriented model of in-service training. In future, schools will take responsibility themselves and will also be allocated the funds for their in-service training policy which is organised based on demand. In addition to this first support for the in-service training system, funds are provided from a separate budget for initiatives of the umbrella organisations for public and private authority subsidised education. The third pillar is the Flemish

government itself, which determines a number of in-service training priorities every year to which external training centres can subscribe.

#### ***1.1.4 Policy priorities of the current government***

10. The policy of the present Government of Flanders (2000-2004) continues with many of the above-mentioned points for attention. The present government is also endeavouring to concentrate above all on its core tasks. This implies that the government aims to provide schools with a level of autonomy and only intervenes when essential social values are at stake. For the government, such values include the protection of the rights of weaker members of society such as underprivileged young people and parents, educational directions and schools, which deal with many deprived young people. Ensuring equal opportunities is an important policy priority of the government.

11. In addition, the quality control of the institutions, which are funded or subsidised by the government, is also a central point for attention. In particular, the government emphasises the importance of internal and external quality control.

12. The government manifesto of 2000 also emphasised the importance of the direct participation of teachers, students, trainees and parents. This follows the 1999 decree, which determined that if one third of the pupils wish it, schools must organise a student council.

#### ***1.1.5 Making the teaching profession more attractive***

13. It was said above that in the past ten years, making the teaching profession more attractive has been an important point of attention for the Government of Flanders. Making the teaching profession more attractive is undoubtedly one of the more important policy priorities of the current Government of Flanders. For this purpose, the present minister of education has developed an action plan which comprises ten points (Vanderpoorten, 2000). Some of these points have already been achieved, others are not yet ready to be implemented:

- A greater social status for teachers: the importance and professionalism of the teaching profession is underlined in media campaigns.
- A human resource management policy: the government wishes to create a framework which provides the school with the right instruments to introduce this sort of HRM policy, for example with regard to training and in-service training, job descriptions and evaluation, legal position and school management. The decree relating to these aspects is still being developed.
- Training and in-service training for teachers: on the basis of a review an evaluation report of the 1996 reforms of teacher training was drawn up in 2001. This report forms the basis for a new dialogue with people in the field and possibly adjusting the decree concerned, depending on the social needs and developments; the next chapters will examine the findings of this report in detail;
- Urgent measures to deal with the shortage of teachers: a replacement pool was created from 1 September 2000. This pool consists of a group of (prospective) teachers. In the pool these teachers are given an appointment for a complete school year, paid by the government. The members of the pool form a mobile team of teachers who can be employed flexibly and across the networks, particularly to substitute for teachers. With this replacement pool, the

government aims to provide interesting career prospects for teachers, with security of employment and financial security. It is precisely this lack of prospects which drives many teachers into other professional sectors. This measure is undoubtedly one of the government's most important measures with regard to tackling teacher shortages. We will return to this later in this report.

- The monitoring and supervision of young teachers: building on the 1996 decree, the government aims to stimulate schools to develop a policy for the monitoring and supervision of young teachers. The government considers that this policy can also be facilitated by the replacement pool system.
- Career differentiation: as in the past ten years, the current Flemish Education Department also continues to express the wish to examine the possibilities with regard to differentiation and variations in the tasks and functions of teachers. The collective bargaining agreement for 2001 finally decided, after lengthy discussions with the trade unions, on a linear increase in salary for all teachers. The government's intention in these negotiations to opt for a differential increase in salary for some jobs was not carried out. The trade unions gave priority to a linear salary increase for all teachers. In accordance with their point of view for the last ten years, they again argued for the financial rewards to be as similar as possible for all teachers.
- Recognition of the professionalism of teachers: by restricting the curriculums to the basics, it is possible to allow sufficient room for teachers to deal creatively with issues which are of interest to their pupils. The government aims to evaluate the curriculums in this respect. It also aims to re-examine the administrative pressure, which has increased enormously in education. Above all, it wishes to avoid the excessive administrative obligations, which are not seen as the tasks of education, from taking up the valuable time for educational core tasks.
- Material working conditions: the government wishes to devote attention to attractive school buildings, a pleasant school environment and the necessary educational aids which are essential for the welfare and satisfactory operation of the teacher.
- The legal position: the aim of the government is to review the legal position in the decrees and harmonise the different networks. This harmonisation also comprises provisions with regard to job descriptions and evaluations in secondary education. These aspects are examined in detail at a later stage in this report. The government also aims to introduce a system of mandates for all heads of schools.
- School management: the government recognises the heavy pressure of work for heads of schools and aims to support them in their task. It will examine this in connection with the system of mandates still to be implemented.

These action points were also tackled in the interviews with the most important stakeholders in education (cf. Chapter 7).

14. The government also invests in scientific research with regard to making the teaching profession more attractive, for example on the following topics:

- Differentiated value and salaries of teachers as a scientific issue relating to personnel (01-12-1999 to 30-11-2001).

- The professionalism and social status of teachers in primary and secondary education. An examination of the views of teachers, other people involved in education and public opinion (01-10-2000 to 31-05-2002).
- The well-being of the teacher: the development of a survey instrument to measure the well-being of teachers in primary and secondary education (01-10-2000 to 31-08-2002).
- The time use and pressures of teachers (01-12-2000 to 31-11-2002).
- The participation of teachers in the monitoring of education organisations: a system of benchmarking using domestic and foreign cases (01-02-2001 to 31-05-2002);

In addition, a study was also carried out by the HayGroup on a new total salary policy for teaching staff. The first stage of the study was carried out in 2001, viz., a comparative study of salaries and initial recommendations.

## 1.2 Data on Flanders

### 1.2.1 *The demographic context<sup>1</sup>*

15. The Flemish Region has 5,952,552 inhabitants (this is 58% of the population of Belgium) (figures: 1 January 2001). The Flemish Region has 82,672 more women than men. Of the total population, 5,671,590 are Belgians and 280,962 are foreigners. More than half of the foreigners comes from the European Union. In the past ten years the population of the Flemish Region has increased by slightly more than 200,000 inhabitants. This amounts to an average annual growth of 3.4 per 1,000 inhabitants. For the year 2000, this annual growth was only 2.1 per 1,000 inhabitants. The annual growth is determined by the number of births and deaths, on the one hand, and the number of immigrants and emigrants, on the other hand. Since the start of the 1990s, the number of registered foreigners has increased by almost 50,000, but their proportion has stagnated in recent years to account for approximately 5% of the total population.

16. Flanders is characterised by two trends: an ageing population and a decline in the number of young people. The proportion of people over 60 is increasing, while the proportion of children and young people under the age of 20 is falling. In 1990, the proportion of over-60s in relation to the total population was 19.7%; by 2000, it had already increased to 22.2%. In 2010, it is expected that 24.1% of the Flemish population will consist of people over 60 and by 2020, it is expected that they will account for 27.7%.

17. The second trend is the fall in the number of young people. In 1990, the number of children/young people under the age of 20 still accounted for 24.6% of the total Flemish population. In 2000, it was 23.1%, in 2010 it is expected that they will account for 22.1% and by 2020 for only 21%. At the moment, the different groups are approximately the same size, but gradually there will be more older people than younger people. In 1990, the proportion of the group of people over 60 in relation to children/young people under the age of 20 was 80%. In 2000, the figure had already increased to 96%. In 2010, it is expected to increase to 109.1%, and in 2020 to 131.7%.

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1. This part is based on:  
 Ministry of the Flemish Community (2002) Flanders 2002 in figures  
 Ministry of the Flemish Community (2000a) VRIND 2000: Flemish Regional Indicators

### **1.2.2 The main evolutions in the labour market**

18. These trends also have consequences for the number of people starting and leaving work. The proportion of the number of young people who still have to join the labour market (aged 15-24) in relation to older people leaving the labour market (aged 55-64) is falling spectacularly. In 1990, the proportion of people entering the labour market (young people aged 15-24) compared with those leaving employment (older people aged 55-64) was still 123.6%. In 2000, it had fallen to 112.5%. For 2010 the ratio between people entering/leaving employment is expected to be 93.1% and in 2020, 77.3%.

19. In recent years there has been a systematic increase in employment in Flanders. In 1997, the level of employment (the number of people working between the ages of 15 and 64) was 61.4%. In 1998, the level of employment was 61.7%, in 1999 it increased to 62.6%, and in 2000 to 63.9%. The number of unemployed fell from 240,200 in 1997 to 169,600 in 2000. In 2001 the number of unemployed remained virtually the same (168,200). In 1997, the number of (VDAB) vacancies was 16,600 and it increased to 40,500 in 2000. In 2001 the number of vacancies fell to 35,000. This is also reflected in the evolution of the number of unemployed people for each vacancy. In the last five years, this has declined very strongly in Flanders. In 1997, the number of unemployed people per vacancy amounted to 14.6. By 1998, this had fallen to 9.2, in 1999 to 6.2, and in 2000 to 4.2. In 2001, Flanders was faced with a less favourable evolution on the labour market for the first time since long. In 2001, the number of unemployed people per vacancy had increased back to 4.8 (cf. Table 1) (source: Centre for Employment, Labour and Training). Nevertheless, the situation is still significantly better than five years ago. According to almost all the people we surveyed, this favourable economic evolution is one of the most important causes of the current teacher shortage (see Chapter 7).

### **1.2.3 The education budget**

20. As regards the education budget, there has been a slight fall in recent years in the percentage share for the education budget as part of the Flemish budget. In 1996, the percentage share of the education budget was still 44.7%. In 1997 and 1998, it was 43.5%, in 1999 it was 42.7%, in 2000 it was 42.2%, and in 2001 it was down to 41.1%. The percentage share of the Flemish education budget in relation to the gross regional product (BRP) has fallen in recent years: 4.7% in 1996, 4.6% in 1997, 4.5% in 1998, 4.5% in 1999, 4.4% in 2001 and 4.3% in 2002. (Ministry of the Flemish Community, Flemish Education in Figures, 2001a)

## **1.3 Valuing teachers<sup>2</sup>**

21. In a recent survey (Aelterman et al., 2002) into the value placed on primary and secondary school teachers by society, the respondents were asked about their own experience at school and about the children's satisfaction with regard to their teachers. The results show that teachers are highly valued by the Flemish people. The satisfaction about teachers in primary education is slightly higher than the satisfaction with teachers in secondary education. However, a number of background characteristics of the respondents play a role. People who are satisfied with their own experience of school (did they enjoy going to school or not?) and who have positive experiences of the teachers of children, value teachers more highly and are more satisfied with the teachers. People who are more strongly involved in education (for example, people working in education, people who have done voluntary work in a school, people who know others working

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2. This part is based on Aelterman, A., Verhoeven, J.C., Engels, N. & Van Petegem, P. (2002). The professionalism and value placed on primary and secondary school teachers by society. A study of the views of teachers, other people involved in education and public opinion. O.B.P.W.O. project 00.03.

in education in their immediate environment), also value teachers more highly (this applies particularly for teachers in secondary education – for primary education, the link is less obvious). In addition, people with a very strong individualist tendency value teachers less highly. A strong individualist character implies a general focus on own personal interests and individual success. Therefore people value teachers highly at a personal level. However, they feel that teachers are valued less highly by society (in fact, this negative image of the profession is therefore artificially maintained). Explicit questions about the way they feel that society values teachers indicates that the respondents believe that society as a whole does not share their individual respect for teachers to the same extent.

22. The respondents were also asked about their perceptions with regard to the evolutions in the value given to teachers by society. Over the years there is perceived to have been a slight decline in the way in which teachers in primary and secondary school are valued.

23. The above study also reveals that although people are in general reasonably satisfied with teachers, they do believe that teachers should devote more attention to coaching pupils with learning problems and socio-emotional problems. Depending on their own situation, respondents also have a different estimate of the working hours of teachers. For example, the oldest age group of respondents (65-70 years old) estimate that the working hours of teachers are significantly lower than the other age groups. On the other hand, students do not see the teaching profession at all as being minimalist. As respondents become more involved in education, they have a broader perception of the teaching profession. The study also shows that on average, students consider that teachers earn too little at the start of their career. This applies most for teachers in secondary education at the level SO1.

24. Most respondents in the study also indicate that in the last twenty years the teaching profession has undergone enormous changes. The teacher's involvement in upbringing has increased: parents have less time for bringing up their children and society has become considerably more complicated. Therefore teachers not only have to be experts in their own subject, they also have an important task in terms of educational psychology. Nevertheless, the study does not indicate that teachers are expected to take over the task of bringing up children from parents. With regard to the broader educational task, the emphasis is particularly on social training, such as learning respect and valuing others.

25. In general, the Flemish people see the teaching profession as an attractive profession although they are aware of the rather high pressure of work. The main attractions are the holiday arrangements and the way in which the teaching profession can be combined with family life. In addition, the pension scheme is also considered attractive. The teaching profession scores badly as regards the opportunities for promotion. The salary and limited possibilities of organising time are also less attractive.

## CHAPTER 2: THE ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION AND TEACHERS

### 2.1 The organisation of education<sup>3</sup>

#### 2.1.1 *Freedom of education*

26. In Belgium, freedom of education is a constitutional right (Article 24). In other words, every natural or legal person has the right to organise education and establish institutions for this purpose. The concept of the competent authority or school governing body is a key concept in the organisation of education in Flanders. It refers to the authority, the natural person or the legal person responsible for one or more educational institutes. The competent authorities have a large degree of autonomy. For example, they are completely free with regard to the choice of their teaching methods. They can also draw up their own curriculums and timetables and appoint their staff themselves. No central tests are developed by the government. The competent authorities who wish their schools to be recognised or to be financially supported by the government must observe a number of conditions. For example, the competent authorities must incorporate the attainment targets and developmental objectives in their curriculums. Attainment targets are minimum objectives laid down by the Government of Flanders which pupils at a particular level of study and in a particular discipline must aim for and achieve. The schools must also be adequately equipped and have sufficient teaching aids. They must be established in buildings which are habitable, safe, and sufficiently well organised.

27. In addition to the freedom to organise education, the constitution also guarantees the freedom of choice of the parents (Article 24). Parents and their children must be able to have access to a school of their choice (in terms of their philosophy) at a reasonable distance from their home.

#### 2.1.2 *Educational networks*

28. One of the characteristics of education in Flanders is the way in which schools and their competent authorities are grouped into educational networks. The education policy is an interaction between the ministry, the educational networks and the local schools. In Flanders there are three distinct educational networks: Community education, subsidised public-authority education and subsidised private-authority education (cf. Figure 1).

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3 . This part is based on:

- Verhoeven, J.C, & Dom, L. (2001) Flemish Eurydice Report 2000: summary of the education policy and organisation of education in Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community.
- Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department (2001b). Education in Flanders. A broad examination of the Flemish education landscape. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

### *Community education*

29. Community education is organised by the public authority, “Community education”, on behalf of the Flemish Community. The Constitution provides that this educational network must comply with special regulations as regards neutrality. With the recent Special decree of 14 July 1998, the structure of this public authority consists of three levels: the central level, the intermediary level or the groups of schools and the local level of the school. In this new structure, the decision-making power largely lies with the groups of schools at the intermediary level. 29 groups of schools have been set up, uniting a maximum of 50 schools in a single unit. These groups of schools are managed by a General Meeting, a Board of Directors, a Board of heads of schools, and a general director.

The groups of schools are competent as a competent authority for the schools, the boarding schools, and the student guidance centre which belong to this group of schools. The General Meeting ratifies the budget, the accounts and the appointment of the general director of the group of schools. The Board of Directors is responsible for the general policy, the educational policy, the staffing policy and financial policy and the policy on equipment at the level of the group of schools.

At the central level there is a Board of Flemish Community Education and a mandated administrator. The Board is responsible for monitoring constitutional guarantees, including the free choice of schools, monitoring the tasks of the public department, general quality control, supporting schools, and groups of schools and allocating funds for investments and infrastructural works. The mandated administrator has an advisory vote in the Board of Flemish Community Education. On behalf of the Board, he is responsible for the day-to-day management and policy. The central administration falls under his competence.

### *Subsidised public-authority education*

30. The provinces and municipalities have established schools in many places. These local governments, which act as competent authorities, have complete autonomy with regard to establishing their local policy, as long as they remain within the boundaries of the legally defined framework. There are a number of co-ordinating organisations in which the competent authorities discuss matters together: the Educational Secretariat of the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (OVSG) and Provincial Education Flanders (POV).

### *Subsidised private-authority education*

31. This educational network includes the schools organised on the basis of private initiative by a private person or a private organisation. In many cases, the competent authority is a non-profit-organisation (VZW). Like subsidised public-authority education, every organising authority of these schools has complete autonomy with regard to the policy implemented in its schools within the legally established framework.

- Subsidised private-authority Catholic schools

32. Private-authority subsidised education consists mainly of Catholic schools. Catholic education is represented by the Flemish Secretariat for Catholic Education (VSKO). This is a co-ordinating organisation which represents Catholic education at the community level, and defends the interests of this education in relation to the government. The VSKO does have an influence on the implementation of the policy of the competent authorities, but it is not authorised to act in their place. There are also decentralised advisory organs such as the Diocesan Planification and Co-ordination Commission (DPCC), which can make plans and co-ordinate within the Diocese (a diocese is the area which falls under the jurisdiction of a

Catholic Bishop within the organisational structure of the Catholic Church). There are also Regional Co-ordination Commissions (RCC) which discuss organisational problems in Catholic education in their region in every diocese. These commissions consist of representatives of the competent authorities, the clergy, the staff at school and parents.

- Other subsidised private-authority schools

33. The denominational protestant schools are grouped in the Belgian Association of Protestant-Christian Schools. The non-denominational and independent schools are collected together in the Flemish Schools Forum (VOOP), the Alternative Schools Federation (FOPEM), and the federation of Rudolf Steiner schools. In the group of independent schools, the Steiner schools (officially recognised since 1984) are the largest group. The Freinet schools form a smaller group. Nowadays, these different groups work together with the Forum of Small Education Providers (OKO). The three Jewish schools in Antwerp do not have an official representative organisation. One of the directors has assumed the role of spokesman for these schools.

### **2.1.3 *The number of schools and school population***

34. In Flanders there are 2,189 educational institutions in mainstream primary education and 924 institutions in mainstream secondary education (Flemish Education in Figures 2000-2001).

#### *Numbers of pupils*

35. In the 2000-2001 school year, there were 435,535 pupils in primary education. Of this group, 409,323 pupils follow mainstream primary education and 26,212 pupils follow special primary education. In mainstream primary education, the largest proportion of pupils are in subsidised private-authority education (261,714 or 64%); 54,693 (13.3%) pupils follow education in community education and 92,916 (22.7%) pupils are in subsidised public-authority education.

36. The total number of pupils in mainstream secondary education is 413,343. In the first stage, 136,051 pupils follow education. In the second and third stages, the largest groups of pupils are in general secondary education (108,307 or 39.29%): 88,131 (or 31.97%) pupils follow technical secondary education (second and third stage), 4663 or 1.69% (second and third stage) follow secondary education in the arts and 74,594 (Or 27.06%) follow secondary vocational education (second, third and fourth stage and modular education).

37. Subsidised private-authority education has the largest number of pupils (312,660 or 75.6%) followed by community education (66,424 or 16.1%) and subsidised public-authority education (34,259 or 8.3%).

(Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c) (cf. Tables 2 and 3).

### **2.1.4 *Policy at the school level***

38. The competent authorities are responsible for the organisation of education (School Pact act). Their management function is usually shared or carried out to a large extent by the head of the school. The competent authorities are free with regard to their choice of teaching methods and educational ideas. If a minimum timetable has been respected and the curriculum has been approved, the school can be funded or subsidised. The competent authorities are responsible for the recruitment and appointment of staff and

receive funding from the government. They own or rent the school infrastructure. The government determines the salary scales of the teachers and pays their salaries.

