



DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION



Department of Educational Studies

Improving School Leadership - OECD Review

Background Report for Flanders

Geert Devos Melissa Tuytens
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INTRODUCTION

This report is the background report for Flanders drawn up within the context of the OECD project entitled 'Improving School Leadership' (2006-2007).

The report provides an overview of the environment in which school leaders in elementary and secondary education currently work and looks at the important developments and challenges school leaders face.

The first chapter describes the context in Flanders within which school leaders work, focusing on demographic and economic trends in particular. The second chapter then looks at the Flemish education system itself in greater detail. The key point here is the concept of freedom of education, the foundation stone on which education in Flanders is built and which in this report is used as a starting point in describing the other elements of the education system. The third chapter looks at school leaders within education: their powers, challenges and various roles. In the fourth chapter we examine the stimulative role played by the headteacher in the learning process: the headteacher as a teacher, a mentor for teachers and evaluator of teachers. The fifth chapter looks at the appeal of school leadership, with some numerical data about Flemish school leaders, and at their working conditions. The sixth chapter deals with the professional development of Flemish school leaders, with an outline of the various pre-service and in-service training programmes available to headteachers. The final chapter summarizes the main strengths and weaknesses in Flanders' school leadership and the most important new developments.

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CHAPTER 1: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

1.1 Education, a matter for the communities

1.1.1 *The federal state of Belgium*

Since the changes to Belgium's government structure introduced in 1989, there are now three tiers of government in Belgium: the federal state, the regions and the communities. They each have their own powers and their own legislative and executive bodies. The Federal Government has jurisdiction over social security, judiciary, defence, public security, etc. The jurisdiction of the three Regions (the Flemish, Walloon and the Brussels-Capital Regions) revolves mainly around matters related to the economy, whereas the three Communities (the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking Communities) have jurisdiction over cultural and language matters and matters related to the individual. (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2001)

1.1.2 *The power of the Flemish Community in relation to education*

Education is under the control of the Communities. The Flemish Parliament (legislative and supervisory function), the Flemish Government (executive power) and the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training control education matters¹. The Flemish Minister for Education and Training is responsible for adapting Flemish education policy, monitoring its progress and assessing policy. The Ministry of Education and Training supports the minister by performing a wide range of policy-supporting tasks. (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2001)

1.2 Data on Flanders

1.2.1 *Demographic context*

On 1 January 2004 Flanders had 6,016,024 inhabitants. This is 57.9% of the total Belgian population. A small majority of Flemish inhabitants are women (50.6%). Of the total population of Flanders, 4.8% is registered as being foreign. The largest group of foreign nationals is from the Netherlands.

The population of Flanders is growing steadily: between 1990 and 2004 the population grew by a quarter of a million. Foreign migration is the primary cause of this growth, and the trend is rising (from around 25,000 in the mid 90s to 35,000 in 2003). In second and third place are migration from other regions and natural growth respectively.

Flanders is experiencing two trends: population ageing and dejuvination. On the one hand the number of over-60s is increasing every year. The proportion of over-60s was almost 23% in 2004. On the other hand the proportion of young people under 20 continues to fall. They made up around 22% of the total population in 2004. There are the equivalent of 100 people in the active population group (20 to 59 year-olds) in Flanders compared with 80 people in the non-active population group (under 20 and over 59).

(Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2005a and Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2005b)

¹ There are three areas in education that have remained within the authority of the Federal State: the determination of the beginning and the end of compulsory education, the determination of minimum requirements for qualifications, and the management of the pension system for teaching staff. By keeping the first two matters under the control of the Federal State, coherence between the education systems of the three Communities is safeguarded. Pensions are part of social security, which, as said earlier, is within federal jurisdiction.

1.2.2 Main developments in the labour market

The population ageing and dejuvination mentioned above obviously has implications for the labour market. The expectation of there being a problem with replacing workers in the near future is therefore realistic, given these two trends. In concrete terms this means that the group of young people who could potentially join the labour market is getting ever smaller compared with the group who is approaching retirement age. Figures indicate an equivalent ratio of 106% between the two for 2003. In the early 90s this was still 120% (Pelfrene, 2005).

The employment level² in Flanders has risen again recently. In 2000, 63.5% of the population in Flanders was in employment. In the three years that followed, this percentage fell to an all-time low of 62.9% in 2003. However, 2004 was characterized by a healthier economic environment and this translated into a higher employment level of 64.3%. If we link employment opportunity figures to this, we see that the number of jobs is rising (Vermandere, 2005). Between 2000 and 2003 the level of unemployment rose from 4.3% to 5.7%. In 2004 there was a slight fall to 5.4% (see table 1.1).

² The employment level is equal to the proportion of employed workers aged between 15 and 64.

CHAPTER 2: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.1 Organizational structure

2.1.1 *Freedom of education*³

Freedom of education is a statutory right in Belgium (Art. 24). In other words, every natural or legal person has the right to organize education and set up establishments for that purpose.