39. In secondary education, the head of the school does not in principle have any teaching duties. However, the heads of small schools are an exception to this, both in primary and in secondary education: if a school does not have a certain number of pupils, the head is given teaching duties. The head is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and (if available) has a limited number of administrative staff. He is responsible for registering the pupils, their administrative files, and for the files of members of staff. He is also responsible for the decision about the use of funds. At least once a year he informs the competent authorities about the financial situation of the school and presents the budget for the following year. He is also responsible for the management of the school equipment, for maintenance and repairs which are necessary and for the purchase of school equipment, drawing up the rules for teachers and pupils, order and discipline at school, etc. The head has a co-ordinating task at the level of the school. He does this, inter alia, by carrying out the educational project of the competent authorities, by providing educational leadership, by means of personal contact with staff, by visiting classes, by organising staff meetings on educational matters, by evaluating the curriculums, by developing and stimulating in-service training activities, by chairing the participation council (subsidised education) or preparing the meetings of the schools council (community education), etc.

40. The head has an important role with regard to the selection of new teaching staff and other staff (appointed by the competent authorities). He is responsible for all external contacts (with the inspectorate, educational guidance, services, parents, local community, etc.) and for the public relations of the school.

41. In addition to the head, a number of other people can be involved in school policy in secondary education. The deputy head is the direct colleague of the head (from 600 pupils). The administrator is responsible for the management of equipment and for book keeping in an educational institution with a boarding establishment. Support staff are responsible for the administrative and supervision tasks (for pupils) entrusted to them by the head.

The vocational training co-ordinator co-ordinates the activities of the teaching staff with regard to vocational practices and technical subjects for which he is responsible (in vocational and technical education). He also supervises the management of the technical equipment and maintains relations with the business world.

The internal educational advisor monitors the process of education in the school, as well as the quality of education. For example, he participates in the educational policy and the management of the school and promotes the school culture (such as internal and external communication at school level). Every school specifies the tasks of the internal educational advisor. For example, he can co-ordinate all sorts of pupil guidance and is involved with the preparation, process and follow-up of meetings of the class committee (the class committee consists of all the members of teaching staff of a class; it takes all the decisions and responsibilities with regard to the evaluation of pupils). He can also be an important contact person for parents and members of the Student Guidance Centres (CLBs). He can supervise new teachers, organise working groups of teachers, prepare various educational activities, etc.

42. A head will no longer be appointed on a permanent basis, but will have a mandate for a particular period. The modalities for this have been drawn up in the Education Decree XI of 18 May 1999. Recruitment can vary depending on the competent authorities (for example, official examinations or not).

43. An applicant can be legally appointed in primary education when he has a nursery or primary school qualification (or an EU qualification which complies with the EU directives) and has worked for 10 years. In secondary education, the applicant must have the qualification that is required or that is deemed to

be adequate to teach, and the last evaluation may not be ‘unsatisfactory’ (this applies from 2006; cf. Chapter 6 for a further explanation). Some competent authorities also require proof of participation in particular in-service training programmes. Community education requires additional qualifications (such as a preparatory course, holding a specific qualification, etc). For other positions related to the management of the school, similar requirements have been imposed.

### **2.1.5 Participation in decision making in schools**

44. Community education and the two networks of subsidised education each have a separate structure for participation.

#### *Community education*

45. In community education, the head and the school council are responsible for school-related matters at the local level. The school council consists of representatives of parents (3), teachers (3), and representatives of the local social, economic and cultural fora (2). The head is not a member of the school council. He does attend the meetings and has an advisory vote. The school councils have advisory and discussion powers and the right of information with regard to all decisions which influence school life. They do not have any decision-making powers.

#### *Subsidised education*

46. In subsidised schools a participation council is compulsory, consisting of the head and representatives of the competent authorities, the staff, the parents and representatives of the local community. The participation council has a right to information concerning all school-related matters. The participation council has advisory powers with regard to the general organisation and operation of the school, the planification and general criteria relating to the supervision and evaluation of pupils. The participation council has powers regarding consultation (aiming to achieve a consensus) with regard to the criteria for the use of the timetables, drawing up and changing school rules, the transport of pupils and the health and safety of pupils. Finally, it also has the power to participate with regard to the planning of the school calendar. Additional rights and powers can be assigned (defined by the law), such as, for example, the policy with regard to the recruitment of pupils, informing parents and the school infrastructure (Decree of 23 October 1991).

#### *Student councils*

47. Since 1 September 1999, every school which forms an educational unit and belongs to mainstream recognised funded and subsidised education can establish a student council. A student council is compulsory if at least one third of the pupils at the school concerned request it. The student council is an advisory organisation elected from and by the pupils (it is not compulsory to include a member of the board of directors or teacher in the council). The student council has advisory powers with regard to the management for all matters directly affecting the pupils, and the management must provide all the available information concerning the pupils. The management must also provide the necessary infrastructure and administrative support for the student council.

### *Negotiation committees*

48. Negotiations regarding the working conditions do not fall under the competence of the school councils or participation councils. In addition to the collective bargaining between the government and the trade unions (see paragraph 2.4: the educational trade unions), there are negotiation organisations for the networks. For community education and subsidised public-authority education, there are organisations with equal representation for the public sector. For community education, the negotiations take place in the Sectoral Committee 10 Education, and for subsidised public-authority education, they take place in the Committee for Provincial and Local Government Services. In both these organisations, the Government of Flanders and the representative trade unions are represented equally. For subsidised private-authority education, there is an umbrella negotiating committee.

At the local level, there are basic negotiation committees (BOCs) for the community schools and the subsidised public-authority schools. For private-authority education, there are Local Negotiation Committees (LOCs) at the school level. The negotiations in these committees cover five fields: the administrative regulations of the working conditions of teachers and other staff, the salary scales, the pension scheme, the relation with the trade unions and the social provisions. Since 15 May 1999, one Local Negotiation Committee can also be established for every community of schools.

49. According to Belgian labour legislation, the big schools in subsidised private-authority education must have a “works council” (if there are a minimum of 100 people employed there) and/or a committee for the prevention and protection at work (if there are a minimum of 50 people employed there).

### **2.1.6 School communities**

50. School communities are voluntary co-operative ventures between secondary institutes (mainstream secondary education, part-time vocational secondary education, and part-time fishery education) which provide a multi-sectoral provision of education, consisting at least of general academic, technical and vocational education. This concept was introduced in the Decree of 14 July 1998 on secondary education.

51. A school community is a single institution or a group of institutions which do or do not belong to the same competent authority and/or the same educational network, and which are jointly responsible for providing education within a specific geographical area. There are 44 geographical education areas in which the new school communities can be created. There are no minimum criteria for the number of pupils per school community. However, the number of school communities for each educational network is limited. If the schools of a school community belong to different educational network, the school community belongs to the education area in which most schools of the school community are located.

52. A school community is led by a co-ordinating director. The aim of a school community is to rationalise the education provided at the local level and create a transparent structure. Agreements can be concluded in a school community with regard to staffing policy (criteria for the recruitment, work and evaluation of members of staff). A school community also gives advice on investments in school accommodation and infrastructure.

53. Schools which are members of a school community have a number of advantages (Decree of 14 July 1998 on various measures related to secondary education and for the amendment of the Decree of 25 February 1997 relating to primary education). For example, there are favourable norms on rationalisation. For schools which belong to a school community, there is a reduction of 15% in the rationalisation norms. It is also possible to transfer teacher hours from one school to another if they both belong to the same

school community and/or the same educational network. In addition, there are also favourable calculation norms for support staff. There is a trend to assign more and more advantages to school communities.

54. Since 1 September 2000, 119 school communities have been created: 35 in community education, 9 in subsidised public-authority education, and 75 in subsidised private-authority education.

### **2.1.7 *Quality control and the promotion of quality***

55. Quality control and the promotion of quality is supported by three mechanisms:

- the attainment targets: a frame of reference for quality approved by the Flemish parliament
- the inspectorate: an external supervision system;
- educational supervision: internal support.

56. With the attainment targets, the Flemish Community clearly indicates its minimum expectations with regard to primary and secondary education. In this way, it aims to guarantee good quality education. Attainment targets are minimum objectives which the majority of pupils at a particular level of study and in a particular discipline must aim for and achieve. Specifically this concerns qualities such as knowledge, insight, attitudes and skills. There are subject-related attainment targets, as well as cross-curriculum attainment targets. Every competent authority must incorporate these attainment targets in curriculums. In doing so, it can autonomously decide on its curriculums and teaching methods, but these must comply with the criteria summarised in the Decision of the Government of Flanders of 26 November 1996. Systematic research could clearly show the influence of issuing attainment targets for the autonomy of teachers. Up to now, no research has been carried out on this matter.

57. The core tasks of the inspectorate are to control the quality of education and inspect the conditions for the recognition of schools and Student Guidance Centres. In order to achieve these core tasks, the inspectorate investigates whether the attainment targets are actually achieved, and whether the other organic obligations were correctly observed (for example, following a minimum timetable). This is done by means of a school inspection. In a school inspection, the inspectorate acts as a team and inspects the operation of the school in one process. In principle, all the institutions are inspected once every six years. The results are published in a report that is available to the public. After the inspection, the inspectorate submits advice to the minister in connection with the continued recognition of the institution.

58. Every educational network has its own educational advisors. At the request of schools, they are responsible for educational and methodological supervision. Every year the schools advisory services submit a report and a supervision plan to be accountable to the government.

59. In recent years there has been a growing awareness that schools themselves play an important role in quality control. The government wishes to support schools with their self-evaluation and internal quality control so that it corresponds with the external evaluation in inspections.

### **2.1.8 *The funding of education***

60. In addition to the funding by the national and community government, there is also (limited) funding by the provinces and municipalities in subsidised public-authority education, by the church authorities and by private persons in subsidised private-authority education, and finally by parents.

61. The community funds the schools of community education and subsidises the schools in subsidised education. In addition to the specific conditions for receiving funds to cover salaries, the operation, buildings and equipment, there are two other types of conditions which must be met to receive funding. First, there are the general conditions of recognition of schools, such as the guarantee of hygiene and safety of the school buildings, the responsibility of the school governing body for the organisation of education, drawing up curriculums, accepting inspections, the structural organisation of education in accordance with the legislation on education, respect for the language legislation in education, etc. The government recognises a school on the basis of the advice of the inspectorate. Secondly, there are a number of specific conditions related to the numbers of pupils. In primary education, the programming norms refer to the number of pupils who must be enrolled on the last day of September when a new school is established, if it is to receive funds from the government. In addition, there are rationalisation norms which determine how many pupils must be enrolled on the first school day in February for a permanent right to funding or subsidies. This happens after the fourth year of the school's existence in mainstream education, and after the third year of its existence in special education. There are also programming and rationalisation norms for secondary education.

### *Staff*

62. All heads of school, members of the teaching and paramedic staff in primary and secondary education are paid directly by the Flemish Community, irrespective of the educational network. The staff salaries are paid by the Flemish Community, as long as the members of staff comply with conditions laid down by law, as long as they observe certain regulations (e.g., qualifications, physical condition, knowledge of the language) and as long as their appointments are possible under the subsidy norms. These norms entail that every school is allocated a certain number of hours (for primary and special education), or a number of hours per teacher (secondary education), depending on the number of pupils, which can be used and distributed in accordance with the needs amongst the levels, types of education, disciplines, etc. The restrictions are the same for every level of education, whether the education is organised or subsidised by the Community or not. The basis for staff salaries concerns qualifications and seniority (cf. 6.7).

### *Operation and equipment*

63. There is a different regulation for the community schools, on the one hand, and subsidised schools, on the other hand, as regards the costs of operation and equipment. The Decree of 25 February 1997 stipulates that the level of the operating funds for every pupil in subsidised primary education must be between 75.8% and 76.2% of the sum of the operating funds for every pupil in community education. Currently these differences are greater. This is a complex problem.

By way of example, it could be said that for the basic operating funds alone, the sum per pupil in private-authority subsidised primary education accounts for 69.3% of that for community education (Deloitte & Touche, 2001).

64. This can be explained by a number of 'objective differences'. These comprise, inter alia, the choice which must be provided in community education between religion and ethics, the obligation to enrol every pupil who applies, a greater number of pupils with a social or cultural background which stands in the way of a successful school career, differences in infrastructure and the consequences of decisions made in the past. A similar arrangement applies for secondary education. The Decree of 14 July 1998 stipulates that in 2007, the operating funds for every pupil in subsidised private-authority secondary education must be 76% of the operating funds for every pupil in secondary community education. Currently the differences are also greater here. The sum per pupil in private-authority subsidised

secondary education is 65.2% for the basic operating funds of that in community education (Deloitte & Touche, 2001).

65. As regards school buildings, subsidised public-authority and subsidised private-authority education receive subsidies of up to 60% of their investment (70% for primary education). The Investment Funds of the Municipalities and Community is responsible for the non-subsidised aspects of subsidised public-authority education. In private-authority education the Community must guarantee the loans which cover the non-subsidised part.

66. Within community education, the Board of Flemish Community Education In Flanders is competent to define the rules regarding the distribution of the funds between the groups of schools. The groups of schools themselves are responsible for the financial management and the management of equipment of schools which belong to the group. A Board of Accountants, appointed by the Government of Flanders, controls the financial policy of the groups of schools. The Board of Flemish Community Education also supervises the financial policy of the Council for Community Education in Flanders. For subsidised public-authority education, the municipalities and provinces are responsible for the financial management of the schools. The budget must be approved by the Provincial Executive (as regards the municipal budget) and by the Government of Flanders (as regards the provincial budget). Schools in private-authority subsidised education have a very large measure of autonomy with regard to the management of the school. The budget does not have to be controlled or comply with particular rules. The schools merely have to comply with a number of basic conditions regarding the operating funds that are received.

67. In 2001, an average of 3,001.01 euro was spent per pupil in mainstream primary education (this sum is higher in community education than in subsidised education). In mainstream secondary education, an average of 6,374.86 euro was spent per pupil (Ministry of the Flemish Community, Flemish Education in Figures, 2001a). Therefore the subsidies per pupil for primary education are significantly lower than the subsidies per pupil for secondary education.

### **2.1.9 Primary education**

68. In general, primary education starts in September of the year in which the child reaches the age of six. The traditional structure of primary education consists of six years and three stages (cf. Figure 2). Nowadays, the school governing body has been free to organise its own education. Schools are no longer obliged to divide the school into classes, subjects or stages. Nevertheless, most schools have retained this division into six grades.

69. Attempts have been made to achieve greater differentiation, for example, special lessons for children with learning difficulties, groups in which children from the same class work together on different tasks, and 'contract work' in which children are responsible for the progress of their own work. Normally one teacher teaches all the subjects. Some special teachers can be appointed for teaching subjects such as physical education, religion, non-denominational ethics, etc.

70. Attainment targets have been formulated for five disciplines in primary education: physical education, musical education, language (French has also been added), environmental education and mathematics. Attainment targets have also been formulated for two cross-curricular areas: learning to learn and social skills.

71. At the end of every year, the pupils are assessed on the basis of tests developed by the schools themselves to see to what extent they have achieved the objectives put forward. A school report informs

the pupils and their parents at mainstream intervals about the results achieved, the progress that has been made, the learning behaviour and personal development of the child.

72. Schools are allocated an amount of teaching hours depending on the number of pupils. This means that the schools have a large degree of autonomy with regard to organising the education they provide. They are able to draw up the best possible timetable and relate the structure of the education provided to the particular needs of pupils (the organisation of transition years, organising physical education lessons, assigning hours to support the school governing body, etc.). Schools can also make use of a remedial teacher (a job created by the schools themselves), who can support pupils during a difficult period of the learning process, by means of specific and strongly individual activities.

73. From the 1992-1993 school year, schools which have plans for a systematic approach to failures and repeating years in the first year of primary education can claim additional funds. However, co-operation with an infant school and a school in special education is a condition for this. By means of a special system of integrated education, pupils with special needs who have spent some time in a school for special education can temporarily continue to receive guidance from special education. Technical equipment can also be provided for these children with a view to their reintegration into a school in mainstream education.

74. There is also an extra framework for the 'Educational Priority Areas' and extension of special needs provisions. From 2002-2003, this will be incorporated in the decree on equal educational opportunities.

#### **2.1.10 Secondary education**

75. Secondary education consists of three stages of two years (Decree of 31 July 1990). The first stage consists of a common curriculum for all pupils (group 1A or group 1B). The second and third stages each provide four types of education (cf. Figure 2):

- General Secondary Education (ASO). This type of education focuses on a broad theoretical education and prepares pupils for higher education.
- Technical Secondary Education (TSO). This education consists of general and technical/theoretical subjects. Pupils are prepared for work or for higher (technical) education. The education includes practical lessons.
- Secondary Education in the Arts (KSO). In addition to a general and broad education, this also involves active artistic practice. Pupils are prepared for work or for higher education.
- Vocational Secondary Education (BSO). Pupils receive a general education and education in specific skills. The transition to higher education is possible, but not usual.

76. Each stage consists of two years and is a unit in itself. At the end of the third stage of general and technical education and education in the arts, the pupils receive a certificate of secondary education. Pupils in vocational secondary education also receive this certificate when they have completed the special seventh year of vocational secondary education. Some schools provide a 'fourth stage' of vocational secondary education which consists of three parts: art, clothing and nursing (general and psychiatric nursing).

77. There are different sorts of educational institutions: middle schools which only provide the first stage (or the first and second stage), schools which only provide the second and third stage (either ASO, or TSO and BSO, or both) and schools which provide all three stages. Education in the arts (second and third stage) is only provided in a few schools.

78. If pupils have a certificate of primary education they can be admitted to the first year A of secondary education. If they do not have the certificate of primary education, they can start in the first year B (from the age of 11), or they can be admitted to the first year A under certain conditions (in agreement with the parents, on the advice of the Student Guidance Centre and on condition that the admissions board of the first year A gives a positive recommendation). (The admissions board consists of the teachers involved and the head of the school.)

79. The current education provision in secondary education (except for the first stage) is divided into 32 areas of study. An area of study is a group of structural elements based on a related content, and in technical and vocational secondary education, also on the basis of a need for the same education infrastructure and a path to the same job sector (see Decree of 14 July 1998). In general secondary education there is only one study area, viz., general secondary education. One study area applies across ASO-TSO, viz., Sport. In TSO there are 27 study areas, and in KSO there are three.

80. An experiment started in vocational secondary education on 1 September 2000 with a modular system (the experiment runs up to June 2006 and will then be evaluated). The aim is for the pupils to focus more on the basis of their capacities (rather than their failures), tackling the discrepancy between the vocational training provided and the demand in the labour market and tackling the unqualified 'output' of pupils. In the modular system, every school education is divided into a number of vocational modules which prepare pupils better for particular jobs (based on job profiles which are drawn up by industry and management). Every module is combined with elements of a general education and leads to a course certificate. All the course certificates together lead to a general certificate.

81. In vocational education, there is also part-time vocational secondary education (DBSO). This was specially organised for pupils who have problems with compulsory education and are often tired of school. Pupils can work part time and go to school part time, and the curriculum and teaching methods are adapted to the specific needs of these young people.

#### *Attainment targets*

82. The attainment targets apply for the first year A and for the second year of the first stage with regard to the subjects in primary education. The developmental objectives have been laid down for the subjects of the basic education of the first year B and the pre-vocational year (BVL). There are also attainment targets and development of objectives for five cross-curricular areas: learning to learn, social skills, citizenship, health education and environmental education.

83. The attainment targets for the second and third stages are gradually introduced, starting with the first year of the second stage, from 1 September 2002. Attainment targets have been formulated for all the subjects for the primary education in the second and third stage. In addition, cross-curricular attainment targets have also been formulated which are the same for General Secondary Education, Technical Secondary Education, Secondary Education in the Arts and Vocational Secondary Education. These are different for the second and third stages. The areas are: learning to learn, social skills, citizenship, health education, environmental education, musical/creative training and technical/technological training (the last only applies for ASO).

## *Evaluation of pupils*

84. This evaluation is carried out by tests and examinations which are organised by the individual teachers and which are under the ultimate responsibility of the school governing body. In secondary education the class committee is the central evaluation body. The class committee is composed of the administrative and teaching staff and is responsible for the education of a specific group of pupils, the evaluation of their progress at school, the decision about the transition of every pupil to a higher year, and the issue of certificates.

85. The form of the evaluation continues to be an important source of debate. For example, there are doubts about the importance of a summative evaluation, the role and volume of examinations and the use of examinations at the end of the year to decide whether a pupil can pass on to a higher year. Pupils can receive the certificate of secondary education at the end of the 6th year of secondary education (ASO, TSO, KSO), or at the end of the 7th year (BSO). In technical and vocational education, pupils can also acquire different qualifications after the fourth or sixth year and after the fifth and seventh specialist and/or extra year for the same qualified training.

86. The system of Integrated education (GON) also exists in secondary education. Again, the aim is to bridge the gap between mainstream secondary education and special education. In secondary education, the extra staff for educational priority is organised from 2002-2003 through the decree for equal educational opportunities.

## **2.2 Staff<sup>4</sup>**

### **2.2.1 Administrative and teaching staff<sup>5</sup>**

87. Within the teaching staff a distinction is made between administrative and teaching staff. The administrative staff consists of the heads of school, deputy heads, vocational training co-ordinators and the senior vocational training co-ordinator. Teaching staff has a teaching task. In mainstream primary education, there was a small increase in administrative and teaching staff between 1993 and 2001. The total number of staff with a permanent and temporary appointment increased from 41,398 in 1993-1994 school year to 45,254 in the 2000-2001 school year. The increase is mainly the result of the increasing number of temporary staff. In 1993-1994 there were 8,721 temporary staff, and in 2000-2001 there were 12,237 temporary staff. (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c) (cf. Table 4). In mainstream secondary education, the number of teachers and administrative staff remained roughly the same in the period 1993-2001. The total number is 53,744 (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c) (cf. Table 4).

88. The number of pupils is increasing most in special primary education. This means that the biggest increase in members of staff is also greatest in special primary education. By way of comparison,

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4. The statistics on staff only record staff who are directly paid by the Education Department. Staff who are paid through the system of 'availability prior to retirement' (TBS55+) are therefore included in the statistics. Support service staff in subsidised education are not included in the statistics. The subsidised contractual employees are also left out of consideration because these members of staff are not wholly paid by the department.

5. The number of members of staff is expressed in physical persons. The physical persons are recorded by the level and network of education where they do most of the teaching. Substitutions of less than a year are not taken into account.

in mainstream primary education, the number of members of staff increased by 9.3% between 1993 and 2001; in special primary education, the number of members of staff increased by 17.1% during the same period (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c)

89. The slight increase in administrative and teaching staff is primarily linked to the evolution as regards pupils (note the strong increase in special education). However, various policy decisions and measures also play a role. For example, there is an increase in the number of temporary teachers, partly as a result of the stop on permanent appointments between 1 February 1996 and 1 January 1999. In addition, the system of replacement pools (see 5.3) will also lead to more temporary staff in the future. Other measures which lead to an increase in the number of teachers are the reserve teachers available prior to retirement (which means that substitutions are necessary) and the gradual expansion of the extra framework for the educational priority policy and extension of special needs provisions (is replaced by the decree on equal education opportunities).

(Flemish Education Indicators in an International Perspective, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department, 2000c)

### *Gender*

90. There are more female teachers than male teachers in education. The difference is particularly great in mainstream primary education: 10,003 (20.8%) men, compared to 38,086 (79.2%) women (in February 2001) (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c) (cf. Table 5). In mainstream secondary education, the difference is much smaller: 25,190 (44.4%) men compared with 31,599 (55.6%) women (in February 2001). (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c) (cf. Table 5).

### *Age*

91. As regards the age of teachers, there is a large group of people over the age of 50: 13,882 (29%) of teachers in mainstream primary education (cf. Table 6) and 20,287 (36%) in mainstream secondary education (cf. Table 7) (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c). The group of teachers between the ages of 20 and 29 is fairly limited in comparison with the other age categories.

92. There has been an increase in the age of teachers in general. Between 1994 and 2000, the number of female teachers between the ages of 50 and 59 doubled. The male and female teachers aged 50-59 account for approximately one third of teaching staff. Only 12% are between the ages of 20 and 29. (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 1993-1994 and 1999-2000)

While there was still a balanced division between young and old teachers in 1990-1991, older staff predominated in 1999-2000 (particularly because of a strong increase in the group of teachers over the age of 55). As more and more people of this group will have to be replaced, there should be an increase in the demand for recently qualified teachers. Up to now this trend has only been visible in secondary education; the category of teachers aged 20-29 is increasing there again. (Flemish education indicators in an international perspective, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department, 2000c)

### *Part- time work*

93. In Flanders approximately one in three teachers work part time (32%). The average for the OECD countries is 22.8% (Education at a glance, 2001).

### 2.2.2 *Other staffing categories*

94. These categories include administrative staff, labouring staff in community education, support staff, paramedic staff, CLB staff, inspectors, educational supervisors and boarding school staff.

95. Both in mainstream primary education and in mainstream secondary education, there has been a strong decline in the number of other categories of staff. In mainstream primary education, this group of members of staff fell from 1,365 in 1993-1994 to 963 in 2000-2001. In mainstream secondary education the group of other members of staff fell from 7,998 in 1993-1994 to 6314 in 2000-2001. In addition, there is another separate group of members of staff which transcends the various levels of education. This group includes, amongst others, the members of staff of the Student Guidance Centres, inspectors, educational supervisors, boarding school staff, etc. Here there has been an increase in the numbers of members of staff from 2,249 in 1993-1994 to 2,614 in 1999-2000. In the following school year there was a marked increase, viz., 3,083 members of staff in the 2000-2001 school year. This can be explained to a large extent by the fact that the activities of the former Psycho-Medical-Social Centres (PMS) and the Centres for Medical School Supervision (MST) came to an end on 1 September 2000. Their tasks were taken over by the Student Guidance Centres (CLBs). The staff of the MST fell under the department of Welfare, Public Health and Culture. From 1 September 2000, these staff were transferred to the Education department and are also recorded under the 'Other categories of staff'. (Statistical Yearbook of Flemish Education, 2001c) (cf. Table 8). In addition, some of the staff are still paid from the operating funds. These are not included in the figures above. There are no centralised figures available on this.

## 2.3 **Indicators on teacher shortages<sup>6</sup>**

96. This paragraph examines supply and demand in primary education and secondary education, one after the other. The more important indicators for teacher shortages for both levels of education are indicated on this basis.

### 2.3.1 *Primary education*

#### *The demand for teachers in primary education*

97. The number of vacancies in schools depends mainly on the following factors:

- The numbers of pupils, the birth rate and the expected turnover of pupils (from nursery to primary education).
- The number of teachers leaving as a result of retirement or redundant teachers who are available (prior to retirement).
- The norms about the amount of teaching hours (pupil/teacher ratio) which are used or changed.
- The achievement norms which are used or changed.

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6. This part is based on Poelmans, P., (2001), Employment market report for Education. Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

- The extent to which special projects are developed, maintained, expanded or abolished (for example, the extension of care, educational priority, etc.).

98. As a result of the falling number of children, the number of jobs in primary education will decline in the next few years. Looking at the prognosis up to 2004, there is a systematic fall of nursery education (in 1999 there were 14,080 full-time equivalent teachers paid from the budget, while the prognosis for 2004 is 12,668 full-time equivalents for the budget).

As regards primary education, there is an increase up to 2001 and this is followed by a decline (in 1999, 33,976; in 2001, 34,525 and in 2004, 33,989). At the same time, teachers are also leaving the profession because of increasing age (both in nursery education and in primary education).

99. Bringing all the developments on the demand side together shows that in nursery education, the fall in the number of jobs as a result of the declining birth rate is largely compensated by policy measures (Collective Employment Agreements V and VI). From 2004, the increase in the number of older members of staff leaving the profession plays a particularly important role.

The demand for teachers in primary education will increase during the period 2000-2004 by 2,024 full-time equivalent teachers included in the budget. This is a result of the increase in the number of pupils (up to 2001), the increasing number of retirements and the policy measures (Collective Employment Agreements V and VI and the replacement pool). (These are the results without taking into account the nursery teachers who teach in primary education.)

#### *The provision of teachers in primary education*

100. The number of graduates (last year students) in nursery teacher training and primary teacher training reached a low point in the period 1990-1991 and has increased since that time, remaining relatively stable between the period 1995-1996 and 1998-1999. Looking at the number of first year students for the 1999-2000 academic year, this reveals an increase of 19% as regards nursery teachers and 40% for primary teachers. For the 2000-2001 academic year, enrolments for nursery teachers fell by 5%, while the number of enrolments for primary teachers increased by 9% (provisional figures). The prognoses are that the availability of nursery teachers will fall by 68 over the period 1999-2003. For primary teachers, there will be an increase of 1,106 teachers in the period 2000-2003.

101. There was an increase in the number of nursery teachers looking for jobs in the period 1997-1999. In September 2000 (1,230 job-seekers) there were 602 nursery teachers less looking for work than in September 1999 (1,832 job-seekers). There has been a drastic fall in the number of primary teachers looking for work since 1997. In September 2000 there were still 670 primary teachers looking for work. The number of permanently appointed members of staff without a job (reassignment list) can currently be considered to be almost exhausted.

102. In recent years (1997-2000) the number of temporary teachers increased in primary education (mainly primary education). This means an increase in the theoretical reserve. This reserve is the room available to part-time temporary members of staff to work more. It is theoretical because not everyone is prepared to work more.

#### *Comparing supply and demand*

103. The ratio of supply and demand continues to be positive in nursery education but is becoming smaller every year. In 1998-1999 there were still 1.8 nursery teachers available for every interim vacancy;

in 1999-2000 there were 1.4. For primary teachers the ratio between supply and demand is negative. In 1998-1999 there was still 0.65 teacher available for every interim vacancy, in 1999-2000 only 0.5. However, it should be noted that in May 2000 there were still 206 teachers registered with the VDAB as looking for work. This can simply be explained by the fact that these teachers do not always live in a region where the vacancies exist, they are not prepared to travel large distances, they apply in a network with fewer vacancies or they are not particularly suitable for a job in education.

Up to now, schools in nursery education have not yet had a problem with attracting teachers with the required qualifications. Schools in primary education already have problems in this respect: in March 2000, these schools had to make use of nursery for almost 12% of their replacements. Also 10% of the vacancies are filled with out-of-field-teachers. Furthermore, there are important regional differences. For example, it is most difficult to find teachers in Brussels. In the primary schools in Brussels only 68% of replacements have the required qualifications for a teacher. The average for all the schools funded or subsidised by the Flemish community is 87%.

### *Conclusion*

104. In the period 2000-2004 the employment reserve of nursery teachers will increase by 316 teachers. Together with the current “excess” of 562 nursery teachers, this forms a reserve of 878 nursery teachers. Increasingly the nursery teachers are used to cope with the shortage of teachers in primary education. Therefore in future, it can be expected that there will also be shortages in the labour market of nursery education. As regards primary education, the employment reserve of teachers will fall by 918 teachers during the period 2000-2004. Together with the present shortage of 806 teachers, this results in a shortage of 1,724 teachers or 5,7% of the total number of teachers in primary education in 2001.

#### **2.3.2 Secondary education**

105. As regards demand, the effect of teachers growing older is not as great in secondary education as it is in primary education. In fact, during the period 2001-2003, there is even expected to be a fall in the number of teachers leaving the profession. From 2005, there will be a significant increase in the number of retirements. The demand for teachers in secondary education will increase by 126 full-time equivalents during the period 2000-2004, despite the effect of the falling birth rate from 1 September 2001. The increase in demand is mainly the result of the measures of the Collective Employment Agreement V and VI.

106. As regards supply, the main intake comes from teacher training. From the 1999-2000 academic year there has been an increase in the number of enrolments in teacher training at institutes of higher education (group 1 – teacher). On the other hand, for the academic initial teacher training there is a falling trend with regard to the number of enrolments. For example, in the 1999-2000 academic year, 163 fewer students enrolled than in the previous academic year. As regards the certificate of education (GPB), the number of students enrolling for this training increases every year. This training is aimed at giving educational qualifications to people who do not have a basic training in education, but who are experts in their subject, e.g., on the basis of useful industrial experience or on the basis of another certificate). The employment reserve will increase by 396 teachers in the period 2000-2003, mainly as a result of the increase in the number of enrolments in teacher training at institutes of higher education (group 1 – teacher).

107. The number of unemployed teachers in lower secondary education has fallen without interruption since 1993. For example, the number of unemployed teachers in September 2000 (1593) was 56% of the total in 1993. Looking at higher secondary education, the number of teachers looking for work has

remained relatively constant over the period 1993-2000. There was a slight decline in the period 1997-1999. In September 2000, the number of teachers looking for work in higher secondary education was 1,395.

108. There has been a significant fall in the number of permanently appointed teachers on the reassignment list. In the 1999-2000 academic year this was 25%, compared with the 1991-1992 academic year, amounting to 192 teachers. The potential of the reserve of part-time temporary teachers fell in the period 1998-2000, mainly because fewer temporary teachers were appointed during that period.

109. The ratio between supply and demand indicates a shortage in lower secondary education. In the 1999-2000 school year there were only 0.75 teachers in lower secondary education available for every interim vacancy. In higher secondary education, the ratios are different. In the 1999-2000 school year, there were 2.7 teachers available for every interim vacancy. However, it is important to make a distinction in terms of subject and specialist areas. For example, in the 1998-1999 school year, there were 370 teacher shortages in lower secondary education to fill interim jobs in particular subjects; in higher secondary education, there were 278 teacher shortages. These subjects are not only the main subjects such as mathematics, French, Dutch, but to an important extent it concerns technical and practical subjects (electronics, electromechanics, mechanics, woodwork, construction, etc.). 24% of the shortages in these specific subjects are shortages for technical and practical subjects. 40% of the temporary applicants appointed in these subjects only have minimal educational qualifications. In the 1999-2000 academic year, 10% of all the temporary teachers who had been appointed at the start of the school year were teaching a subject for which they only had a "different" qualification; in March, this had already increased to 15.5% of the temporary teachers. (This category can also include teachers who do not have a basic educational qualification but who are enrolled in a training to gain this educational qualification.)

110. On the basis of the net result of this comparison of supply and demand over the period 2000-2004, we can assume that the employment reserve of secondary school teachers will grow by 270 teachers during this period – simply on the basis of the evolutions in secondary education.

Together with the current shortage of 833 teachers, this means a continuing shortage of 563 teachers during the period referred to. However, obviously the employment reserve of teachers is not influenced only by developments in secondary education. In other words, schools in secondary education will also be confronted with a shortage of teachers in the next few years.

Furthermore, from 2005, the huge retirement wave will start to have an effect in secondary education.

## **2.4 The teacher unions**

111. Because of the 1974 act on the unions, the government is obliged to conduct negotiations in advance with the representative trade unions before taking any measure which has repercussions on staff. Trade unions, which represent at least 10% of the employees, are representative for the competent education committee. These representative trade unions are seated in numerous discussion and negotiation organisations of the government or of the competent authorities at every level.

112. The compulsory negotiations on all the measures which have repercussions for staff cover an extremely broad area. Some examples are given to illustrate this: determining the annual staffing for levels of education, changes into the performance system of teachers, statutory changes such as the method of appointments and promotions. As almost all the matters in the budget related to education also affect staff, it could be said that a great proportion of the fundamental decisions in education can only be taken after negotiations have been conducted with the trade unions (Devos, 1995: 23).

It is clear that these negotiations have a profound affect on the decision making of the Government of Flanders. In fact, the negotiations are only the last official stage in the discussions between the government and the trade unions. It is customary to hold informal discussions first. The points of view of the parties involved are explored during these informal discussions. If the trade unions are extremely negative about certain proposals, these proposals are not usually discussed at the official negotiations (Devos. 1995: 23).

113. In Flanders the representative trade unions form part of the three main general unions: the General Christian Trade Union (ACV), the General Belgian Trade Union (ABVV) and the General Centre of Liberal Trade Unions (ACLVB) (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001).

114. In the ACV there are two catholic education trade unions:

- the COV promotes the interests of members of staff in primary education in subsidised private-authority and subsidised public-authority education;
- the COC promotes the interests of members of staff in secondary education, special education, higher education, education in the arts, continuing education and the CLB sector both for community education, subsidised public-authority education and subsidised private-authority education. This trade union also exists for members of staff in primary education in community education.

115. The ACOD is a subsidiary department of the socialist ABVV, namely a centre for public departments. In the ACOD, the education sector is responsible for members of staff in education. The trade union groups members of staff of every level of education and the CLB represents community education and subsidised education.

116. The VSOA is part of the ACLVB. This is the liberal trade union for public servants. The staff in educational institutions fall under the Education Group of this trade union.

The COV, COC and ACOD are the largest education trade unions. The VSOA is a smaller representative trade union.

## CHAPTER 3: ATTRACTING NEW TEACHERS

### 3.1 Intake of graduates<sup>7</sup>

117. Table 9 shows the number of graduates from teacher training (from the 1996-1997 academic year to the 2000-2001 academic year) and the number of teachers appointed in education. These figures from the Education Department show that many young recently graduated teachers go to work in education. Certainly as regards primary education, the percentage intake is very high.

In secondary education, the turnover percentage is approximately 65% (secondary education certificate group 1 = lower secondary school teacher) and approximately 50% (secondary education certificate group 2).

118. The figures on who actually ends up working in education should be seen in relative terms. A clear distinction must be made between the group which starts in teaching and the group which actually stays in teaching. A study carried out between 1995 and 1999 reveals these differences. The study was carried out on a group of temporary interim teachers: 8,492 people who were teaching on 1 January 1995, in mainstream or special primary or secondary education. The employment situation of this group was examined in October 1999. The figures are shown in Table 10 in the appendix.

Of the total group of teachers employed in primary and secondary education in September 1995, 24% had left education in October 1999. In this respect, it is also important to differentiate in terms of the education level and network. The number of teachers leaving is significantly higher in secondary education (30%) than in primary education (16%), and much higher in the public-authority networks (29%) than in the private-authority subsidised network (22%).

119. According to the minister of education, some possible explanations for these differences are:

- the divergent evolution in employment. Between 1993 and 1999, employment in primary education increased by 5.5%, in secondary education, it decreased by 0.05% during the same period. In secondary education, there has only been an increase, albeit a small increase, in the number of jobs in private-authority subsidised education in recent years;
- differences in working environment, working conditions and the pressure of work between primary education and secondary education. The greater fragmentation of teaching tasks in secondary education could also play a role in this;
- teachers with a secondary education certificate have more alternatives for a job outside education than nursery teachers and primary teachers.

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7. This part is based on Vanderpoorten, M., (2001). Answer to parliamentary question no. 23 of 12 November 2001 by Chris Vandenbroecke, a Flemish member of parliament.

According to the minister of education, the loss of teachers over the period 1995-1999 can be mainly explained by:

- the positive economic climate and rapid economic growth over the same period;
- the increasing demand for highly trained employees outside the education sector;
- the working conditions for teachers starting out: the lack of work security and financial security.

120. A detailed scientific study has been commissioned by the minister of education on this problem, to start in September 2002. The aim is to examine why people choose for the teaching profession or not when they graduate and why people decide whether or not to stay in the teaching profession or return to it.

### **3.2 Other data**

121. No other information is available on the alternative way in which people enter the teaching profession. The available data on the number of students following teacher training are given in chapter 4. To interpret these figures it is essential to go through the explanation about the various types of teacher training in paragraph 4.1.