The concept of an administrative authority or a school board is a key concept in the organization of education in Flanders⁴. It encompasses the authority, the natural person or legal person who is responsible for one or several educational establishments. The school boards enjoy far-reaching autonomy; for instance, they have complete freedom in their choice of educational methods. They are able to devise their own curricula and timetables and appoint their own staff. No central tests are developed by the government. School boards who wish their schools to be recognized or receive financial support from the government do have to comply with a number of regulations. For instance the school boards must incorporate final attainment levels and developmental targets in their curricula. Final attainment levels are minimum objectives set by the Flemish Authority, which pupils in a specific year-group or study pathway must aim for and achieve. The schools must also be adequately equipped and have sufficient teaching materials available. They must be housed in buildings that are habitable, safe and sufficiently clean.

Besides organizing freedom of education, the constitution also provides for freedom of choice for the parents (Art. 24).

2.1.2 *Education networks*⁵

A characteristic feature of education in Flanders is that schools and their school boards are grouped into education networks. Education policy is an interaction between the ministry, the education networks and the local schools. Flanders comprises three education networks: community education, subsidized public-sector education and grant-aided private education.

2.1.2.1 *Community education*

Community education is organized by the 'Community Education' public institution under the authority of the Flemish Community. The constitution specifies that this education network must comply with special regulations regarding neutrality. Under the provisions of the special Decree of 14 July 1998, the structure of this public institution comprises three levels: the central level, the medial level or the level of the school groups, and the local level of the school. Within this structure, the decision-making power lies mainly with the school groups at the intermediary level. There are 28 school groups, comprising a maximum of fifty schools. School groups can comprise elementary schools (i.e. nursery and primary schools) as well as secondary schools. Each school group is governed by a general assembly, a board of governors, a board of headteachers and a general director. The school groups are the organizing bodies for the schools, boarding schools and the pupil support and advisory centre that belong to the school group. The general assembly approves the budget, the accounts and the appointment of the general director of the school group. The board of governors is

³ This section is based on Devos, G. & Vanderheyden, K. (2002). Attracting, developing and retaining teachers. Thematic Review – OECD: background report Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

⁴ The concepts of administrative authority and school board are basically synonymous. For the sake of clarity, the concept of school board will therefore be used from hereon in.

⁵ Cf. Devos, G. & Vanderheyden, K. (2002)

responsible for general policy, education policy, staffing policy and material and financial policy at the school group level.

At the central level there is a community education board and a mandated administrator. The community education board is responsible for monitoring the constitutional guarantees, including freedom of choice, monitoring the tasks of the public department, general quality assurance, supporting the schools and school groups and allocating operating resources. The mandated administrator has an advisory function within the community education board. On behalf of the board, he is responsible for daily management and policy. He is also responsible for central administration.

2.1.2.2 Subsidized public-sector education

The provinces, towns/cities, and municipalities organize education in many places. These local authorities, which act as school boards, have full autonomy in their local policy-making, provided they keep within the bounds of the legally-defined framework. The school boards are under the umbrella of two co-ordinating bodies: the Flemish towns and municipalities education secretariat *Onderwijssecretariaat van de Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten, OVSG*) and for the provinces the *Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen (POV)*.

2.1.2.3 Grant-aided private education

Within this network, education is organized on private initiative, by a private individual or a private organization. The school board is often a not-for-profit organization. As with subsidized public-sector education, every school board within the grant-aided private education network has full autonomy in the implementation of policy in its schools within the legally-defined framework.

Grant-aided private Catholic schools

The grant-aided private education network is made up of mainly Catholic schools. Catholic education is represented by the Flemish Catholic education co-ordinating body *Vlaams Secretariaat van het Katholiek Onderwijs (VSKO)* at community-level consultations. The *VSKO* also defends the interests of Catholic education vis-à-vis the government. The *VSKO* does influence the policy implementation of the organizing bodies but is not competent to act in its place. There are also decentralized advisory bodies such as the *Diocesane Planificatie- en Coördinatiecommissie (DPCC)* , the diocesan planification and co-ordination committee⁶.

Other grant-aided private schools

The denominational Protestant schools are grouped in the association of Protestant-Christian education in Belgium, *Vereniging voor Protestants-Christelijk Onderwijs in België*. The non-denominational and independent schools are assembled under the Flemish schools forum *Vlaams Onderwijs Overleg Platform (VOOP)*, the alternative schools federation *Federatie voor Onafhankelijke Pluralistische Emancipatorische Methodescholen (FOPEM)* and the Federation of Rudolf Steiner schools. In the group of independent schools, the Steiner schools (officially recognized since 1984) form the largest group. The Freinet schools form a smaller group. Nowadays, these different groups work together within the forum of small education providers *Overlegplatform Kleine Onderwijsverstrekkers (OKO)*.

The nine Jewish elementary schools and the three Jewish secondary schools in Antwerp have no official representative organization. One of the headteachers takes on the role of spokesperson.

⁶ A diocese is the sphere of jurisdiction of a Catholic bishop within the organizational structure of the Catholic Church.

2.1.3 *Quality control and quality assurance*⁷

Quality control and quality assurance is based on four key aspects:

- final attainment levels: a quality reference framework anchored within society;
- inspection: an external supervisory tool;
- educational guidance and support: internal support;
- in-service training.