The data on the salaries of teachers are given in chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 4: THE TRAINING DEVELOPMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS

122. On 16 April 1996, the Initial and In-Service Teacher Training Decree was approved. The decree aimed to integrate all the sorts of teacher training in a single coherent body and entailed important changes in the field of in-service training. The decree also provided for the development of job profiles for the different types of teaching posts (with the exception of technical and practical subjects). A job profile is the description of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of an experienced teacher in the exercise of his profession. It contains both competencies common to all teachers with regard to knowledge, skills and attitudes and specific competencies which are related to a particular level of education. The basic competencies are the knowledge, skills and attitudes in the job profile which every graduate of teacher training must have to start working as a probationary teacher in a satisfactory way and to develop towards the job profile.

123. The following ten functional units are distinguished in the decree:

- the teacher as the supervisor of learning and developmental processes;
- the teacher as an educator;
- the teacher as an expert on content;
- the teacher as organiser;
- the teacher as innovator – the teacher as researcher;
- the teacher as the partner of the parents;
- the teacher as a member of the school team;
- the teacher as the partner of external parties;
- the teacher as a member of the education community;
- the teacher as a participant in culture.

124. For each functional unit a number of skills are summarised. In addition, ten attitudes are indicated which must be passed on to future teachers, viz., 1) decision-making abilities, 2) an open attitude to relationships with others, 3) a critical attitude, 4) the desire to learn, 5) the ability to organise, 6) a sense of co-operation, 7) a sense of responsibility, 8) a creative focus, 9) flexibility, 10) a focus on suitable and correct use of language and communication.

125. In 2001, the reforms of the teacher training were evaluated (Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department, 2001d). One of the comments in the report on the evaluation of the teacher training is that the basic skills are inadequately formulated in an operational sense or in terms of measurement. Furthermore, a more realistic approach would be desirable: too much is expected from probationary teachers. One of the proposals to deal with this is to work with skills required for new teachers. The basic training should be restricted to the most important skills and accept that probationary teachers are not able to tackle all the problems at the same time. This is why it is extremely important for probationary teachers to be properly supervised at the start and to receive adequate in-service training.

#### 4.1 Initial teacher training<sup>8</sup>

126. A distinction can be made between five types of teachers:

- the nursery teacher, who provides general and social education for children between the ages of 3 and 6;
- the primary teacher, who provides general and social education for children aged 6 to 12;
- the qualified lower secondary school teacher – group 1, who teaches specific subjects to children from the ages of 12 to 20 (the first stage and second stage of secondary education and in certain circumstances also in higher stages, the third stage of technical secondary education for certain subjects and the third and fourth stage of vocational secondary education);
- the qualified upper secondary school teacher – group 2, who teaches specific subjects to pupils aged 14-21 in the second, third and fourth stage of secondary education;
- the vocational teacher, who teaches vocational skills in technical and vocational secondary education (mainly second and third stage).

127. For the three types of teachers, the teacher training is provided at institutes of higher education. The upper secondary school teacher – group 2 is trained at universities or institutes of higher education which provide initial training of 2 cycles in the disciplines, commercial sciences and business studies, audio visual and visual arts or music and dramatic arts. A vocational teacher must follow certain courses of the “Teacher training for secondary education – group 2” or courses for Continuing Adult Education.

##### 4.1.1 *Teacher training for primary school teachers and the first stage of secondary education*

128. Anyone who has a certificate of secondary education can start initial teacher training.

Tables 11 and 12 give examples of a training programme for a primary teacher and for a “qualified secondary school teacher – group 1”. This training lasts three years.

129. In the teacher training for the first stage of secondary education, several different options or specialist areas are possible. Every training consists of a basic cluster of training units and of one or more course units for further study. In general, the specialist subject must belong to the basic cluster that is chosen.

130. Both in the training programme for primary teachers and in the training programme for “qualified lower secondary school teachers – group 1”, the apprenticeship is important. During the apprenticeship, students learn to apply general and subject related educational principles. In addition to observing experienced teachers they must also take classes and teach themselves. The share of the apprenticeship gradually increases (during the three years of the training), and in the third year takes up about half of the course.

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8. This part is based on Verhoeven, J.C. & Dom, L. (2001). Flemish Eurydice Report, 2000: survey of the education policy and organisation of education in Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community.

#### **4.1.2 Initial teacher training of higher secondary school teachers**

131. This training is part of university education or (for some disciplines) part of education at an institute of higher education consisting of two cycles (this is the initial teacher training at an academic level). The qualified upper secondary school teacher for secondary education – group 2 always has a university degree, an engineering diploma or a master’s degree for students of education in the arts.

Therefore the certificate of a “qualified upper secondary school teacher – group 2” can only be gained if the candidate has a university or master’s degree.

132. The study activities related to the teacher training can either take place concurrently with the programme of the initial training which is focused on a particular subject, or subsequently. Therefore students who have already completed their academic education and have gained a degree must follow this training if they wish to go into teaching. They can complete this initial academic teacher training in one or in several years. The training requires on average 14 hours of education and study activities per week.

133. The academic initial teacher training consists of a general and a subject-related part. The general part, which is followed by students in every discipline provides a general frame of reference for the teaching and educational activities of the teacher.

The educational part of the academic initial teacher training concerns the specific emphases in the educational activities which are typical of the subject area in which the academic initial teacher training is organised.

134. There are also integration seminars on the teaching activities (towards the end of the training) and the apprenticeship. During the apprenticeship, the students must learn to convert theoretical insights into good classroom practice, they must learn to prepare practical work for the class, they must learn to reflect on the practical work in class and they must learn to work with the required job profile. The apprenticeship is much more limited than the apprenticeship in the training for lower secondary school teachers.

#### **4.1.3 Certificate of education (GPB)**

Several sorts of teachers can follow a GPB training:

##### *Vocational teacher*

135. The training for the “vocational teacher” consists of courses in Continuing Adult Education or of certain courses in the training programme for the “qualified lower secondary school teacher – group 1”. There are no specific entrance requirements for the courses in Continuing Adult Education. Depending on the certificates and work experience which have been acquired, candidates are exempted from some modules of the programme. In the Continuing Adult Education, people are trained as teachers to teach vocational courses or certain technical courses for which there is no full-time training available. The courses focus both on theory and on practice, and are given in weekends or in the evenings. Depending on the certificates or degrees which candidates have, the course takes at least three to five part-time semesters. After following this course in Education for Social Promotion, the certificate they gain is the Certificate of Education (GPB).

### *Other teachers*

136. In order to increase the availability of staff, the Certificate of Education (GPB), in combination with a basic degree, is also a required qualification to teach in higher secondary education. For people with a university degree, this training is an alternative for the academic initial teacher training (decision of the Government of Flanders of 14 June 1989 on qualifications, salary scales, the performance system and the salary regulations in secondary education).

#### **4.1.4 Intake of the teacher training<sup>9</sup>**

##### *a) General evolution*

137. As regards the education of one cycle in institutes of higher education, there has been an increase in the participation in initial teacher training in recent years (cf. Table 13 and Table 14).

The number of students at Flemish universities, following the academic initial teacher training, has fallen in recent years. One possible explanation for this is the introduction by the teacher's decree of the minimum size of the programme, expressed in terms of the duration of the study (introduced in 1996-1997) (cf. Table 15). However, the very latest figures once more reveal an increase (see below in this paragraph).

138. The number of students enrolling for a GPB course is also increasing every year (see Table 16). This can also be seen from the number of Certificates of Education which have been issued in recent years (Table 17). Following a high point in 1997, the number of certificates issued has fallen slightly. However, in view of the increase in the number of enrolments in the 1999-2000 academic year, it is to be expected that this fall will be turned again.

##### *b) Training for primary school teacher and lower secondary school teacher*

139. In the 2000-2001 academic school year, there were 3,075 first year students in the teacher training for primary education, and 3,675 first year students in the teacher training for secondary education SO1. The big difference between the number of men and women in the first year of primary school training is very striking: 623 men compared with 2,452 women. In the teacher training for secondary education SO1, there is only a small difference; women are still just in the majority (evaluation report of teacher training, cf. Table 18).

140. Looking at the type of secondary education followed by first year students, in teacher training for lower secondary education, 48.8% of the pupils came from ASO, 48% from TSO, 1.6% from KSO and 1.6% from BSO. For the teacher training for secondary education SO1, the figures are similar: 51.7% come from ASO, 42.7% come from TSO, 3.1% come from BSO and 2.5% come from KSO.

141. The pass rates of first year students (2000-2001 academic year) vary, depending on the type of education which the students followed in secondary education. The highest pass rates for the teacher training for lower secondary education are for students who followed ASO (68.5%), followed by students who did KSO (49.3%), TSO (34.3%) and BSO (12.5%). The highest pass rates for the teacher training for secondary education SO1 are also in students with an ASO education (62.1%). This is followed by TSO (42.9%), KSO (40.3%), and BSO (27.2%). The above figures reveal that a large group of students come from TSO. The pass rates of this group are significantly lower than those of students with an ASO

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9. This part is based on the Evaluation Report on Teacher Training (2001d) of the Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

education. These figures provide food for thought about the quality of the intake into teacher training. In general, it has been found that first year students in teacher training in institutes of higher education did not belong to the highest performing groups of their last year in secondary education.

142. It was also found that the motivation of students in the first year of teacher training for lower secondary school was good or very good. As regards the teacher training for higher secondary school SO1, the choice of study of more than half of the first year students was the second or third choice (because they failed in earlier study choices they made), which does not really do very much for their motivation.

*c) Teacher training for higher secondary school*

143. The number of students in academic teacher training has fallen in recent years (evaluation report of teacher training, cf. Table 15) from 4,259 students in the 1996-1997 academic year to 3,149 students in the 2000-2001 academic year. It is to be expected that the changes in this training are the basic cause of the fall in the number of applicants. The changes meant a greater pressure of work for the students. This clearly has a negative affect on the decision to follow teacher training. However, in 2001-2002, there was once more an increase in the number of enrolments (mainly the number of principal enrolments), viz., 3,410.

*d) GPB training: (Certificate of Education)*

144. In the GPB training there are approximately the same number of men and women (with a slight predominance of men): 1,675 men and 1,571 women in the 1998-1999 academic year. These trainees appear to be highly motivated to follow the training.

**4.1.5 Additional comments on the initial teacher training<sup>10</sup>**

*Apprenticeship*

145. The evaluation report of teacher training shows that up to now apprenticeships have not always produced the expected results. Furthermore, many students experience quite a shock, both during the first long apprenticeship and during the first months of working in the job. Many of the daily problems and social problems which have repercussions on education (such as schools with a disproportionate high number of ethnic minority pupils resulting from the intercultural population) are not sufficiently tackled in the training. However, the problems of the apprenticeship differ, depending on the training. Students who follow a GPB training already have a significant amount of technical knowledge. For these students, it is mainly a matter of concentrating on teaching skills.

The same applies for academic teacher training: again the students have followed prior training in terms of content. Comments in connection with the apprenticeship reveal that the students do not always have sufficient social communication skills, and that the apprenticeship by definition remains restricted to 'giving a few lessons'.

146. In training at institutes of higher education (particularly the teacher training for higher secondary school), there is a constant division between the training as regards the content and the professional

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10. This part is based on the Evaluation Report on Teacher Training (2001d) of the Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

training. This also has consequences for the apprenticeship: the trainers all too often see the apprenticeship as an excessive burden.

147. Another difficulty regarding the apprenticeship relates to the evaluation. Admittedly, trainers must have the last word with regard to the evaluation of students, but the mentors also play an important role. The mentors are the teachers (or in exceptional cases, members of the management team) of the school where the students do their apprenticeship. They have the first and closest relationship with the student, supervise the students' preparation and teaching, are responsible for providing the first feedback, and where necessary, the first monitoring of the student. The interaction between the trainers and the mentors can vary a great deal. In some cases students receive contradictory signs from the two parties. Sometimes students also have criticisms of the way in which trainers evaluate them. Experience shows that a visit by the trainers during the apprenticeship lasts on average 10 minutes (admittedly, this is an average and means that some students are not visited by their trainer). Therefore some students dispute the final evaluation of their apprenticeship.

148. As regards primary and secondary schools, they are prepared to accept students in their apprenticeship and supervise them in so far as this leads to a win-win situation. For the management, this means that the students can be used for school activities for a longer period (so that they are actually working along with the teachers). It also means that the school culture helps to determine what students have to do and that the predominant role of the training institute is restricted to a certain extent. The last comment which appeared in the evaluation report is the fact that the students are confronted with a large number of formalities and planning on paper during their apprenticeship. It would certainly be possible to cut down on this.

149. The mentors play an important role throughout the apprenticeship. Within the group of mentors it is possible to distinguish different categories. Students arrive with a whole series of theoretical principles and practical instructions, for example, regarding lesson preparation. Some mentors consider these preparations of lessons unnecessary, and respond negatively to this. Others respond in a neutral way and accept the fact that the student must follow the rules of the training institute. The third group of mentors is interested and hopes to learn something as well through the students.

150. Many mentors make great efforts and do so on a voluntary basis. According to the evaluation report, there should be a government measure to organise the mentor's status. The budget should allow for a strengthening of the interaction between schools where students are doing their apprenticeship and the training institutes, for example, by providing a financial contribution for the mentors.

Different models would be possible:

- The mentor fulfils his role in addition to his normal tasks and is reimbursed for this. This model corresponds with the concept of job differentiation and balancing tasks.
- The mentor retains the volume of his normal tasks and is exempted for mentoring. The additional cost would then be to pay the replacement who takes over part of the teaching tasks.
- The mentor is given the opportunity to follow in-service training free of charge in the training institute. The additional costs are for the training institute which generates costs for developing the in-service training.

151. The Decree of 8 June 2000 containing urgent measures for the teaching profession provides for the possibility of incorporating an independent apprenticeship in teacher training from 2001-2002.

Independent apprenticeship is defined as ‘a period which the student carries out in the third year of study of an initial teacher training of one cycle or in advanced teacher training at a school for the apprenticeship where he independently takes over the tasks of the teacher’. The institute of higher education can decide whether or not to include this apprenticeship in its curriculum on a voluntary basis. Independent apprenticeship only takes place if there is an agreement between the institute of higher education, the student and the school where the apprenticeship takes place. The apprenticeship lasts a minimum of six weeks and a maximum of nine weeks. The aim of the independent apprenticeship is to create a win-win situation for the student and for the school where he does his apprenticeship. The student is submerged in a particular school culture and gets to know all the aspects of the way in which the school operates. In this way, he is better prepared for the practice of the teaching profession. For the school where the apprenticeship takes place, this independent apprenticeship is also a possible solution for tackling teacher shortages. If a teacher is absent during a period of the independent apprenticeship, the student can replace him. Obviously the agreements continue to apply in connection with the supervision of the student.

#### *The gap between the training and the subsequent employment*

152. The evaluation report of teacher training also reveals that there is a gap between the training and subsequent employment. The teaching profession is constantly evolving. One of the examples concerns the attainment targets and developmental objectives for primary and secondary school teachers. Teacher training does not fully respond to these evolutions. In addition, society expects much too much from teachers and from schooling in general (for example, vocational education, special education, the extension of special needs provisions, schools with a disproportionate number of ethnic minority pupils, participation, etc.). Furthermore, these problems/challenges are not uniform, but depend on the social-economic-cultural context.

153. Another comment concerns the creation of job profiles and job descriptions (cf. chapter 6). Job profiles have been created top-down; on the other hand, the job descriptions are completely bottom-up. In revising the basic skills of teachers, the link with job descriptions must therefore be taken into account. The gap which exists between training and subsequent employment once more reveals the importance of co-ordinating the apprenticeship, supervising probationers and in-service training. In order to achieve this, there is an argument for involving experienced teachers in the training.

The final comment concerns ICT, flexibility and innovation. It is important to be aware that ICT is not systematically integrated in the training. ICT has become part of our society, and consequently future teachers should be confident and in full control of it. In 2002, and in the budget for 2003, credits have been reserved for ICT and teacher training (2002: 1,240,000 euro) (source: Education Department). Nor are flexibility and innovation given enough attention in the teacher training. In fact, lecturers should serve as an example to future teachers.

Sometimes students complain that they are still taught too much in the traditional way as a class, and that there are few attempts at trying out a number of different alternative models.

154. The Government of Flanders is currently preparing a new decree taking into account the conclusions of the evaluation report of the teacher training.

## **4.2 Advanced teacher training**

155. There are also advanced teacher training courses. Teachers with a certificate of initial training can participate in these. The advanced teacher training for primary school teachers can be followed by

people who do not have a certificate of initial teacher training. Advanced teacher training is provided by institutes of higher education.

156. The following advanced teacher training courses are organised at the moment:

- General subjects in the first year B and the pre-vocational year in secondary education;
- Primary education;
- Additional cluster for in-depth German or chemistry;
- Special education;
- Religion for primary education;
- Intercultural education;
- Nursery education;
- Primary education;
- Teacher for physical education;
- Musical training;
- Non-denominational ethics for primary education;
- Extension of special needs provision and remedial teaching.

157. The advanced training comprises a more detailed version of the initial teacher training, or can focus on the acquisition of an additional skill. The structure and length of the course can vary. The amount of study expressed in points is determined for every advanced training by decree. For example, the advanced teacher training for “extending special needs provision” aims to increase the professionalism of teachers in their preventive and remedial work on learning problems. This training lasts three years. It comprises an initial year, an advanced year and a treatment year. All the members of staff in mainstream and special education who have a certificate for nursery teacher, primary school teacher or secondary school teacher SO1 can follow this training. Another example of advanced teacher training is “intercultural education”. This training takes one year and is aimed at exploring the basis for dealing with differences in a respectful way.

### **4.3 In-service training**

158. The evaluation report of teacher training shows the importance of the initial supervision of teachers starting out and of in-service training. A probationary teacher is certainly a full teacher, but should be able to count on sufficient supervision and support, particularly in the first year. The in-service training should also be seen in the context of further development in the basic skills and to comply with the professional profile in the longer term.

159. The in-service training which is organised is usually organised by schools.

From 1996, the Flemish Community has made funds available every year to the competent authorities for schools in nursery and primary education and full-time and part-time secondary education. These funds must be spent on in-service training for the staff at their schools at the indicated level of education. The share of the funds to which every school is entitled is calculated on the basis of the number of organic posts in that school on 1 February of the previous budget year, taking into account the level of education for which the funds are intended.

In the budget year 2002, approximately 90 euro is spent on in-service training for every primary school teacher. For a secondary school teacher the budget is approximately 95 euro (Initial and In-Service Teacher Training Decree, 16 April 1996).

160. Following the in-service training at the initiative of schools, there is also in-service training at the initiative of Community education and of the representative groups of competent authorities in subsidised education (Initial and In-Service Teacher Training Decree, 16 April 1996). In 2002, the sum for this network-related in-service training amounts to 1,487,361.1 euro.

161. Finally, there is also in-service training provided on the initiative of the Government of Flanders. This determines policy priorities on behalf of the members of staff in education for in-service training initiatives necessary to support the implementation of education reforms and to cover the requirements which arise as a result of market shortages (Initial and In-Service Teacher Training Decree, 16 April 1996). The amount made available by the government in 2002 is 1,313,835.6 euro.

162. The participation in in-service training activities with the whole school team has increased in recent years (mainly figures for primary education) (cf. Table 19).

## CHAPTER 5: THE RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND ALLOCATION OF TEACHERS

### 5.1 The recruitment and selection of teachers

163. The regulations on the recruitment of teachers which must be observed by the competent authorities are extremely complex. In principle, the competent authorities can recruit their members of staff autonomously. However, in doing so they must take in account so many rules that their autonomy is greatly reduced.

164. There are two important steps in a teacher's career: the temporary appointment and the permanent appointment. The advantages of a permanent appointment are job security, a government pension and the possibility of making use of various systems of leave. Teachers must collect 720 days of work to be employed on a permanent basis. Anyone with permanent appointment continues to be employed, even if his job is lost as a result of a fall in the number of pupils. Through the system of reallocation, this teacher is then employed in the same or a different school where there is a comparable vacancy. Even if there is no such job available, the teacher continues to be paid by the government for a while. Schools must always give priority to these teachers with a permanent appointment before they can appoint new temporary members of staff. This system gives a significant advantage to teachers with a permanent appointment, but obviously it limits the freedom of schools with regard to appointments.

165. For the appointment of temporary teachers, the schools not only have to take into account the teachers with a permanent appointment who are available, they also have to take various priority regulations into account. For example, members of staff who have worked for a certain number of years must be given priority with regard to appointments. In community education, this record of employment applies within the same school or group of schools. In subsidised education, it applies to the record of employment within the same competent authority.

166. The priority arrangement concerned is extremely complex (cf. Appendix II for a simplified version of this system). It means that the schools must respect an enormous number of rules when they appoint staff. The rules have been drawn up on the basis of the philosophy that anyone with a certain number of years of employment always has priority over people with fewer years. The system of reallocation is drawn up on the basis of the principle that the teacher's job security has priority<sup>11</sup>. Again this principle of employment has priority over the principle that schools should be able to appoint their staff autonomously.

167. The reallocation system and the various priority measures mean that new teachers in the school do not have much job security for a considerable length of time, and find it difficult to build up links with one particular school. The various arrangements mean that they are usually appointed for shorter periods and that they know in advance that there is a very real possibility that they will be replaced by teachers

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11. This system of reallocation obviously also serves a priority in the budget, so that teachers who become available are used in new vacancies with priority.

with a permanent appointment. They can only be permanently employed when they have worked as a teacher for 720 days. Then they obviously do start to benefit from these arrangements.

## **5.2 Qualifications**

168. There are three sorts of qualifications: 'required qualifications', 'acceptable qualifications' and 'other qualifications' (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001).

169. The required qualifications clearly describe which teaching qualifications are required to perform a particular activity. For the required qualifications, a basic diploma must have been achieved in the specialist area of the subject to be taught.

170. The acceptable qualifications usually concern the same level of the certificate included in the required qualification, though without taking the specialist area into account. A certificate of education is required both for the required qualification and for the acceptable qualification. The acceptable qualifications are accepted for a post if the required qualifications are not available. Both qualifications can lead to a permanent appointment following a temporary appointment.

171. If there is a shortage of people with the required qualification or an acceptable qualification, the competent authority can appoint an applicant who only has an 'other' type of qualification. A minimum level has been set for these 'other' qualifications, amounting to a basic certificate or a minimum number of years of useful experience, but no certificate of education is required. The salary scale for this is substantially lower than that which applies for required qualifications or acceptable qualifications. It is not possible to become permanently employed on the basis of this type of other qualification. Furthermore, the appointment of a member of staff with an 'other' qualification is limited to one school year, with possible extensions if the shortage continues. The competent authority must make an official declaration that they have not been able to find anyone with a required qualification or an acceptable qualification.

Example: see Table 20.

172. One of the problems in education is to find people with the required qualification to teach practical subjects in vocational and technical education (Verhoeven & Dom, 2001). If these people have the right qualifications, they must be prepared to receive a lower salary than in the industrial sector. Furthermore, they also accept the risks of a temporary appointment.

173. Another point of attention concerns teaching in the second stage of general and technical education. Both teachers with an academic training and those trained at institutes of higher education can be appointed in the second stage of secondary education. The competent authority of the school must decide on this. If there are a lot of vacancies, the 'lower secondary school teachers group 1' have a greater chance of being appointed in the second stage of secondary education because, unlike teachers with an academic training, they can generally teach two or three subjects. However, the school can also decide that pupils who will probably follow university education or education at an institution of higher education should be taught by a teacher with an academic training as quickly as possible. In this case, the choice of teachers in the second stage of secondary education is more likely to be for teachers with a university degree (or a degree of two cycles from an institute of higher education).

## **5.3 Replacement pools**

174. One important problem in education is the lack of job security for young teachers starting out in their teaching career. This problem has been tackled by establishing the replacement pool (started in the

2000-2001 school year) (Decree of 8 June 2000 on urgent measures concerning the teaching profession). The replacement pool is a group of teachers who supply teaching for short periods and are available in one or more of the education zones in Flanders or Brussels which they have chosen, and for all the education networks in mainstream and special primary and secondary education. These teachers are available for all the schools which register for the pool.

175. The Flemish Employment, Services and Vocational Training Agency (VDAB) is responsible for the establishment and operation of the replacement pool. Every applicant who is admitted is allocated to a group of schools, a school community or school governing body, which then assigns him to an 'anchor school'. The members of the replacement pool are used in the first place for short substitutions in schools, which have joined the replacement pool; this applies within the networks and education zones which they choose when they applied. The teachers are employed in this anchor school during periods that they are not used for short-term substitutions. In that school the teacher is appointed for non-regulation substitutions, in-service training, or other teaching tasks. Because of the replacement pool, it is easier to find replacements for absent teachers, and young teachers who have just finished their teacher training have job security and secure salary for at least one year. Teachers returning to the profession or other employees who are considering a teaching career can also register for the replacement pool.

176. For the 2000-2001 school year, 44% of primary schools participated in the replacement pool (20% of schools in private and home-subsidised education, 95% of schools in community education and 87% of schools in public-authority subsidised education). In secondary education, 58% of secondary schools registered (36% of schools in private-authority subsidised education, 96% of schools in community education, and 97% of schools in public-authority subsidised education) (Source: Education Department, 2002). In the 2001-2002 school year, there was an increase in the number of schools which participated in the replacement pool. The increase particularly concerned secondary schools. This can be explained mainly by the high participation of schools in private-authority subsidised education (from 36% in 2000-2001 to 97% in 2001-2002) (cf. Table 21). In the 2001-2002 school year, 91 men participated in the replacement pool for mainstream primary education, and 746 women. For mainstream secondary education, there were 746 men and 1201 women (cf. Table 22).

177. As regards the certificate held by the people who participated in the replacement pool, there were 488 nursery leaders, 221 primary teachers, 121 lower secondary school teachers and 7 others for mainstream primary education. For mainstream secondary education there were 479 with a certificate of higher secondary education, 796 with a certificate of lower secondary education, 300 with GPB training (certificate of education) and 372 with no educational qualification (cf. Table 23).

## CHAPTER 6: KEEPING TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

### 6.1 Job descriptions and evaluations of teachers

178. There are job descriptions describing the task of teaching staff (and for the head of the school) every year, for both primary and for secondary schools. In secondary education, teachers will in future also be evaluated on the basis of this job description. This does not apply for primary schools, where there is no general compulsory regulation for the evaluation of teachers.

#### 6.1.1 Primary education

179. In primary education the job description is drawn up in mutual consultation between the head of the school and the member of the teaching staff concerned. If no agreement is reached, the school governing body decides (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001).

180. The job description consists of two parts: the result-related areas describing the tasks of the teacher, and the competencies which indicate which skills, abilities and competencies a teacher must have to be able to carry out the tasks. Staffing and development objectives are also included in the job description. In addition, the job description contains the rights and duties with regard to lifelong learning and training.

181. The government provides models of job descriptions which can be used. It has also specified a number of tasks which may not belong to the tasks of a teacher (the 'negative list'):

- The organisation of bus transport;
- The maintenance and/or repairs of equipment of and in the school; attending or co-operating in religious, philosophical, or socio-cultural activities outside the school context;
- Looking after children during afternoons when there is no school or during the school holidays;
- Giving extra lessons or therapy before or after school hours;
- Making home visits (there may be an exception for social, psychological and special needs staff);
- Lunchtime supervision;
- Providing supervision on buses;
- Regulating the traffic on the public highway;

Carrying out administrative and/or organisational tasks of the head of the school or the school governing body (exception: administrative staff).

In 'exceptional circumstances' members of staff may be required to carry out the six last tasks on this list in a 'non-systematic way'. However, this must be done following consultation in the local committee.

182. The Primary Education Decree (25 February 1997) did not lay down a date for the introduction of the job descriptions. From the 1997-1998 school year it has been possible for covenants to be concluded between school governing bodies and trade unions. At the moment, no such covenants have been concluded.

### **6.1.2 Secondary education**

183. In secondary education, the task of the teaching staff must also be drawn up in job descriptions (Decree of 14 July 1998) (Verhoeven & Dom, 2001; Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001). A job description is compulsory for every member of staff appointed for more than 104 days, but the competent authorities can decide to do this for members of staff with a shorter appointment as well.

184. The job description comprises three parts: the tasks and duties related to the institution and the way in which the member of staff must carry these out, the specific aims of the institution and the personal and development goals and rights and duties with regard to lifelong learning and in-service training.

185. As a result of the reforms of secondary education, an evaluation system was introduced for all the educational networks (for mainstream and special secondary education). Every member of staff must be evaluated once every three years on the basis of the job description.

186. General agreements are negotiated in the local committee. The member of staff and the evaluator then decide on the job description. Every member of staff has one or two evaluators appointed by the competent authorities. One of the two is always the head and/or deputy head.

187. If the final conclusion of the evaluation is 'unsatisfactory', this has serious consequences. A temporary member of staff appointed for a particular period is dismissed. A member of staff with a permanent appointment or a member of staff employed on a long-term basis must be re-evaluated. In the case of two successive 'unsatisfactory' evaluations or three 'unsatisfactory evaluations' during his career by the same competent authorities or school community in one particular job, these members of staff are dismissed.

188. The job descriptions and evaluation in secondary education will be gradually introduced over a period up to 2006.

## **6.2 Tasks within the teacher performance-related arrangement**

189. The job description in particular describes the content of the task of teachers. In addition, there is a performance arrangement which indicates how many hours teachers must work. The salary regulations determine how many (teaching) hours member of staff must work to be entitled to a full salary (Verhoeven & Dom, 2001; Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001).

190. The task of teachers is still expressed in actual teaching hours. In the government declaration of 1989, the government was already making attempts to extend the task of teachers and make it more flexible. This is still one of the government's points for attention now.

191. In the 1997 Primary Education Decree, there was a new arrangement on performance. This determines that the weekly school task amounts to a maximum of 26 hours and that contacts with parents and staff meetings can also be organised outside this. The main task during the week (for a teacher this consists of teaching) lies between 24 and a maximum of 27 lessons in mainstream education.

192. In secondary education, the following minimum and maximum hours apply.

**Table 20B: Minimum and maximum number of weekly lessons of 50 minutes which (full-time) teachers can teach in secondary schools)**

Higher secondary education: higher secondary school teacher - group 1 and group 2

Teachers who teach general subjects	Min. 20 and max. 22 lessons.
Teachers who teach technical and vocational subjects	Min. 20 and max. 20 lessons.
Teachers who teach vocational subjects	Min. 29 and max. 30 lessons

Lower secondary education: lower secondary school teacher – group 1 and group 2

Teachers who teach general subjects	Min. 22 and max. 24 lessons
Teachers who teach technical and vocational subjects	Min. 22 and max. 24 lessons

Source: (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001)

### 6.3 Teaching hours

193. The teaching hours refers to the number of hours that the teacher is in the classroom to teach per year. The teaching time is not an indication of the full workload of teachers. Other school activities such as contacts with parents, correcting work, supervising pupils, etc. and the administrative obligations are not included in this.

194. Teaching times in primary and secondary schools in Flanders are above the average for the EU countries (N.B.: the teaching time is calculated on the basis of the maximum performance of teachers). (cf. Table 24, 25 and 26). The difference is most obvious for BSO, KSO and TSO (secondary education) in the second and third stage: 833 hours per year compared with 694 hours (average for all the countries) (cf. Table 27). This can be explained mainly by the teachers who teach practical subjects.

195. Teachers in Flanders have fairly high teaching hours, but on the other hand they also have a fairly high salary. From an international point of view they earn a higher than average salary for an average to high teaching time. In addition, from the international perspective there is a low pupil-teacher ratio in secondary education. (Flemish education indicators in an international perspective, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department, 2000c).

## **6.4 The pupil-teacher ratio**

196. The pupil-teacher ratio indicates for how many pupils there is a salaried member of teaching staff. An international comparison shows that the pupil-teacher ratio for Flanders is average for every level of education, except in secondary education. There, the pupil-teacher ratio is lowest, both in the European and in the OECD context. However, this indicator does not show the average class size. All the teaching staff paid by the Education Department are included in this ratio (for example, also special education, remedial teachers, replacements for less than a year). (cf., Tables 28 and 29).

197. The current figures for Flanders are available for the following levels of education. In nursery education, the pupil-teacher ratio is 17:8. In mainstream primary education, the ratio is 14:1. This ratio indicates the number of pupils in the 1999-2000 school year divided by the number of teachers (budget full-time equivalents in January 2000 (Verhoeven & Dom, 2000)).

## **6.5 Special Teaching tasks**

198. The task of teachers in Flemish education is based to a large extent on their teaching tasks. A specific regulation on Special Teaching Tasks means that some teachers can carry out part of their tasks differently. To explain this, the principle of the division of work in schools must be described first.

199. In secondary education, educational institutions are allocated an amount of weekly teaching hours which they can use to organise the tasks of the teachers. Depending on the number of pupils, schools therefore have an overall amount of teaching hours. The overall amount of teaching hours may be used freely when the actual organisation of the school is worked out:

- On the one hand, for teaching hours;
- On the other hand, for hours which are not lessons, such as: internal supervision of teachers (BSO), special teaching tasks (ASO, TSO), in-service training, remedial lessons, educational coordination, class committee, class management.

200. A maximum of 3% of the amount of teaching hours that can be used may be devoted to non-teaching educational duties. Changes can be made, provided they are negotiated in the basic negotiation committee in the school. BPT hours can be used for the co-ordination of stages, pupil supervision, etc. (Circular of 31 July 1998 with the Decision of the Government of Flanders of 31 July 1990 determining the number of 'teaching hours' in full-time secondary education). This means that the task of a limited number of teachers can be organised differently. From 1 September 2001, the system of non-teaching educational duties (BPT) also applies in primary education. These hours may be used for improving the organisation of education and teaching. They can be used for non-teaching educational duties, such as ICT, the introduction of a new reading methods, etc. A maximum of 3% of the allocated lessons and teaching hours at the school level can be reserved for non-teaching educational duties. Deviations are possible, provided these are discussed in the basic negotiation committee in the school (N.B.: specific measures from 1-9-2001 for the organisation of non-teaching educational duties in primary education. Circular).

## **6.6 The selection and promotion of teachers**

201. The career possibilities for teachers are extremely limited. In principle, teaching staff are in a recruitment profession. In addition, there are possibilities for selection and promotion. These are always organic jobs with a management responsibility. The job of deputy head and vocational training co-

ordinator are selected posts which only exist in secondary education. The vocational training co-ordinator has a co-ordinating function in schools for technical and vocational education. In addition, there are promotions: the job of head of the school and advisory vocational training co-ordinator. The latter is an additional co-ordinating job in large schools for technical and vocational education. Therefore there is a very small number of possibilities of being selected or promoted in relation to the number of appointments that are made.

## **6.7 Salaries**

202. According to a study carried out in 1993 (European Commission 1996), Flemish teachers' salaries are close to the European average. However, there are a large number of different salary scales. The salary depends on the following factors (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001):

- the work that is carried out;
- the status of the position (temporary or permanent appointment);
- the administrative situation (active, non-active etc.)
- the stage and type of education concerned;
- the qualifications and salary scales related to this;
- the nature of the job (main employment, additional employment) and the scope of the job;
- the number of years of employment;
- the personal and family situation (additional financial incentives such as holiday pay, child pay, reimbursement of travelling expenses, end of year bonus, etc.);
- other contributions, such as reimbursement for child care before and after school hours and reimbursement for lunchtime supervision.

203. The salary scales correspond to particular qualifications and indicate the corresponding minimum and maximum salaries for one year, with in addition, a number of mainstream increases (annual, biannual and at the end) depending on the number of years of employment. The amounts of the salary scales are linked to the increase in consumer prices. In 2000, the budget for salaries amounted to 69% of the total education budget (not including higher education) (Verhoeven & Dom, 2000).

204. In Belgium, there are also plans for increasing the tasks and the salaries of teachers. To some extent the increasing dissatisfaction in the education sector is the result of the increasing gap between the salaries of teaching staff and that of employees in the private sector with similar qualifications.

205. The professional costs of teachers are an additional problem. Usually they have to pay for their books and teaching materials themselves because the operating funds that are allocated to schools are insufficient. Therefore the demands for higher salaries to some extent include a demand for more operating funds. The budget for salaries in comparison to the total education budget is higher in Belgium than in most countries of the European Community. Therefore this means that the operating and equipment costs are relatively low (European Commission, 1996).

206. Finally, there is also the matter of the status of teachers. The funds in the budget for increasing salaries are limited. In addition, there are a number of reserve teachers, which entails extra costs. These teachers are presumed to replace temporary teachers, but this is only possible to a limited extent. The mobility in the teaching profession is limited because of the obstacles between the educational networks.

The replacement pool is an attempt to tackle these sorts of problems.

207. Teachers' salaries are an important variable. For example, the level of the salaries can have an influence on attracting new teachers, keeping teachers and the motivation of teachers. This paragraph makes two comparisons: a) the salaries of Flemish teachers compared to other countries; b) the salaries of Flemish teachers compared to other sectors in Flanders.

### **6.7.1 A European comparison**

208. Comparing the salaries of Flemish teachers for all education levels and every point in a career (the start, the middle of the career and maximum salary) with other EU countries reveals that the salaries are above average. As regards the starting salary in primary education, the Flemish Community comes fifth; for salaries in the middle of a career they come third and for top salaries they are average. Looking in lower secondary education, the Flemish Community comes fifth for starting salaries, third for salaries in the middle of a career and fifth for top salaries. Finally, in higher secondary education, Flanders is in second place as regards the starting salary, third for salaries in the middle of a career, and second for top salaries (cf. Tables 30, 31 and 32).

209. At the start of their career, the salaries of Flemish teachers amount to approximately 60% of the maximum salary, and at the middle of their career approximately 80% of the maximum salary (cf. Table 33).

210. In Flanders the salaries of nursery and primary teachers are equal. Work is being carried out on levelling the salaries of primary and lower secondary school teachers so that they are equal. (Flemish Education Indicators in an International Perspective, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department, 2000c) There is a problem with regard to the second stage of secondary education: teachers with a different training (higher education or university) in the same jobs earn different salaries (Aelterman et al., 2002).

### **6.7.2 Salaries compared to other sectors of society**

211. The Government of Flanders recently commissioned a study of salaries, comparing the salaries in education with salaries in other sectors (HayGroup, 2001). This study showed that the key functions (i.e., teaching staff) receive salaries that are average for the labour market. On the other hand, the salaries of support staff are low and those of management jobs are well below the average in the labour market.

212. The study of the salaries looked at salaries on two levels:

- The basic salary: 12 times the monthly salary + holiday pay and the end-of-year bonus
- The total salary package: basic salary, as well as taking into account the following elements:
  - Permanent appointment
  - Variable salary

- Total working hours
- Additional pension scheme
- Other bonuses (company car, meals and payment of expenses).

The study concluded that the basic annual salary in education was lower for all the educational groups than salaries in the rest of the market. However, looking at the total salary conditions, they are in the middle area of the reference market. (These conclusions do not take into account the 3% increase in salary concluded in the Collective Employment Agreement VI.)