With the final attainment levels, the Flemish Community clearly indicates what its minimum expectations are for elementary and secondary education. The purpose of these is to guarantee quality education. Final attainment levels are minimum targets that the majority of pupils in a specific year group and pathway must aim for and achieve. In concrete terms, this means qualities related to knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills. There are subject-specific and cross-subject final attainment levels. Every school board must incorporate final attainment levels in its curricula. Every school board may determine its curricula and educational methods autonomously but they must meet the criteria set in the Flemish Government Decree of 26 November 1996. Systematic research could demonstrate the effect these final attainment levels have on the teachers' autonomy. A study is currently underway looking at the perception of the teachers and management in elementary education of final attainment levels and developmental targets.

The core tasks of the inspectors are assessing the quality of education and checking the conditions for the official recognition of schools and pupil guidance and support centres. In order to carry out these core tasks, the inspectors ascertain whether the final attainment levels have actually been achieved and whether the other organic obligations are being met (for instance working to a minimum timetable). This is done through a school inspection (see 4.2.2.). In such an inspection the inspectors work as a team and inspect the entire school. All institutions are normally inspected once every six years. The results are published in a public report. Following the inspection, the inspectors make a recommendation to the minister regarding the further recognition of the establishment.

Every education network has its own educational support staff. They provide educational and methodological support if schools request it. Every year, the support services submit a report and a support plan to the government to account for their activities.

Every year schools receive funding via their school board for in-service training for their staff. Schools annually devise an in-service training plan in which the school's in-service training needs are determined. (see 4.3.4)

In recent years there has been a growing realization that schools themselves play a significant role in quality assurance. The government therefore wants to support schools in their self-assessment and internal quality assurance processes so that external assessment can dovetail with it through inspections.

⁷ This section is based on Devos, G. & Vanderheyden, K. (2002). Attracting, developing and retaining teachers. Thematic Review – OECD: background report Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

2.1.4 *Elementary education*⁸

Elementary education includes nursery education and primary education. An elementary school provides nursery and primary education, whereas an autonomous nursery school provides only nursery education and an autonomous primary school only primary education. Nursery education is available to children aged between 2.5 to 6 years. Mainstream primary education is for children aged between 6 and 12 and usually consists of six consecutive school years. The beginning of primary education usually coincides with the beginning of compulsory education⁹ (= 6 years of age).

The authority imposes no minimum or maximum number of pupils per class. Schools decide how they divide the pupils into groups. Most elementary schools work a year system, although other arrangements are also possible. In many cases, every class has its own teacher.

Even though nursery education is not compulsory, almost all children in Flanders attend nursery education. The fact that many children can go to school relatively early compared with some other countries is of great benefit to children from underprivileged backgrounds. Nursery education provides an all-round education for children and helps them in their development towards reaching maturity for primary school. Children acquire skills (such as language skills, motor development, social skills, etc.) and learn about the world around them. Primary education builds on this further. The developmental targets for mainstream nursery education have been in force since 1 September 1998. Mainstream primary education teaches the same areas of learning as mainstream nursery education, also interlinked where possible. However, mathematical orientation is replaced by Maths. Other aspects are also addressed, such as study skills and social skills. The final attainment levels for mainstream primary education have been in force since 1 September 1998.

There is mainstream and special elementary education. Special education is for children who temporarily or permanently need specific help. This could be because of a physical or mental disability, because of severe behavioural or emotional problems or because of severe learning difficulties. Special primary education usually lasts seven years. Integrated elementary education is a collaborative partnership between mainstream elementary education and special education. Integrated elementary education enables children with a disability or with learning or developmental difficulties to attend lessons and take part in activities in a mainstream school, with special input from special education. This arrangement can be temporary or permanent and for some or all of the pupil's lessons. Special elementary education is subject to developmental targets.

At the end of elementary education, pupils who have achieved the targets of the curriculum satisfactorily receive a certificate of elementary education. Children in special elementary education can in some cases also gain a certificate that has the same value as that awarded in mainstream elementary education.

⁸ This section is based on the Ministry of the Flemish Community (2005). Education in Flanders The Flemish educational landscape in a nutshell. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Information and Documentation, Education.

⁹ A child becomes of compulsory education age in the year it turns six. Compulsory education lasts twelve academic years. It ends on 30 June of the calendar year in which the pupil turns 18 or on his/her 18th birthday. If a pupil gains his/her secondary education certificate at a younger age (at sixteen for instance), compulsory education finishes at that time.

2.1.5 Secondary education¹⁰

Secondary education is for youngsters aged between 12 and 18. In secondary education all schools are basically co-educational since no school may refuse a pupil on the basis of his/her gender. Full-time secondary education has been organized according to the unified structure since 1989. The unified structure includes all the different stages (i.e. year-groups), education types and study pathways. The definitive choice of pathway is postponed until the second stage to allow pupils to experience as many subjects as possible first. The majority of lesson periods in the first stage are devoted to the basic curriculum.

There are four different education types from the second stage onwards. The pupil chooses a specific study pathway within one these education types. The four education types are as follows:

- General secondary education (*ASO*) provides a general education that gives a sound basis for higher education;
- Technical secondary education (*TSO*) focuses mainly on general and theoretical technical subjects. *TSO* leads students either into higher education or into the job market;
- Secondary education in the Arts (*KSO*) combines a broad general education with practical art study. *KSO* leads students either into higher education or into the job market;
- Vocational secondary education (*BSO*) provides practical education in which pupils learn a specific trade besides a general education.