213. The comparison was carried out as follows:

- In education, a permanent appointment provides an average advantage of 6%, compared with the private sector (permanent appointments were only included when members of staff had been employed for more than 10 years).
- The impact of variable salaries does not exist in education, but is very strong in the private sector, (particularly for key and administrative functions). The advantage for the private sector is estimated at 6% in this respect.
- The difference in total working hours between education and the private sector is so small that it is not included. The study was based on an average of a 42-hour working week for education and a 45-hour working week for the private sector (salary survey Vacature 2000 – Luc Sels)).
- Pensions in education are considerably higher than the legal pensions. The additional cover in the private sector does not weigh up against this. Therefore this results in a 3% advantage for education.
- Pensions in education are considerably higher than the legal pensions. The additional cover in the private sector does not weigh up against this. Therefore this results in a 3% advantage for education.
- Other reimbursements such as company cars, paid expenses, paid meals, apply particularly in management jobs in the private sector. The management jobs in education are 5% worse off in this respect.

### 6.7.3 *Additional salaries*

214. Additionally it can also be said that there are a number of extra salaries for administrative and teaching staff with special certificates or qualifications (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001). These include the additional salaries of holders of a Certificate of Advanced Education Studies or a Diploma of Higher Educational Studies. The conditions for receiving these additional salaries are:

- holding the specific qualifications;
- responsible for teaching the indicated subjects (not for administrative staff).

215. An additional salary is awarded to members in the administrative and teaching staff who have a job in primary education in the Brussels Capital District equal to the additional salary for a DHOS certificate (Diploma of Higher Educational Studies). If they have a thorough knowledge of the French language (as provided in the Collective Employment Agreement VI 2000-2001 from 1 September 2002). The aim is to attract additional teachers to Brussels, which is confronted with a great teacher shortage.

216. An annual subsidy is provided for the mandates of the head and coordinating director.

An additional annual subsidy is provided for the head of groups of schools in community education and for the coordinating director of subsidised education,. The complete repayment of travel expenses on public transport from and to work is provided for all members of teaching staff and from 1 January 2001 there is also a contribution to transport by bicycle (collective agreement V, 1999-2000).

The existing arrangement for travelling from home to work for members of staff paid by the Education Department also applies from 1 January 2002 to contractual members of staff paid from the operating funds.

#### **6.7.4 Measures to reduce the pressure of work**

217. In addition to the financial measures, the Collective Employment Agreements V and VI include a number of measures for reducing the pressure of work for teachers. Some of the important measures are:

- a spread increase of the credits for the education priority policy, deprivation, urban policy and extension of special needs provision in primary education (Collective Employment Agreement V).
- from September 2001, the maximum hours of work of teachers in primary schools is set at 27 hours. Every school will have to organise work in such a way, reducing the pressure or teaching across classes, so that this can be respected as far as possible (Collective Employment Agreement VI);
- by reducing the pressures of work, the government attempts to meet its objectives with regard to reducing the administrative pressure in education and recognising the professionalism of teachers (cf. 1.1.5);
- from 1 September 2001, members of staff can no longer be required to do non-subsidised or non-funded lessons, with the exception of lessons which are situated in the so-called “plage” (these are the lessons between the minimum and maximum number of lessons for a full time job). If a competent authority violates this prohibition, the salary is at the expense of the competent authority (Collective Employment Agreement VI);
- measures are taken in mainstream secondary education to reduce the number of “plage” hours. In order to achieve this, and in the context of reducing the pressure of work, additional hours are distributed amongst school communities in secondary education (in 2002-2003: 7,000 hours; in 2003-2004: 14,000 hours, from 2004-2005: 20,000) (Collective Employment Agreement VI);
- the maximum number of hours worked by teachers in practical subjects is reduced from 30-33 to 29-30 (Collective Employment Agreement VI).

## **6.8 Professional mobility**

218. Horizontal professional mobility is legally possible, but only takes place to a limited extent. Legally, teachers with a permanent appointment have the possibility of moving to another school. These possibilities are decided by the competent authorities. Teachers with a permanent appointment can also wholly or partly stop carrying out the teaching tasks for which they were permanently appointed, and be moved to another post temporarily with other tasks for which they were not appointed (Education Decree VIII of 15 July 1997). At the moment, few measures are taken to promote the extra mobility from other sectors to education.

## **6.9 Dismissal**

219. A teacher with a permanent appointment can be dismissed without a period of notice, for example as the result of a disciplinary measure or if he has received a negative evaluation two years running (only in community education). The school governing body can take sanctions if a teacher with a permanent appointment does not fulfil the obligations laid down in the contract. These sanctions include dismissal, suspension, a change to a temporary appointment or a lower position, transfer, financial sanctions, a reprimand, etc. (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001). These sanctions are taken by the school governing body (Devos et al., 1999). A teacher with a permanent appointment can also leave his job on his own initiative with a period of notice of at least 15 days. For teachers with a temporary appointment there is a period of notice of 7 days.

220. Teachers with a temporary appointment can be dismissed with a period of notice of 30 days, or without any notice in the case of a dismissal for urgent reasons. In community education, both temporarily and permanently appointed teachers are evaluated (as stipulated by decree).

221. As indicated above, a compulsory evaluation is gradually being introduced in secondary education. An inadequate evaluation can be a reason for dismissal. The reasons for the dismissal must always be stated (Devos et al., 1999). There are administrative legal boards specifically for education where teaching staff can go to appeal, (Devos, et al, 1999).

## **6.10 Pension scheme**

222. The pension scheme for teaching staff is laid down in the federal (Belgian) legislation (i.e. it is not a Flemish area of competence).

The pension is based on the number of years of teaching and the salary.

For teachers who want early retirement there are a number of different schemes. In order to receive a pension, a member of staff (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001)

- must submit a personal application (even if the person concerned is obliged by law to terminate his professional career);
- have a permanent appointment;
- have reached the required age (60);
- comply with the required number of years of service (five years)

223. In order to calculate the pension (the reference salary) you take the average salary of the last five years of service (seen as full-time and active service). The pension may never be higher than three quarters of the average sum of the last five years of service. There is a maximum sum which applies not only for a particular pension, but also for the accumulation of several pensions (1,891,245 BEF at 100%, or 199,873 BEF gross per month from 1 June 2001). The guaranteed minimum (on 1 June 2001) for a pension at pensionable age amounts to 357,843 BEF annually (at 100%) for a single person and 447,304 BEF (at 100%) for a married couple. The person concerned must have reached the age of 60 and have worked for 20 years. A “disability” pension guarantees 50% for single people and 62.5% for a married couple of the average sum of the last 5 years. If the salary is lower than 715,687 BEF (at 100%) (on 1 June 2001), this sum is taken as a reference. Other incomes of the person concerned and his wife are deducted from this sum. A set supplement of 49,020 (at 100%) BEF is provided for people who have retired due to a serious handicap which they suffered during their career so that they had to stop work.

224. In the 2000-2001 school year, 221 men and 364 women retired from mainstream primary education. 931 men and 778 women retired from mainstream secondary education. Of this group of teachers who retired, a large group reached the age of 60. In mainstream primary education, 148 men and 152 women retired aged 60 or over. In mainstream secondary education, this concerned 823 men and 609 women aged 60 or over. It is noticeable that it is mainly women who retire from primary education before the age of 60 (table: source, Education Department, Electronic Staff file, 2002) (cf. Table 34).

### **6.11 The age of retirement**

225. One of the measures to reduce the teacher shortage is to increase the age of retirement from 55 to 58. Only nursery teachers can leave when they are 56). For anyone aged 55 or older on 31 August 2002, the “old” regulation for full time TBS 55+ continues to apply (redundant teachers prior to retirement at the age of 55). The only difference is the starting date of the possibility of retirement. The starting date can only be on 1 September, 1 January or 1 April. There are transitional measures for teachers who reach the age of 50 before 1 September 2002. The government decree allocates months of credit to these teachers aged 50. These are calculated on the basis of the number of years of service and can be included as full time, half time or a quarter. These teachers can leave teaching before the age of 58 but receive reduced redundancy pay (the income received by teaching staff who have retired). This is calculated on the basis of the salary. Those who stay on longer are financially rewarded. Anyone who leaves immediately at the age of 55 receives 8% less than the current TBS 55+ regulation. Anyone who stops at the age of 56 loses 7%. At 57, 5% is deducted and at 58, 3%.

If you continue working up to the age of 59 nothing is deducted. Once the calculation has been performed, this is the money which the member of staff receives for the whole of the period of retirement. It is not possible to return to teaching. The transitional stage will be up to September 2007. For members of staff who are under the age of 50 on 31 August 2002 it will be necessary to discuss the modalities of determining this redundancy pay and part-time employment as an extra job. These agreements can only enter into effect from 2007.

226. The aim of the new retirement formula is to motivate teachers to continue working longer, if necessary part time. The trade unions responded very strongly to this proposal. They wish to continue making use of this measure and argue that the quality of education will suffer from burnt-out teachers who have to continue teaching against their will (interview with a trade union representative, Roos, 2001).

## 6.12 Leave and absence

227. The annual holidays comprise the official holidays and a few days chosen by the educational institutions themselves. In addition, there is a series of other possibilities:

- Compassionate leave: a maximum of 8 days in the year in the case of a marriage, death of family member, etc.
- Exceptional leave as a result of force majeure (illness or accident of a member of the family living in the same home as the teacher);
- Lawful absence to perform civil duties or civil tasks (legal proceedings, local elections, etc.);
- In addition, teachers with a permanent appointment also have other grounds for lawful absence, such as leave for reduced performance as a result of social or family reasons, or due to personal matters, educational leave, leave to perform certain public duties, political leave, etc. (Heyvaert, & Janssens, 2001).

228. The system of career interruptions also applies for teachers. Teachers with a permanent or a temporary appointment can interrupt their professional activities for a certain time under certain conditions and take paid leave (Heyvaert, & Janssens, 2001). There are more than 50 types of interrupted career in education. Only a number of these different types are common. The figures shown below concern these common types of interrupted career measured on a particular day, viz. 1 February 2001.

### *Mainstream primary education*

The figures below refer to the total number of teachers of 51,372 (this figure refers to the number of physical people including short-term replacements) (Source: Education Department, 2002).

Type of interrupted career	number on 1 February 2002
Complete career interruption	798
Part-time career interruption	2776
Partial career interruption 50+	1768
Redundant teachers prior to retirement	3507
Sickness leave	3124
Maternity leave	554

(Source: Education Department, 2002)

*Mainstream secondary education*

The figures below concern the total number of teachers of 60,002 (this figure refers to the number of physical persons including short-term replacement)(Source: Education Department, 2002).

Type of career break	number on 1 February 2002
Complete career break	708
Part-time career interruption	1107
Partial career break 50+	1073
Availability prior to retirement	4668
Sickness leave	4071
Maternity leave	414

(Source: Education Department, 2002)

## CONCLUDING REMARKS ON CHAPTERS 1-6

229. In order to tackle the imminent shortage of teachers, a number of measures have already been taken. According to the Government of Flanders, one of the most important measures was to establish a replacement pool so that teachers who participate in this are given job security and consequently financial security for one year. Creating this replacement pool should make the teaching profession more attractive for young people and provides schools with the possibility of using “pool members” for short substitutions.

230. The second series of measures is related to the age of retirement. The aim of the new retirement formula is actually to motivate teachers to continue working longer. However, the trade unions fear that this will lead to burnt-out teachers who are forced to continue to teach, which could adversely affect the quality of education. In addition to the new retirement regulation, there is also the possibility of recalling teachers who are on leave, who are redundant for personal reasons, who have taken early retirement or who have retired but are under the age of 65.

231. The third series of measures concerns the qualifications of teachers. There is a possibility of using teachers with acceptable qualifications or with other qualifications when there are no teachers with the required qualifications. In order to tackle the shortage of teachers in primary education, it is possible to appoint nursery teachers. Schools in primary education are confronted with the problem of finding teachers with the required qualification. For example, schools in primary education made use of nursery teachers for 12% of their replacements in March 2000. In Brussels this even amounts to 28%. Also 10% of the vacancies are filled with out-of-field-teachers. These sorts of problems also apply in secondary education for maths, French, Dutch and religion. Shortages for certain technical and practical subjects are most dramatic. In the 1999-2000 school year 41% of the applicants who had been appointed temporarily for these subjects were out-of-license teachers.

In the 1999-2000 school year, 20% of all temporary teachers in secondary education appointed at the beginning of the school year taught a subject for which they only had an “other” qualification; by March this had already increased to 15.5% of temporary teachers.

232. Another measure for tackling the shortage of teachers concerns accumulation. Teachers who wish to work extra hours in addition to their full time task in education receive a higher payment.

Yet another way of tackling the shortage is to provide independent work experience (cf. Chapter 4) for students in their last year of teacher training.

The last collective employment agreement (Collective Employment Agreement VI) comprises a number of other important steps to reduce the shortages:

- The administrative framework in primary education will be strengthened.
- A recruitment campaign is being launched to increase the intake into teachers training.

- In Brussels, where teacher shortages are greatest (particularly in primary education), Collective Employment Agreement VI provides a premium for anyone who teaches in primary education in Brussels and passes a language examination.

233. On the basis of a study of salaries, amongst other things, as well as the evaluation of teacher training, a number of possible measures are also proposed. The first important proposal is the adaptation of teacher training. The requirements imposed on probationary teachers should be more realistic (basic competences). A probationary teacher cannot possibly know everything. Therefore it is important that in addition to the teacher training, there is also good supervision for probationary teachers and in-service training. In this way, teachers should continue to develop their basic competences. There should also be better supervision for students during their apprenticeship, and the cooperation between the schools where they do their apprenticeship and the training institutes should be strengthened (for example, by recognising the importance of the role of mentors and by providing a financial contribution).

234. Another series of measures concerns the possibility of differentiation in a teaching career. Teachers could have more career prospects, for example by creating a number of jobs at the meso-level. In addition, there is a possibility of financial differentiation. In addition to the qualifications and years of service it would also be possible to use different grounds for salaries, such as competence and the pressures of a job. It is also important for the task of teachers to be redefined in relation to the complete range of tasks and not only in terms of hours. In addition to teachers' careers there is also the support which they receive for carrying out their job. Sufficient support such as operating funds, ICT structure, the payment of expenses etc. could make the task of teachers more agreeable. The use of more administrative staff is also an important support. This is particularly necessary in primary education: between 1993 and 2001, administrative staff fell by approximately 30%.

235. These different measures are an answer to the proposals made by the government as long ago as 1989 and for what is now one of the most important policy priorities for the current Government of Flanders: to make the teaching career more attractive.

## CHAPTER 7: VISION OF THE GOVERNMENT, SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND TRADE UNIONS<sup>12</sup>

### 7.1 Method

236. This chapter is based on semi-structured interviews with the Minister of Education, representatives of the school governing bodies and of the representative trade unions. Within the limited time available, it was not possible to question teachers and heads in detail. In order to incorporate the vision of various stakeholders in the report after all, it was decided in consultation with the supervising steering group, to question the representatives of the school governing bodies in the various networks, and the representatives of the representative trade unions in addition to the minister of education.

237. The guideline for these interviews consisted of three parts:

- Part 1 explored what the respondents considered to be the main causes of the present teacher shortage in Flanders, by means of an open question. This question was deliberately kept very broad with the aim of examining which causes were generally given by the respondents.
- Subsequently, the most important topical points of discussion were selected with regard to the attraction of the teaching profession as indicated in the previous chapters (cf. the concluding consideration to chapters 1-6). This guideline was approved by the supervising steering group. The following topics were put forward for discussion.
  - The task and career of teachers, including the problems with regard to differentiation in salaries;
  - Teacher training and the supervision of probationary teachers;
  - Specific measures regarding the teacher shortage;
    - Replacement pools
    - The use of teachers with other certificates where there are teacher shortages
    - Increasing the retirement age
- Finally, every interview concluded by asking the respondents to put forward their own priorities for tackling the teacher shortage. The emphasis was placed on the possible consequences of the teacher shortage for the quality of education and with the limited funds available.

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12. This chapter is based on semi-structured interviews with the minister of education, representatives of the competent authorities, and of the representative trade unions. Appendix III p.103 contains a list of these respondents.

238. A guideline for the interviews is contained in appendix IV. All the interviews were taped. A written report was drawn up of every interview. Subsequently, a synthesis was drawn up for all the interviews, per topic. This synthesis was presented to all the respondents so that they could be checked and the report would reflect the points of view of the respondents as closely as possible.

## 7.2 Causes of the teacher shortage

239. In general, there is a large consensus amongst the respondents with regard to the reasons for the teacher shortage. There are three important reasons which were put forward by nearly all the respondents: the favourable economic climate, the low status of the teaching profession, and the increased complexity of the tasks. In addition, there are a number of other reasons which are often closely related to these reasons.

There are three main reasons:

- Almost all the respondents indicated that the favourable economic situation since 1994 is a fundamental factor in explaining the current teacher shortage. It is easier to find work in the private sector (where work is generally more attractive financially) and a number of people have also left teaching for that reason. Some respondents therefore point out that the issue of teacher shortages is not primarily an issue which can be tackled very effectively in education itself. Depending on economic developments, this issue will become more difficult or will solve itself. Many people believe that it is important to be aware that the problem cannot easily be tackled from the perspective of education itself.
- One of the fundamental problems which influences the interest of young people is the low status of the teaching profession. While the profession used to be at the top of the ladder in the view of society in the past, many respondents now consider that the profession is almost at the bottom. This certainly applies to primary school teachers. One respondent explained this as follows: “When a parent tells another parent nowadays that his son is going to be a primary school teacher, the other parent usually responds in the sense: surely your son was not such a poor student?” According to most of the respondents, it is no longer the best students who opt for the profession. Teacher training for primary teachers is viewed as one of the weakest courses of training in higher education. There is no longer much respect for teachers, and there is no financial support to encourage people to become teachers either.
- The tasks of a teacher have become more complex. This is reflected in a number of different ways. Teachers are confronted with too many issues related to the upbringing of children, in addition to their educational tasks. This means that their workload has increased significantly. In primary education, teachers also have to carry out many other tasks such as supervising children and bus transport. Nowadays, dealing with pupils has also become much more difficult, also at the emotional level. There is an increase in the legal aspects, so that people are much more likely to submit legal complaints against teachers or class committees, for example with regard to decisions involving students who fail. This increase in legal matters is a result of the increased participation of parents and an increase in assertive behaviour. The different attitudes of pupils to teachers also contribute to this. According to one of the respondents, parents even want to have a dominant role in schools and have an influence at the educational level.

240. Other reasons which were also given by a number of respondents and which are often related to the above-mentioned reasons are:

- Young people dream of creativity and a dynamic career. The profession now has an image of being hemmed in by bureaucracy and restrictions. The profession is an example of a structured influence and teachers have to take part in the bureaucratic system, while people who opt for the teaching profession are usually creative and actually want to use this creativity. According to one respondent, this is also related to the fact that education has not evolved with society and teachers still teach in the same way as they did in the 1960s or 1970s. The expectations of young people are not sufficiently met. More attention should be devoted to self-monitored learning, which is actually already happening in primary education in project work. One of the respondents goes even further and believes that there should be new types of schools (for example, learning from experience in project weeks, work experience). Young people no longer find going to school attractive in itself. Again, the rules and regulations lead to all sorts of inhibitions.
- A number of respondents indicated that for some teachers an important reason for leaving teaching is that they are irritated by the far-reaching regulations, the restrictions of rules and the planning workload. Teachers are burdened with too many administrative tasks so that they can no longer carry out their core tasks. (Furthermore, an apprenticeship gives teacher training students a poor picture of this administrative workload.) One respondent noted that this workload depended to a great extent on the quality of the school management. Competent school managers can deal with the workload in a meaningful way and restrict it when it is not meaningful. Less competent school managers play safe when the inspectors come and therefore expect the teachers to work out all their plans in detail on paper. Some heads go even further than what is expected of them by the government and inspectorate. As regards other arrangements, people from the private sector are inhibited from going into teaching (for example, in many cases the number of years of employment is not taken into account). At the moment, the policy does not tackle this problem at all. According to a number of respondents, some teachers are leaving teaching because they are tired of changes. There have been enormous changes in the last ten years, but according to the respondents, these were on such a large scale that the schools and teachers did not have the opportunity to implement the innovations. This means that many teachers lack job satisfaction because they can no longer prepare for changes. They constantly have to switch from one change to the next.
- In general, the non-profit sector has a less favourable position in the market because it pays less. Commitment, idealism and a socially meaningful dimension: what do you get for this nowadays? There is a much smaller sense of commitment than in the past and this is clearly noticeable amongst students who are in teacher training now. They want to teach, but they do not want to engage in any additional activities. Furthermore, the starting salary, particularly of primary school teachers, is not very good. Young people are not interested in salaries at the age of fifty, or in a good pension scheme. Furthermore, teachers have to pay for a number of things themselves, such as buying materials, and sometimes even in-service training.
- The negative image of teaching. According to a representative of one of the education networks, the many trade union actions in the last two years contribute to this. If trade union representatives constantly broadcast the message in the media that the situation for teachers is bad and that teachers are overworked, they do a great deal of harm to the attraction of a teaching career. The representative of the largest trade union, which was involved in most of the actions in recent years, also indicates that the recent discussions (“the fuss of the last few years”) were not good for the image of the teaching profession. According to the respondent, the government should make greater efforts to avoid confrontations by means of dialogue.

- According to some of the respondents, the government's media campaigns to make teaching more attractive to young people are effective, though others doubt the usefulness of these campaigns to attract eighteen-year-olds. One respondent considers that a human interest series on teaching, like the series on the national airport, or on a vet's practice, could have a much more powerful effect. Another respondent also considers that teaching sells itself short. Changes are sometimes wrongly communicated from a negative perspective. Things are not going well, and therefore we have to change them. It would be better to communicate these changes positively, with reference to social changes to which education aims to respond. According to this respondent, too little attention is devoted to positive aspects of the policy at the macro-level, to interesting projects in schools and to the fantastic things that teachers do with their pupils.
- One representative from an educational network also considers that a permanent appointment, which means that teachers in principle have job security up to the end of their career, actually reduces the attraction of the profession. If the permanent appointment was abolished, teachers would be more valuable on the market and would try to increase this value. This respondent also considers that the tasks of teachers are not sufficiently flexible.
- Two respondents mentioned the lack of job security for probationary teachers as a reason for the reduced attraction of the teaching profession.
- The lack of career prospects (opportunities for promotion) was also given as an important reason by two people.
- One trade union representative considers that the attraction of the teaching profession has become problematical since the cutbacks in the 1980s and 1990s. In his view, these measures led to too many people becoming unemployed. This resulted in a reallocation and employment problem which has made the teaching profession less attractive.
- The trade union representatives also refer to the recent increase in the age of retirement for teachers from 55 to 58. They consider that this also gives young people the signal that they should no longer opt for the teaching profession because of certain advantages in the status of teachers because they are being undermined anyway. In this respect, they also feel that there is no longer any job security in the teaching profession.

241. Finally, it should be noted that according to the Minister of Education, the two most important causes for the current teacher shortages are: a. the negative image of teaching in the media and in public opinion; and b. the lack of job security for young teachers, so that large numbers of people leave the profession in the first few years.

### **7.3 Problem areas and measures to tackle these problems**

242. Sometimes there are arguments for taking specific measures to deal with certain teacher shortages, for example, in some regions, or for specific groups of teachers (mathematics, technical subjects). The respondents who were questioned were in most cases strongly against these sorts of measures. In their view, these measures are generally, above all, a way of combating a particular symptom, and not the cause. They are often also focused on temporary phenomena and can become a problem when the phenomenon has disappeared (for example, higher salaries for some teachers for subjects where there are shortages at the moment). Therefore all the respondents prefer a general approach to the problem and are more concerned with maintaining or improving the quality of teachers than with the

quantity. They all also emphasised the fact that only initiatives which respond to different aspects can have an effect. They all feel that merely increasing salaries or providing more career possibilities or trying to have an effect by reducing the administrative workload of teachers does not have any point. They argue for an approach in many different fields.

243. In the interviews, we discussed a number of important problem areas with the respondents as they emerged in the report. This concerns aspects with regard to teacher training, the teachers' tasks and career and specific measures for tackling teacher shortages.

### **7.3.1 Teacher training**

#### *Quality of the intake*

244. According to the respondents, one of the most important reasons for the reduced attraction of the teaching profession is its low status. The respondents note that this low status is related to the lower level of difficulty of the training. This certainly applies for primary school teachers who follow a three-year non-university training in higher education. (The training for nursery teachers is not included in this study.) A closely related matter is the conclusion of the evaluation of teacher training, that the quality of the intake and the people leaving teacher training is relatively low. Almost half of the students who start training to become a primary school teacher have been to a technical secondary school. The intake from vocational schools is still very limited (1.6% for teacher training for primary school teachers.) The report also shows that the students who start on this teacher training are not at the top of their last year of secondary education.

245. The respondents were asked to what extent there has been a decline in the quality of the intake and people leaving teacher training for primary school teachers. While the evaluation report was fairly cautious in formulating this question, a number of the respondents answered very resolutely. In recent years there has been a strong decline in the quality of graduates for primary teachers. This is mainly related to the mediocre intake. These respondents also emphasised that everyone actually knows this, but that it is not politically correct to say so. Probably this was also an important reason why some of the respondents did not wish to talk about this subject explicitly. Some representatives of the competent authorities also said that this decline in the quality is confirmed by heads of schools in their network. A number of respondents stated that the basic skills (writing, mathematics), which must be learnt in primary education, are not actually sufficiently mastered by some of the graduates themselves.

246. All the respondents were extremely cautious about putting forward a solution for this problem. They consider that teachers, even in primary education, should be of a sufficient intellectual standard, because the teaching profession is a complex matter. Nevertheless, they are hesitant about simply arguing for a university course (a master's degree). After all, teachers do not just need a good theoretical basis. They also need important social and dynamic-affective skills. An academic course cannot guarantee these skills. The respondents emphasise that it is important to ensure that teachers are able to relate well to children in primary school. One respondent also considered that extending teacher training would create an additional shortage, certainly for the year that the training changes from a three-year course to a four-year course. Another respondent said that this could be avoided by spreading out the training and introducing a formula which involves part-time work and part-time study. Several respondents did say that the longer course would have to lead to a higher salary and it is very doubtful that there is enough room in the budget for this. Finally, a respondent indicated that even a university course and a higher salary would not be enough to revise the status of the teaching profession. It would have some impact, but it would still

be insufficient. According to this respondent: “It is a matter of culture, mentality and a set of values which have priority in society in general. You would have to start by changing the views of society.”

247. The minister also considers that it would not be a good solution to make all teacher training university courses. She does believe that in the first year of teacher training there should be greater differentiation depending on the prior education of the students. She believes that it is very important that students from TSO and BSO also become teachers. This is also emphasised by a representative of a competent authority. At the moment, all teachers come from ASO. They are not familiar with the TSO-BSO, and in the minister’s opinion this has consequences for the poor progress of pupils. She believes that an academic training is important for higher secondary education because of the importance of the subject knowledge. However, this does not mean that all the training should be at this level. Even so, all teachers should be trained and should know what scientific research entails. Above all, they should become skilled as teachers. In her opinion, it is actually an improvement that there are teachers with different training and different educational backgrounds.

248. In general, the minister advocates a teacher training institute where the different strengths and skills of the various types of teacher training are combined: the academic teacher training in the universities, the institutes of higher education, which are particularly strong with regard to training for the teaching profession itself, and the subject-related training which is linked to the GPB. This institute does not necessarily have to be a physical centre, but a “virtual” centre providing support. This means that we would get a lot more from the present teacher training for the various different target groups. It requires a debate, and we are currently engaged in this with teacher training courses, but it is not an obvious discussion.

### *Mentoring*

249. An alternative to the master’s degree for primary school teachers is to invest more in in-service training and mentoring. Although this certainly cannot solve the weaker quality of the intake, a number of respondents emphasised that more attention should be devoted to it. One very important element in this respect is the mentoring of probationary teachers. The evaluation report of teacher training also emphasises that there is a need for a more structured approach in this respect. The decree indicates that schools must devote more attention to this, but they must organise and pay for it themselves. All the respondents consider that this will not work, although there is a strong demand for it. Additional funds are needed. Almost all the respondents stated that mentoring could be an element in the differentiated tasks of teachers (cf. infra), so that an experienced teacher could devote some of his time to supervision.

250. With regard to the supervision of probationary teachers, one of the respondents suggested bringing in external people. This makes it easier to evaluate probationary teachers (more objectively). One respondent also noted that teachers in a school must be open to feedback; if they are not, mentoring is pointless. One trade union representative considered that this could be a task for the over-55s. Another respondent also argued for using very experienced teachers. On the other hand, several representatives of the competent authorities stated very explicitly that this is not a good idea. An experienced mentor is not by definition over 55. A teacher with ten years of teaching experience can also be a good mentor. It is above all the competence to coach colleagues which should determine who carries out this job, and not the number of years of teaching experience. In their opinion, burnt-out teachers of over 55 who no longer want to teach should certainly not act as mentors for young teachers. One respondent noted that the creation of additional hours for mentoring would increase the teacher shortage even further. Therefore he thinks it is more important to focus on greater flexibility with regard to all the teachers.

251. The minister also considers that mentoring is very important. In the future she would like to make a budget available for this. It is not yet clear to her whether this mentoring should be organised by the school itself, by the teacher training or as part of in-service training.

252. As regards in-service training, one trade union representative referred to the lack of opportunities for teachers. Anyone who follows in-service training must be replaced by another teacher or do the training in the evenings or in weekends. A mobile teacher (in primary education) who can stand in for teachers and carry out a number of administrative tasks would be useful.

### *Apprenticeship*

253. The evaluation report on teacher training shows that the apprenticeship does not always deliver enough benefits. All the respondents agree about this. They are particularly critical of the independent apprenticeship. This was created partly to tackle the teacher shortage. It concerns a period of 6 to 9 weeks, which a student in the third year of teacher training does in a school as an apprenticeship where he independently takes over the tasks of the teacher. One respondent described this as follows: "This apprenticeship is based on the principle that you learn as you go. Well, you learn something, but not very much."

The respondents emphasised that this apprenticeship did not teach the students anything without supervision, and this is often missing in practice. That is why it is so necessary for mentors to be exempted from other tasks for a few hours per week. Some respondents questioned the added value of training in which students are left entirely to their lot in the context of an independent apprenticeship.

In addition, many respondents argued for closer cooperation between institutes of higher education which organise teacher training and the apprenticeship in schools. The lecturers are often still too far removed from practice in schools. More agreements should be made between the schools for the teacher training and the schools where students do their apprenticeship. The apprenticeship supervisors and mentors should be given greater responsibility.

254. The minister of education and the representative of a teaching union emphasised that there is a need for starter jobs so that probationary teachers are exempted a few hours a week to follow in-service training or go back to their initial teacher training. This should create the space to reflect on the problems confronting them. Although the minister stated in the interview that the consequences for the budget will still have to be reviewed, she nevertheless stated that she would like to make an effort to provide this supervision for probationary teachers by means of these jobs and the mentoring.

### *Initial standards of competence*

255. The evaluation report on teacher training also argued for a more realistic approach to the teacher's tasks: the basic skills required demand too much from probationary teachers. Therefore it is proposed to work with initial standards of competence which are limited to the most important skills in the basic training, while accepting that a probationary teacher is not able to tackle all the problems at once. Therefore the report also argues for good initial supervision for probationary teachers and efficient in-service training.

256. A number of respondents wholly agree with this recommendation. For example, to what extent is it necessary for every teacher to develop his own subject curriculum? Many teachers base their curriculum on one that is provided. According to one respondent, not every teacher has to develop the curriculum himself. Some respondents do not agree with this. They think that it is irrelevant to make a distinction

between initial standards of competence and basic skills. In their view, these basic skills should already be focused on during the basic training. In this respect, one respondent was critical about the teacher training for primary school teachers. In his view, the trainers themselves are too ambitious. They cannot achieve all these and pass the buck to the schools. This is particularly problematic when there is no investment to bridge the gap between initial standards of competence and basic skills. The respondent considers above all that the trainers make it too easy for themselves. In many courses, teaching training often focuses mainly on theoretical courses on the subject matter for certain subjects (with which students in primary education training should be familiar anyway). Too little attention is devoted to the actual teaching: how to teach the subject to the pupils. No attention is devoted either to the job of the teacher at the meso-level. According to this respondent, too many graduates are not really familiar with the curriculum they have to deal with in their teaching profession. They have never learned to plan ahead for more than a week. In his view, it is not surprising that for many graduates the transfer to the actual practice of teaching is a great shock. The cause of the shortcomings of the teacher training lies with the lecturers who are not adequately trained to teach students how to teach. This is not surprising. They come from the university and the respondent considers that they did not learn to do this there. Other respondents also emphasised the gap between the practice of teaching and lecturers in teacher training. Another respondent noted that there is not enough emphasis on the development of a vision of education amongst teacher training students. What is their view of how children learn/develop and how do they adapt their teaching to this?

### **7.3.2 The teacher's tasks and career**

#### *Task differentiation*

257. As regards the tasks of a teacher, all the respondents agree that there should be more differentiation. This differentiation of tasks can be hierarchical as well as a differentiation across the board. It is possible to create a middle level to support policy (such as a faculty head, stage co-ordinator, head of department), or teachers can perform other more specialised jobs (such as being responsible for ICT, extending special needs provisions, supervising pupils or mentoring probationary teachers).

258. Although the respondents agree on the general principle of differentiated tasks in order to break down the lack of change in the career, they made a number of peripheral remarks.

Several of the respondents referred to the enlargement of scale taking place in secondary education as a result of the creation of school communities, which is a matter of discussion in primary education at the moment. Some of them stated that a middle level will become necessary to organise these larger units. In addition, the scale will provide more possibilities for specialised functions for which there is no room in smaller schools now. Nevertheless, certain respondents have their doubts about this. For example, one respondent of an umbrella organisation mentioned that in primary school education there is a big difference between a small school working with one head, who is responsible for everything, and a large school with a number of sites which is visited by the head from time to time. Therefore you either opt for smaller schools with heads who do not teach a class, or you opt for large schools with a number of middle jobs. As regards the support for the school, the formula of a smaller school will, in his opinion, lead to better results.

259. On the other hand, there are also the comments of a trade union representative. Everyone in primary education wants additional staff to support policy, even in small schools. However, this must be justified. An enlargement of scale actually means that schools work better. In larger schools it is easier to create jobs for people who specialise in a number of fields. A representative of a smaller umbrella organisation noted that organising a middle level could be quite helpful (providing differentiation), but that in this way you do not create other career opportunities for all teachers. Another way of motivating

teachers and removing pressure from them is to invest in extra people and different methods. In this way, teachers could be better prepared to respond to the new youth culture.

According to a representative of a different umbrella organisation, the creation of a middle level is a very dangerous matter. It could lead to the teacher being at the bottom of the ladder. The conclusion could be: "You are really good, if you no longer teach."

There is a need to create differentiation in tasks: teaching some of the time, as well as performing other tasks within a particular weekly programme. However, there is still great resistance to this sort of change with teachers. Some of the problems of differentiation are:

- Some teachers might use it as an escape route: for example, someone who does not function well in the class could become a faculty head.
- Teachers could lose their feeling for the practical side of teaching.
- Differentiation can create competition between teachers (particularly if it were to be linked to salary).

260. The last comment on the middle level was made by a respondent who said that it was important to create greater diversity in the tasks of teachers, but that the middle level should not be generated depending on the amount of teaching hours. The respondent explained: "For example, suppose there are five English teachers in the school and that one of these teachers starts to supervise pupils. This means that the same task now has to be divided amongst four teachers." A number of respondents referred to the importance of flexibility. A teacher should be able to choose how his job is composed. For example, a teacher with a full-time teaching task now also has to supervise students during their apprenticeship. This is too much work for the teacher, and means he becomes a less good teacher. The teacher should have the possibility of teaching fewer hours so that there is time for mentoring. However, the system must be flexible.

A teacher should not continue to be a mentor for the rest of his career. Therefore there should always be a possibility, for example, of returning to a full-time teaching task or to a different job.

One representative of an umbrella organisation considered that the staffing policy should change from one focusing on certificates to a policy focusing on skills. Teachers should be used to do things they are good at. Why should someone who is good at French, but has a different certificate, not be able to teach French? In addition, it would be extremely motivating for teachers if they could teach different target groups. For example, secondary school teachers could teach in adult education, the VDAB, etc. In this way they are obliged to have in-service training. Another possibility is to follow more training. In this way, teachers can specialise and develop a different career (the teacher as expert).

One umbrella organisation goes even further and refers to differentiated management. Schools should have greater freedom for dealing with management issues. For example, instead of the traditional management, it would be possible to work with a rotation system or the management could be divided amongst different people, each with their own tasks.

### *Differentiated salary*

261. As regards differentiated salaries, opinions are greatly divided (both within the umbrella organisations and within the trade unions). Some people are completely against differentiated salaries,

others believe that this could work for middle management jobs, but not for teachers doing similar jobs, while others again believe that differentiated salaries should be possible in general. It is striking that the trade unions have not adopted a consensus in this respect. Until recently, they rejected any form of differentiated salaries. Now the biggest trade union is in favour of differentiated salaries for middle management jobs. Recently a consensus developed in this trade union with regard to paying people with more responsibilities more as well.

262. The opponents of differentiated salaries amongst the various stakeholders consider that this makes an unhealthy financial distinction between people in the same organisation. A large number of opponents of differentiated salaries for the same teaching job (in all the trade unions and most of the organisations) consider that there should be better teaching conditions (for example, fewer hours of teaching) for more difficult jobs (for example, in BSO, special education, or schools with large numbers of immigrants). One of the respondents indicated that these differentiated salaries could also be organised differently, for example, in the form of credits for further training.

263. A number of the respondents consider that differentiated salaries should be possible for jobs with greater responsibilities. The more responsibilities (for example, in middle management jobs), the higher the salary could be. Finally, there are those who advocate differentiated salaries for all jobs (in two smaller umbrella organisations). They also support the principle that the salary should be based on the teacher's responsibilities. In addition, one of these respondents considered that individual performance-related pay is also positive. The second respondent considers that differentiation should be possible for teachers if it has a direct and visible effect on the structure and operation of the school.

#### *Differentiated salaries for teacher shortages?*

264. Last year, there were strong discussions in the collective employment agreement negotiations for higher salaries for teachers in Brussels, where the greatest teacher shortages in Flanders are found. This was supported by the government. In the end, it was decided to pay teachers in Brussels who pass an additional language examination a higher salary.

265. Of all the respondents there was only one who thinks that teachers in Brussels should receive a higher salary because of the large teacher shortages there. According to this respondent, if the norms are maintained at the same level in Brussels as in the rest of Flanders, the task of teachers are heavier and should therefore be compensated. One alternative is to work with smaller groups and therefore make the conditions more attractive.

266. Most respondents believe that it is only possible to pay more if there are objective criteria (for example, costs for extra professionalisation, costs for extra travel). Otherwise, what is the basis for paying teachers in Brussels more than teachers in Ghent or Antwerp?

Again, several respondents suggested improving the teaching conditions for teachers in Brussels, for example, by asking them to teach shorter hours, instead of paying them more.

Many respondents note that the teacher shortages could be a temporary phenomenon caused by the economic situation. They raise the question of what should happen about these higher salaries when the shortages disappear.