The second and third stages comprise a common and an optional curriculum. In the optional curriculum, the basic curriculum is supplemented with a wide range of study options. In the third stage the curriculum can be further refined in line with the pupil's final career-path choice or study plans in higher education.

In the fourth stage, which comprises mainly nursing training, no basic curriculum is imposed because the training is so specific.

A pupil is awarded the certificate of secondary education once he/she has successfully completed six years of *ASO*, *TSO*, or *KSO*, or seven years of *BSO*. The secondary education certificate, from any school, education type or study pathway, gives students unrestricted access to higher education.

Youngsters whose physical, psychological, social or intellectual development is hampered by a disability or learning or developmental difficulties are provided for in special education. These youngsters need temporary or permanent special help and specially adapted teaching. The aim is to integrate the pupil into the educational environment and society through educational and teaching provision adapted to individual needs. The year-system in special secondary education (*BuSO*) is rarely the same as in mainstream secondary education. In *BuSO* a pupil usually only moves up to the next 'learning phase' once he/she is ready for it. Integrated education (*GON*) allows youngsters with a disability to attend a mainstream secondary school. *GON* provides such children with expert help from within special education.

From the age of 15 or 16, a pupil can move to part-time education by attending part-time vocational education (*DBSO*). They can also attend the education programmes provided by the VIZO-Syntra network or another recognized part-time education programme.

¹⁰ This section is based on the Ministry of the Flemish Community (2005). Education in Flanders The Flemish educational landscape in a nutshell. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Information and Documentation, Education.

2.1.6 School communities¹¹

School communities are voluntary collaborative partnerships between schools¹². They were introduced in secondary education in 1981 and were updated in the 1999-2000 academic year. Elementary education followed suit in the 2003-2004 academic year. The government lays down clear criteria for the formation of school communities. Their powers and benefits are also clearly described¹³.

2.1.6.1 Criteria

In elementary education, a school community always consists of several schools which belong to either the same or different school boards and/or education networks. In secondary education, a school community always consists of one school or a group of schools which belong to either the same or different school boards and/or education networks. There are 44 geographical education areas, which are the same for elementary and secondary education. There is also a quota system which determines the maximum number of school communities per education network for both elementary and secondary education. Cross-network school communities are included in the quota of the education network to which most of the schools within the school community belong.

A co-ordinating director ensures that the school community operates smoothly in secondary education. In elementary education, the school communities can decide autonomously to make available resources for a co-ordinating director.

In elementary as in secondary education, a school community must have 900 pupils on the first school day in February prior to the date the school community begins to operate.

2.1.6.2 Powers

A school community within elementary education can have decision-making powers for specific matters. The school board or school boards to which the school within the community belongs decides whether it transfers powers to the school community or not. This decision is included in the agreement. If the decision is made to transfer powers, the school board/boards may continue to monitor the school community. If no powers are being transferred, the school community reaches agreements regarding these powers and these agreements are then submitted to the school board/boards. A decision is made only once an agreement has been reached. The powers that can be transferred are:

- the use of resources¹⁴ as a stimulus within the school community
- the use of a staffing points system for care, ICT and administration, which can be combined at a school community level
- the way in which ICT staff are used within the school community
- the way in which the special education school makes available its expertise
- the formation of collaborative partnerships with elementary schools that are not part of the school community

¹¹ This section is based on the secondary education school communities circular (*Omzendbrief Scholengemeenschappen secundair onderwijs*) (30/04/99) and the elementary education school communities circular (*Omzendbrief Scholengemeenschappen basisonderwijs*) (30/06/05).

¹² School communities should not be confused with the school groups within community education described earlier (see 2.1.2.1).

¹³ The Decree of 14 July 1998 regarding secondary education provides the legal framework for school communities in secondary education. The Decree regarding elementary education and the Flemish Government order regarding the points system for elementary education school communities provide the legal framework for school communities within elementary education.

¹⁴ The school communities are allocated resources in support of their operation. These resources for staffing are calculated on the basis of the number of pupils within the school community (see: Flemish Government order regarding the points system for elementary school communities, 11.06.04).

- the inclusion of additional schools within the school community.

There are also powers that cannot be transferred to the school community. The school community does conclude agreements about these issues and submits these to the school board/boards of the schools that are part of the school community. These powers are:

- transfer of lesson periods and times
- transfer of resources to other school communities
- pursuing a care policy
- infrastructure
- staffing policy.

The powers of secondary education school communities have been expressly laid down by decree:

- concluding agreements regarding the organization of rational education provision
- concluding agreements regarding objective pupil orientation and support
- concluding agreements regarding the staffing policy in place: criteria for appointing staff, for the overall functioning of staff and for assessing staff
- concluding agreements/making decisions regarding the distribution of extra teacher hours within its establishments
- concluding agreements regarding the determination of the criteria and the use of weekly teacher hours that can be combined at a school community level
- concluding agreements regarding the distribution of resources for support staff for its establishments
- concluding agreements regarding the use of resources for ICT co-ordination
- making recommendations about investment in school buildings and infrastructure, with the school board using the investment resources of Community Education or the education infrastructure agency *Agentschap voor Infrastructuur in het Onderwijs (AGION)* (for the other networks)
- entering into collaborative partnerships with one or several other schools than those that belong to the school community.