267. In general, there is a certain consensus growing in Flanders with regard to the salaries of teachers with comparable jobs. The Minister of Education also considered that it is very difficult to have differentiated salaries in this respect. She suggested that this was possible for Brussels on the basis of the rule related to the language examination, but this is actually an exception. "I realise that this is a very

difficult exercise for the whole of education. In education no two jobs are the same, not even in the same school. It is very difficult to have differentiated salaries here.” According to the minister, it would be better to give some people fewer teaching hours, or to make the class groups smaller. Nevertheless, she considers that in the end this must be left to the schools themselves. In her view, it is better for the schools to be able to decide about this than to determine policy lines in Brussels. The head should have more autonomy with regard to performance-related rules and also with regard to the certificates and qualifications. In her opinion, schools should work more with financial envelopes in future. These financial envelopes would gradually also relate to staffing matters. However, these are all individual stages, which must be carried out step by step. According to the minister this will still be quite a while, though it is the direction in which things should move.

### *Teacher's salaries*

268. According to a number of the respondents (both trade unions and umbrella organisations), the 3% salary increase (linear) which was agreed last year was absolutely essential. There had been no salary increase since 1985, so that salaries had fallen behind and a general salary increase was necessary. According to one respondent, one trade union organisation supported reducing the workload instead of introducing a 3% salary increase, but they did not insist on this because of the common front presented by the trade unions. One of the umbrella organisations also had a preference for providing extra support in schools. In addition, the trade unions aimed to create a fair salary scale for recruitments, selections and promotions (for example, heads should earn more). However, there were insufficient funds available to achieve this.

### *The teacher's tasks: should they be expressed in number of teaching hours per week or not?*

269. A number of respondents argue for a more flexible system, for example, by re-evaluating the tasks of teachers and formulating them in terms of a 40-hour week or in parts of days (which does not mean that a teacher should be at school full time), instead of basing the tasks on lessons. The teacher's job is now expressed in terms of fractions (for example 20/20). This refers only to the contact hours. This is in direct opposition to the teacher's job profile: to teach knowledge and skills, to bring up children, to supervise pupils, etc. Therefore all the other tasks, apart from actually teaching, are more or less carried out unpaid. The teacher's full-time tasks should really be translated into a modern way of describing all the tasks, and it is necessary to let go of the performance-related description based on lessons. The fact that teachers should be at school more benefits the relations between colleagues and makes it easier to work on something as a team (for example, developing a school vision).

270. Other respondents consider that with the great pressure on teachers, and the teacher shortages that exist in the current situation, it is not appropriate to enter into this debate now, as it is undoubtedly an extremely sensitive issue.

271. The Minister of Education also considers that the tasks of the teacher should also be related to the school, rather than related to the lessons taught in class. Supervision, contacts with parents and teachers' meetings are obviously all part of every teacher's tasks. However, an additional problem in this respect is the fact that the infrastructure of schools is inadequate to allow teachers to remain at school all week. This is also referred to by a representative of the competent authorities. Therefore investing in infrastructure is an important priority for the future. She does consider that this task of the school which requires a permanent presence at school, is possible for some jobs, such as pupil supervisors and ICT coordinators.

### *BPT hours*

272. Finally, a number of respondents commented on the BPT hours (3% of the total amount of hours available for lessons can be devoted to tasks other than lessons by the schools).

According to one representative of an umbrella organisation, the BPT hours should be a conscious choice. At the moment, these BPT hours cannot be used (although this differs from school to school). It is also possible that a teacher in a particular part of the school year has a heavier workload during a particular part of the school year (depending on what the school does for the pupils).

273. One representative of an umbrella organisation regrets that the number of BPT hours is limited to 3% of the teaching hours. In his view, this is a clear example of excessive regulations, which also reduces the autonomy of schools. On the other hand, another representative of an umbrella organisation states that the number of BPT hours is adequate. However, the problem is the training of heads (particularly in primary education). The less training heads of schools receive, the less flexibly they will be able to make use of these BPT hours. The head will try to play safe and keep everything under control. Therefore there is an enormous need for the additional professionalisation of school managers.

274. One of the respondents noted that the competent authorities want the freedom to be able to decide on BPT hours, although this does lead to some concern amongst teachers.

### **7.3.3 Specific measures with regard to teacher shortages**

The interviews also looked at the way in which the respondents assessed the various measures for tackling teacher shortages.

#### *The replacement pools*

275. In recent years the Government of Flanders has created a system of replacement pools. These pools are made up of prospective teachers who can be used in a flexible way, transcending the networks, to replace teachers. The teachers concerned are appointed for a whole school year paid by the government. With this replacement pool the government aims to provide more job security and financial security for teachers, and at the same time help schools to find replacements for absent teachers. Except for schools in private authority primary education, most schools have joined this pool for the next school year. According to the minister, this is because Catholic primary education has its own system for replacements.

276. The government considers the introduction of the replacement pools as an important initiative to tackle the shortages. Nevertheless, the minister sees the effect of the pools in a relative light. She says that the biggest problem facing these pools is actually the teacher shortage itself. The groups where the shortages are most severe are not available in the replacement pools either. The minister also considers that some teachers are satisfied about these pools, particularly those people who want to gain some experience first and who attach a great deal of importance to a secure salary. In her view, other teachers are sometimes disappointed because they hoped to be attached to one school, while they actually have to move from school to school.

In addition, the minister states that some anchor schools are happy with the system because they can use teachers for temporary tasks while other teachers are unhappy because they immediately have to let the teachers allocated to them go to replace teachers elsewhere.

277. The views on the usefulness of these replacement pools varies enormously amongst the other respondents. In general terms, a distinction can be made between the representatives of community education (both competent authorities and trade unions), and the representatives of the subsidised networks. This immediately shows that the views for or against are particularly determined by other underlying factors. One possible factor could relate to the general underlying philosophy of the respondents about the role of the government and the role of schools and school governing bodies. Subsidised networks in particular opt for the greatest possible autonomy for schools. For them, replacement pools are a threat to this autonomy. Originally, school governing bodies were no longer able to choose their staff themselves. Later, the right to reserve judgement was introduced, so that schools were able to refuse teachers, but the whole system is still a strongly regulated system, and private authority schools prefer to remain autonomous. There is less of a tradition of school autonomy in community education. Although these schools have also had an important degree of autonomy for some time, recently strengthened even further with the creation of groups of schools, there was a greater tradition in this network in the past of staffing systems which allocated members of staff across the schools (more changes within the network, centralised recruitment, etc.). Obviously this has consequences for the current culture, particularly with the representatives of the network and with the trade unions. Another possible underlying causal factor could be related to the character of replacement pools, which transcend the networks. Initiatives which transcend networks are generally supported by community education, while Catholic education in particular usually rejects these initiatives. Catholic education devotes a great deal of importance to the freedom of education and the identity of its own network. Finally, there is also the Minister of Education's own declaration. She said that Catholic primary education has its own system to replace teachers.

278. It is curious to see how the philosophy of the respondents influences their views of the way in which replacement pools work. Depending on their general attitude, they sometimes came up with completely conflicting points of view. A representative of community education and of the ACOD, the socialist trade union which is particularly strong in this network, considers that the replacement pools have contributed to job security for young teachers and that they have increased the attraction of the teaching profession in this way. They also feel that because of the guaranteed annual salary, fewer people are leaving teaching. In this respect, an internal evaluation amongst school heads and school secretariats in this network led to an extremely positive evaluation.

279. With regard to a completely different issue, other respondents are extremely critical of replacement pools. Some representatives of Catholic primary education, public authority subsidised education and the largest Christian trade union consider that the pools are not very good. In the first place, they point out that it is bizarre to create a replacement pool to help young teachers find work during a period of teacher shortages. In their view, this pool is not necessary. The representatives of the competent authorities state that this principle conflicts completely with a healthy staffing policy. Schools are no longer able to select, they must accept everyone with the right certificate. Like the Christian trade union, they also consider that the replacement pool actually reduces the attraction of the teaching profession. Teachers are employed in two or three schools at the same time, and sometimes even have to run from one school to the other. In many cases these schools have very different cultures. Furthermore, they are sometimes far apart. According to the respondents, this system reflects a centralised approach: everyone is thrown together into a single pot, is used where they are needed and when they are no longer needed, thrown back into the pot. They feel that this is not attractive at all for a graduate of teacher training. It does not give them the opportunity to grow into a team and become familiar with a school culture. It does not give the teacher the opportunity either to start feeling at home and getting the most out of his job. Other representatives of Catholic and public authority subsidised education and trade union representatives are more moderate about the operation of the replacement pools. Nevertheless, most are not positive about them here either. One respondent said that it is not really a sustainable solution to the problem.

### *The replacement of teachers by teachers with other certificates*

280. One very common practice for tackling teacher shortages is to make use of other members of staff who do not have the necessary certificates. The interviews show that this practice is viewed differently, depending on the level of education. All the respondents reject the use of nursery teachers in primary education. In secondary education, most feel that it should be possible to use members of staff with different certificates.

281. Most respondents in primary education do not consider that it is a good idea to use nursery teachers in primary schools. In their view, they are not trained for this. It would only be possible with additional training. In this respect, some argue for greater flexibility. They argue for a common training followed by a division into nursery, primary and secondary education. Subsequently, it should be possible to transfer from one level to the other, provided the teachers follow a number of modules. For example, nursery teachers would have to do an apprenticeship in primary schools. This additional training does not exist at the moment, and there is no additional supervision in schools for these teachers either, which results in a decline in the quality of education. Furthermore, this practice is not good for nursery teachers themselves and it is often too much for them. According to one trade union representative, this practice causes some people to leave teaching.

One of the competent authorities considers that it should be possible (nursery teachers teaching in primary education), as long as these nursery teachers are properly supervised and have the necessary skills).

282. In secondary education most respondents considered that using people with different certificates is possible without jeopardising the quality of education, as long as they gain a GPB. It is possible to follow this training at night school, while you are already teaching. Some respondents also referred to the useful role which could be played by good mentoring (i.e., with hours freed for this purpose). In this respect, most respondents referred in particular to technical and practical subjects (which have by far the largest teacher shortages in Flanders). Many respondents considered that more possibilities should be created for these shortages to attract people outside education (provided they have a GPB training). In this respect it is important that their years of employment continue to count. Some respondents emphasised that people with a different certificate could be used, as long as they do not account for the majority of teachers for these subjects. One respondent noted that again there is too little flexibility with regard to the level of training. Someone who is a graduate in mechanics (bachelor's degree) might be more suitable to teach mechanics at higher secondary level than an industrial engineer in chemistry.

283. The Minister of Education emphasised that there should also be the possibility of certificates other than those of teaching staff for the new jobs in special needs education, in the context of the policy on equal opportunities. The paramedical professions should also be eligible for this, provided there is additional training. In the debate on other certificates, the minister added that there is a need for a reduced teacher training. Someone who has already done academic teacher training for higher secondary education should also be able to teach at other levels of education, provided they follow the reduced training. At the moment, these people still have to follow the complete three-year course.

### *Raising the age of retirement*

284. One of the measures strongly disputed by the largest trade unions recently introduced by the government is to raise the age of retirement from 55 to 58. The trade union representatives rejected this measure. They stated that the result is that burnt-out teachers will continue to teach, which will not benefit the quality of education. Furthermore, they argue that absenteeism will increase enormously as a result. They also said that this measure is actually above all a way of making cuts, which was presented by the

government as a measure for tackling teacher shortages. What really irked the trade union representatives was the way in which this measure was decided upon. In Flanders there is a strong tradition of discussing all staffing measures with the trade unions in advance. In this case, the measure was announced by the Flemish Minister of Education after a budget discussion by the Government of Flanders.

285. Some of the representatives of the competent authorities preferred not to voice an opinion on this. Most of them thought it was actually quite logical to increase the age to 58, but they think there should be a possibility for burnt-out teachers to leave the profession. This possibility should be accompanied by some financial disincentives (which was not really the case in the past). Some of them also mentioned the possibility of differentiation and of providing different jobs for these teachers (coaching teachers, coordination). We have already emphasised that some respondents were against giving burnt-out teachers important jobs, such as coaching probationary teachers.

#### **7.3.4 *Priorities in the funds to be used***

286. Although there was a fairly large consensus amongst the respondents on a number of points in many respects, there was a great variety of opinions in their answers to the question about which measures should have most priority with regard to tackling the teacher shortages, taking into account the implications for quality and the limited available funds.

287. According to the minister, the reform of teacher training is very important. If one sector in education should be able to count on additional funds, it is teacher training. The minister believes that this will determine whether we have a sufficient number of good teachers in the future. Nevertheless, she is cautious, because it all depends on the funds which are available.

288. The representatives of trade union organisations do not want to give any measure priority. They stated that it was simply a matter of making more funds available for education. In this respect, one respondent said that first it was necessary to clearly define the teacher's tasks (and those of education). This should be done at the level of the Government of Flanders, and funds should be made available on this basis. If the teacher has to take on certain new roles in addition to the strict teaching tasks, other ministries should assist with additional funds. If teachers also have to tackle the problem of drugs in schools, funds should be provided by welfare or culture. Another trade union representative supported this argument. Obviously there is a risk that this means that education will become a super-ministry with a super-minister, and according to one of the respondents, this would cause serious political problems.

289. According to this respondent, defining the tasks of education (and then determining the funds) should take place at the round table conference which will take place this year on the initiative of the Government of Flanders. However, according to the respondent, this round table conference is a missed opportunity, because a model has not been drawn up in advance of what is actually expected of education. From the very start there was too much focus on drawing up lists of funds. This reduced the chances of a serious debate on the tasks of education, and only then the discussion about the funding.

290. Several respondents argued that the attraction of the profession should be increased for the intake of other levels. People following a GPB training should be paid a salary during their training comparable to that of teachers with a required or acceptable certificate. The number of years of employment from people in the private sector or other non-profit sectors should also be taken into account so that people outside education would enter teaching more readily. At the moment this is only possible for technical and practical subjects, where there is useful work experience relevant for the subjects concerned.

291. According to these respondents, too little is done at the moment for other people entering teaching from different sectors. One respondent said that it is curious that an education budget is based on

the fact that some of the teachers are employed without sufficient years of employment and with a full salary scale (anyone without a required or acceptable certificate earns much less).

The Minister of Education responded that she had examined this possibility, but that it is a “rather expensive” matter. Furthermore, this raises the question of what to do with people who entered education earlier from the private sector without years of employment in that sector.

Should these people be retrospectively reimbursed? According to the minister, the discussion is more complex than it seems at first sight. At the moment this is not a top priority for the budget in 2003, although it will be discussed during the negotiations in the future.

292. Two respondents from Catholic education emphasised that the possibility for schools to determine policy should be increased. In this respect it is important that the head has more autonomy with regard to the staffing policy, but also that the head should be sufficiently professional, that he is able to run the school well and ensure that everyone does the job for which he is suitable. This requires training of a sufficiently high level. The current level of some small non-profit-making organisations or other organisations is sometimes below par. Training at university institutes can play an important role in this respect. Professionalisation also provides support for networks, giving people the chance to pass their expertise onto each other, so that they feel supported and have a stronger image. These networks are also very important for teachers.

293. Finally, the following priorities were mentioned by one or two respondents:

- better salaries for teachers;
- a better infrastructure for pupils and teachers;
- contracting out some tasks to other members of staff: social assistance, administrative staff;
- reducing the workload;
- adapting teaching methods to the changing youth culture;
- higher status;
- no reforms over the heads of teachers and enough time to introduce the reforms;
- the quality of the working conditions of the teachers;
- a more comfortable teaching environment.

This report has not dealt with another shortage: that of heads of schools. This shortage was mentioned by many respondents as another important challenge for the future.

## **7.4 Conclusions**

- i) The interviews show that there is a fairly large consensus amongst the respondents with regard to some important issues directly or indirectly related to teacher shortages. This does not apply to the same extent for other issues. In this respect, it is striking that it is impossible to make many simple generalisations. The points of view are rarely such that, for example, all the trade unions adopt the same view or that all the representatives of school governing bodies share the same opinion. Sometimes there are agreements between those involved depending on the network, but with regard to many other issues this is not the case. In other words, it is very dangerous to make general pronouncements about “the trade unions”, “the networks”, or representatives of a specific network.
- ii) According to most respondents, the most important causes of the teacher shortage in Flanders is related to the positive economic climate since 1994, the low status of the teaching profession and the increased complexity of the teaching profession. The

respondents usually reject very specific measures for tackling some teacher shortages. They argue for a general approach to the problem, and are more concerned with the quality of teachers than with the numbers. The respondents also state that there is only any point in having an approach with measures in different fields (salary, career, differentiated tasks, training, etc.).

- iii) There is great concern about the low status of the teaching profession and the quality of the intake in training. It is not quite clear how this can be remedied. Views differ on this. An academic university training for all teachers is not seen as an ideal solution for various reasons. However, there is a great consensus about devoting more attention to probationary teachers who should receive more support and supervision. The mentoring of probationary teachers should be structurally better developed. There is also an argument for starter jobs so that probationary teachers are exempted from teaching for a few hours a week to follow in-service training, reflect on their tasks and engage in feedback with their initial teacher training. This is also one of the minister's priorities.
- iv) All the respondents consider that there should be more differentiation of tasks for teachers. Some consider that this differentiation could apply both hierarchically (middle management) and across the board (for more specialised jobs). Others warn against having too many new specialised jobs and hierarchical levels, because the best teachers will disappear from the classroom in this way. They consider that the actual job of the teacher should be much more differentiated. They also argue for more flexible tasks which can vary over time.
- v) The views on differentiation in salaries vary enormously. In this respect, it is crucial to clarify what is meant by "salary" and "differentiation". A distinction is made between the financial salary and a reduction of the workload. A distinction is also made between differentiated salaries for jobs with management responsibilities, jobs which require particular expertise and jobs which are different because of specific working conditions. Most respondents consider that financial differentiation can only apply for jobs which explicitly entail more responsibilities. They argue for a reduction in the workload (smaller classes or shorter hours) for teachers who have to work in difficult circumstances (for example, schools with a disproportionate number of immigrant pupils, vocational education, etc.). With regard to financial differentiation, it is striking that the largest trade union's point of view has evolved. According to this trade union, financial differentiation is possible in the salaries for managers in responsible jobs. Until recently, all the trade unions rejected this. This is a new evolution on the part of trade unions.

Almost all the respondents (including the largest trade union) reject higher financial salaries for jobs where there are serious teacher shortages. They prefer improving the teaching conditions for the teachers concerned.

- vi) The replacement pools created to provide greater job security for teachers with a view of tackling teacher shortages are assessed in different ways. The representatives of subsidised schools, especially in primary education, particularly dispute the usefulness of these pools. Other representatives are strongly convinced of their usefulness. A number of respondents, including the minister, note that the success of the replacement pools varies greatly from school to school and from person to person and that the weakest aspect of the replacement pools is the teacher shortage itself: because of the shortages, the pools cannot always be filled up so that they do not provide a solution for schools.

- vii) Using members of staff who do not have the required certificates to solve the teacher shortages, is a measure which is appropriate in secondary education. However, in secondary education, the teachers involved should follow GPB training at night school. The shortages are most spectacular for teachers of technical and practical subjects. In this respect the respondents state that more opportunities should be created to attract people from outside education. It is important that their years of employment are taken into account. This is not always the case at the moment. According to the respondents, it is not good to use nursery teachers in primary education. They have not been trained for this. It should be possible, as long as additional training is provided for the nursery teachers.

Therefore there is an argument for greater common teacher training which divides into nursery, primary and even secondary education training at a later stage. With additional modules, it should then be possible to transfer from one level to another.

- viii) Finally, several respondents argued that the possibility for schools to determine policy should be increased. Two aspects are very important in this: a. the school should have greater autonomy regarding their staffing policy; b. the heads should have sufficient training. Training of a good quality is essential for this. At the moment, this training is often inadequate.

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