2.1.6.3 Benefits

In both elementary and secondary education, incentives are given in order to promote school communities. In elementary education the incentive is a staffing points system. The number of points is determined by the number of pupils the school community has on the first school day in February of the previous school year. For secondary education the benefits are greater:

- favourable rationalization standards
- transfer of teacher hours in full-time secondary education
- extra teacher hours for schools in Brussels
- extra teacher hours for school communities
- favourable calculation standards for support staff
- adding up of 'residual' hours
- provision of non-organic staff training
- wider availability of a staff member
- maximum use of facilities

2.1.6.4 Number of school communities¹⁵

In the 2006-2007 academic year, there were 367 school communities within elementary education. These were distributed across the networks as follows: 35 in community education, 88 in subsidized public-sector education and 236 in grant-aided private education. Eight school communities within elementary education are cross-network communities.

¹⁵ Figures published by the Education Department.

In secondary education there were 118 school communities in the 2006-2007 academic year, 25 are school communities in community education, 7 in subsidized public-sector education and 72 in grant-aided private education. The other 14 school communities are cross-network communities.

2.1.7 Number of schools and school population¹⁶

All figures are for the 2005-2006 academic year.

2.1.7.1 Elementary education

There were 1,959 elementary schools providing nursery and primary education in mainstream elementary education in Flanders. In that same academic year there were 168 autonomous nursery schools and 187 autonomous primary schools in mainstream education. Special elementary education had 91 elementary schools providing nursery and primary education and 100 autonomous primary schools. We found no autonomous nursery schools (see table 2.1). There were a total of 650,256 pupils attending elementary education, 234,530 nursery children and 415,726 primary pupils.

There were 232,709 children in mainstream nursery education. Of those nursery children, 147,480 (around 63 %) attended grant-aided private education, 52,823 (just over 23%) attended subsidized public-sector education and 32,406 (around 14%) community education. There were 388, 973 children in mainstream primary education. The distribution of pupils across the education networks is as follows: 248,114 pupils attended mainstream primary education in grant-aided private education. That is just less than 64%. 87,337 (around 22.5%) attended subsidized public-sector education and 53,522 (just under 14%) community education (see table 2.2).

There were 1,821 in special nursery education, 1,136 (62%) of which attended lessons in grant-aided private education, 537 (just under 30%) in community education and 148 (around 8%) in subsidized public-sector education. 26,753 children attended special primary education. Of these, 16,565 (62%) attended grant-aided private education. 5,910 children (22%) attended community education and 4,278 children (16%) opted for subsidized public-sector education (see table 2.2).

2.1.7.2 Secondary education

There were 927 schools providing full-time secondary education in Flanders in mainstream secondary education and 47 centres for part-time secondary education. These centres are always linked to a school providing full-time secondary education. There were 110 schools providing full-time education in special secondary education (see table 2.3). A total of 457,351 pupils attended full-time secondary education. In part-time secondary education, 6,450 pupils attended school.

There were 439,550 pupils in mainstream full-time secondary education. Of those pupils, 332,601, or just under 76%, attended grant-aided private education. 72,323 pupils (around 16.5%) opted for community education. The remaining 34,626 pupils (just under 8%) attended school in subsidized public-sector education (see table 2.4).

There were 17,801 pupils attending special secondary education. 11,491 pupils attended grant-aided private education, i.e. around 65%. 3,988 pupils (22%) attended community education and 2,322 (13%) subsidized public-sector education (see table 2.4).

¹⁶ All the figures are taken from: Ministry of the Flemish Community (2006). *Vlaams onderwijs in cijfers: 2005-2006*. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

2.1.8 Education funding¹⁷

The Community funds the schools within community education and subsidizes the schools in subsidized and grant-aided education. In addition to the specific conditions for receiving funds to cover salaries, operation, buildings and equipment, there are two other types of conditions that must be met to receive funding. First there are the general conditions of recognition of schools, such as the guarantee that the school buildings meet health and safety standards, the responsibility of the school board for the organization of education, drawing up curricula, accepting inspections, the structural organization of education in accordance with education legislation, respect for language legislation within education, etc. The government officially recognizes a school on the basis of the advice of the inspectorate. Secondly, there are a number of specific conditions related to pupil numbers. In primary education, the programming standards refer to the number of pupils that 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 rationalization standards that 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 rationalization standards for secondary education.

The national and Community authorities fund education to a large extent, as we have seen earlier. Besides that funding, there is also sometimes another network-specific source of funding: the provinces and municipalities in subsidized public-sector education and the Church and private individuals in grant-aided private education. And finally parents also contribute to their children's education.

2.1.8.1 Staff

All headteachers, members of the teaching and paramedic staff in primary and secondary education are paid directly by the Communities, irrespective of the education network. The staff salaries are paid by the Communities, provided staff members comply with conditions laid down by law, provided they observe certain regulations (e.g., qualifications, physical condition, command of the official language) and provided their appointments are possible under the subsidy standards. On the basis of these standards every school is allocated a certain number of hours (for elementary and special education), or a number of teacher hours (secondary education), depending on the number of pupils, and these can be used and distributed as needed among the different levels (i.e. year-groups), education types, study pathways, etc. The restrictions are the same for all levels, regardless of whether the education is organized or subsidized by the Community. Staff salaries are based on qualifications and seniority.

2.1.8.2 Operation and equipment

When it comes to operating and equipment costs, community schools are subject to a different regulation than subsidized and grant-aided schools. The Decree of 25 February 1997 stipulates that the level of operating funds for every pupil in subsidized and grant-aided elementary education must be between 75.8% and 76.2% of the sum of operating funds for every pupil in community education. This difference can be explained by a number of 'objective differences', which include the choice that has to be provided in community education between religion and ethics, a larger number of pupils with a socio-cultural background that hampers a successful school career, differences in infrastructure and the consequences of past decision-making processes.

¹⁷ This section is based on Devos, G. & Vanderheyden, K. (2002). Attracting, developing and retaining teachers. Thematic Review – OECD: background report Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

A similar situation occurs in secondary education. The Decree of 14 July 1998 stipulates that in 2007, the operating funds for every pupil in grant-aided private secondary education in 2007 must be 76% of the operating funds for every pupil in secondary community education.

As regards school buildings, subsidized public-sector and grant-aided private education receive subsidies of up to 60% of their investment (70% for elementary education). The municipalities and community investment fund *Investeringsfonds van de Gemeenten en de Gemeenschap* is responsible for the non-subsidized aspects of subsidized public-sector education. In grant-aided private education the Community must guarantee the loans that cover the non-subsidized part. Within community education, the Council for Community Education is responsible for defining the rules regarding the distribution of funds between the school groups. The school groups themselves are responsible for the financial management and the management of equipment of the schools that belong to the group. A board of accountants, appointed by the Flemish Government, controls the financial policy of the school groups. This board also supervises the financial policy of the Council for Community Education. In subsidized public-sector 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 Flemish Government (as regards the provincial budget). Schools in grant-aided private education are monitored by the Education Department auditing body in relation to the way they use their funding.

In 2006 an average of 3,881.52 euros was spent per pupil in mainstream elementary education. This amount is higher in community education (4,294.18 euros) than in grant-aided private education (3,788.53 euros) or subsidized public-sector education (3,890.27 euros). In mainstream secondary education an average of 7,157.19 euros was spent per pupil in 2006 (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2006). The funding per pupil in elementary education is therefore considerably less than the funding per pupil in secondary education.

2.2 Staff¹⁸

2.2.1 Management and teaching staff

The term management staff includes headteachers, deputy headteachers, vocational training co-ordinators and senior vocational training co-ordinators. Teaching staff are those who teach.

There were 53,910 management and teaching staff in mainstream elementary education in 2004-2005. In the 2004-2005 academic year, there were 13,848 temporary management and teaching staff in mainstream elementary education. In that same academic year in special elementary education there were 6,058 management and teaching staff, of which 1,601 were temporary.

Mainstream secondary education had 62,080 management and teaching staff; 16,140 of them were temporary. In special secondary education there were 5,434 management and teaching staff, of which 1,564 were temporary.

2.2.1.1 Gender

There are more female management and teaching staff. Particularly in mainstream and special elementary education there is an imbalance: around 82% of staff in mainstream elementary education are women, in special elementary education 80% are women. In secondary education the ratio is

¹⁸ Staff here means physical persons. These physical persons are registered in the education network and stage where most of their work is carried out. Brief replacements are also taken into account. All figures are taken from the Flemish education statistical yearbook, 2004-2005 academic year (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2005d). The figures for the 2005-2006 academic year are not available yet.

different: 58% of staff are women in mainstream secondary education. In special secondary education 56% are women.

2.2.1.2 Age

Figures for all the levels for the 2004-2005 academic year show that 30% of all staff are over 50 years of age. Ageing of the education staff is therefore still an issue, although over the past five academic years there has been an increase in the number of staff under 30 years of age: from 12% in the 2000-2001 academic year to 18% in 2004-2005.

2.2.1.3 Part-time work

In Flanders, around 1 in 3 teachers works part-time.

2.2.2 Other staff categories

These categories are made up of administrative staff, manual workers in community education, paramedic staff, *CLB* staff, inspectors, educational support staff and boarding school staff.

In mainstream elementary education there is a strong increase in the number of staff in staff categories other than the management and teaching staff categories: 5,510 in the 2004-2005 academic year. In 2000-2001 there were 963 staff in other staff categories in mainstream elementary education. This increase could be explained by the recently introduced posts of ICT and care co-ordinator and child-care worker in nursery education. Furthermore, the administrative staff in community education elementary schools were no longer contractual staff and became statutory staff, which meant they were included in the Department records. The points system for staffing for school communities in elementary education may also have led to an increase in staff numbers.

In mainstream secondary education this increase is less marked: from 6,314 in the 2000-2001 academic year to 8,015 in 2004-2005.

2.3 Teacher unions

The government is obliged under the provisions of the act of 1974 regarding unions to conduct negotiations with representative unions before implementing any measure that has repercussions on staff¹⁹. Unions are representative when they represent at least 10% of employers for the competent education committee 10. These unions hold seats in government and school board consultative and negotiation bodies at every level. The impact of these negotiations should not be underestimated. If unions are very negative about a proposal, it is usually not implemented (Devos & Vanderheyden, 2002).

There are four teacher unions in Flanders:

- *Christelijk Onderwijsverbond* (COV): this Christian union protects the interests of staff in grant-aided private education and subsidized public-sector education elementary schools.
- *Christelijke Onderwijscentrale* (COC): this Christian union protects the interests of staff in secondary education, special education, higher education, arts education, continuing education and the *CLB* sector²⁰ in community, subsidized public-sector and grant-aided private education. Community education elementary school staff can also join this union.

¹⁹ Examples of such measures include the determination of annual staffing levels in all stages and changes to the teachers' performance assessment system.

²⁰ CLB is short for *Centrum voor Leerlingenbegeleiding*, pupil support centre.

- *Algemene Centrale der Openbare Diensten – sector Onderwijs* (ACOD Onderwijs): caters for staff from all levels and *CLB* staff in community education and subsidized and grant-aided education.
- *Vrij syndicaat voor het openbaar Ambt – sector Onderwijs* (VSOA – Onderwijs): represents staff of all education establishments.

These four unions are part of the three large general trade unions. The COC and COV are part of the general Christian trade union *Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond* (ACV). *ACOD Onderwijs* is part of the socialist union *Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond* (ABVV). And finally *VSOA- Onderwijs* is part of the liberal union *Algemene Centrale der Liberale Vakverbonden* (Devos & Vanderheyden, 2002).

Teacher unions protect the interests of all education staff. This is obviously mainly teachers. There are no separate unions that protect the interests of headteachers. Only the COC and COV have a separate group for headteachers. In the case of the COC this is a section that is responsible for the specific staff problems of headteachers. The COV has a committee that provides support and follow-up for school managements and occasionally organizes training for them.

2.4 Headteachers associations and consultative bodies

Besides the unions there are separate headteachers associations and consultative bodies. They are organized by network and often also by level. However, these associations and consultative bodies are not represented at government negotiations with the representative unions regarding important staffing measures (see 2.3).

The different headteachers associations and consultative bodies are:

- Atheneum: association for headteachers and deputy headteachers in public-sector education in community education
- BAND: managements of technical colleges within the Antwerp diocese
- BIGO: for boarding schools in community education
- *Coördinatorenvereniging Steiner-basisscholen*: Steiner elementary schools
- CORA: community education
- DCBaO: elementary education (VVKBaO)
- municipal education
- DIRGO: community education
- DIVO: private education (secondary)
- ODVB: Flemish elementary education
- StAM: authentic middle schools
- *Vereniging directies provinciaal onderwijs*: provincial education
- VIGOM: middle schools (community education)
- VIRBO: elementary schools (community education)
- DCB: special elementary education
- DCS: special secondary education
- DIBUO: special elementary education (community education)
- VEDIBUSO: special secondary education (community education)
- CODIS: VVKSO secondary education
- DIRVIGO: adult education in community education
- RADI: *CLB* (community education)
- D'gas: community academies
- NODB: cross-network consultative platform within elementary education

2.5 Valuing education

2.5.1 Valuing teachers²¹

In a recent survey (Aelterman et al., 2002) into the value placed on teachers working in elementary and secondary education by society as a whole, the respondents were asked about their own experience at school and about children's satisfaction with their teachers. The results show that the Flemish people value teachers highly. The level of satisfaction with teachers in elementary education is slightly higher than that with teachers in secondary education.

However, the results also show that a number of background characteristics affect the respondents' answers. People who had a good experience of school themselves (enjoyed going to school or did not) and who have had positive experiences of their children's teachers value teachers more highly and are more satisfied with the teachers. People who are more deeply involved in education (for instance, people working in education, people who have done voluntary work in a school or people who have relatives, friends or acquaintances who work in education), also value teachers more highly (this applies particularly to teachers in secondary education; the link is less obvious for primary education). Furthermore, people who are strongly individualistic value teachers less highly; a strong individualistic character implies a general tendency to focus on your own personal interests and individual success.

Therefore, people as individuals value teachers highly. Society as a whole however, values teachers less highly (this negative image of the profession is therefore maintained artificially). 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. The respondents were also asked about how the way society values teachers has evolved. Their perception is that society has valued teachers in elementary and secondary education slightly less over the years.

2.5.2 Valuing headteachers

Vandenberghe et al. (2003) questioned newly-appointed headteachers in elementary education about their positive experiences as headteacher. These elementary school headteachers say that they are valued, understood and supported by teachers (54%) and parents (38%). Examples given by headteachers include: the teachers valuing the headteacher's efforts, credit given to the headteacher by his/her teachers and acceptance felt by the headteacher from the parents. It is important to note, however, that the same survey shows that the newly-appointed elementary school headteachers' negative experiences mirror their positive experiences. Indeed 30% of headteachers mentioned conflicts with individual or a small group of teachers, whereas 23% mentioned similar problems with parents.

²¹ This section is based on Devos, G. & Vanderheyden, K. (2002). Attracting, developing and retaining teachers. Thematic Review – OECD: background report Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL POLICY AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the responsibilities of the headteacher and the division of power for school policy. The first section explains the work of the headteacher within Flemish education in greater depth. The second section describes the different administrative bodies within elementary education and secondary education, including an explanation of the relationship between the management and the principal administrative body, i.e. the school board. Besides administrative bodies there are also consultative bodies within the schools, which are explained in section 3. Section 4 describes the co-operation between schools and between schools and other partners. Section 5 looks at the challenges facing headteachers in respect of school policy. Sections 6 and 7 explain the relevant research and recent reforms respectively.

3.2 The term ‘headteacher’

There is no comprehensive statutory description of the post of headteacher in Flanders. A brief description of the post of headteacher is given in the Flemish Government Decree regarding the duties of staff in elementary education (11.09.97) in relation to elementary education. This states that the headteacher is in charge of the school under the supervision of the school board and that he/she must be at one of the sites for at least the whole time pupils are at school, unless he/she has a justified reason for being absent. The deputy-head carries out the tasks allocated to him/her by the school board at the suggestion of the headteacher.

It is important to point out here that the school boards in both elementary and in secondary education are responsible for determining the responsibilities of the headteacher. The autonomy of the school boards fits in with the concept of freedom of education (see 2.1.1). It is only within community education that the headteacher’s responsibilities are laid down by law²². These powers are:

- overall and educational organization of the school
- the school’s work plan
- drawing up school regulations
- determining the areas of competence of the staff
- drawing up the job descriptions of the staff
- support and assessment of staff
- formulating proposals for permanent appointments for staff
- temporary appointment of staff for the schools
- implementing reform projects
- determining the teaching staff’s in-service training needs
- order and discipline measures for the pupils
- applying the entry requirements in education for continuing education
- organizing extra-curricular activities within and outside the school
- implementing the school budget as approved by the school group
- external relations of the school
- maintenance work and guardianship of the school infrastructure and implementation of minor infrastructure work.

Apart from this provision for community education, there are models of job descriptions made available by the Ministry of Education and Training for headteachers in both elementary and secondary education. These models are merely examples, however, and school boards are under no obligation to adopt them. There are a few secondary schools that are currently obliged to have a job description for their staff members who have been appointed for more than 104 days. The function of

²² See the Special Decree regarding community education published in the Belgian law gazette on 30.09.98.

headteacher is described in the models for both elementary and secondary education as the translation of the school's educational project into specific concrete objectives and on the basis of these, to organize, co-ordinate and adapt the school's activities with the aim of realizing the intended results. The education networks have also made available models of job descriptions for their schools.

The Education Department's job description models for both headteachers in mainstream and special elementary education and headteachers in secondary education list the following as headteachers' responsibilities:

- help develop and/or implement the educational project of the school
- monitor the quality of the teaching provision and the education of the children/pupils
- in consultation with those involved, planning, organizing, co-ordinating and adapting the school's activities
- leading and supporting the staff
- making time to maintain contact with the children/pupils
- formulating, implementing and auditing the budget
- taking responsibility for timely and correct processing of documents, staff administration and pupil administration
- ensuring good communication and collaboration with parents
- ensuring good communication and/or collaboration with various bodies involved with the school
- fulfilling his/her own teaching commitments
- ensuring his/her own in-service training.

The models also comprise a competency profile, with a description of skills such as teaching skills and knowledge of child developmental psychology, and other competencies such as involvement in the school, aptitude for working with children, team player, etc.

3.3 Governing bodies of Flemish schools

3.3.1 School boards²³

Schools answer to school boards, which can be either legal persons or natural persons. The Community, province, municipality, federation of municipalities and social services can act as school boards. Schools that answer to these school boards are public-sector schools.

A natural person, a group of natural persons or a not-for-profit organization can also act as the school board of a school. Schools that are organized by such school boards are private schools.

3.3.1.1 Community education

The aim of the Special Decree regarding community education (14.07.98) was to optimize the way community education works. The management of these schools was divided into three levels: local, middle and central level.

The local level are the schools. The central figure in the school is the headteacher. He/she has an advisory function within the school council. This school council is organized at a school level and comprises 8 members: 3 members directly elected by and from among the parents, 3 members directly elected by and from among the staff, and 2 members co-opted from social, economic and cultural milieus. This council has advisory and consultative powers and information rights on decisions that affect school life. In other words they do not have any decision-making powers.

²³ This section is based on Devos, G.; Verhoeven, J.; Beuselinck, I.; Van den Broeck, H. & Vandenberghe, R. (1999). *De rol van schoolbesturen in het schoolmanagement*. Leuven/Apeldoorn: Garant, and on the Special Decree regarding community education (30.09.98).

The medial level are the school groups. They act as the school board of schools in community education. Each school group is governed by a general assembly, a board of governors, and a general director. The board of headteachers prepares policies and implements them. The general assembly is made up of 2 representatives from each school council: 1 representative appointed by and from among the parents and co-opted members of the school council and 1 representative appointed by and from among the staff who sit on the school council. The general assembly approves the budget, the accounts and the appointment of the general director of the school group. The board of governors is made up of 10 members: 6 elected by the members of the school councils, 3 co-opted by the directly-elected members and a general director with a consultative role. The post of general director is taken up by one of the headteachers of the school group. He has decision-making and management powers in the school group and is therefore responsible for the day-to-day management of the school group. He also chairs the board of headteachers. This board is made up of all the headteachers of the schools and *CLB* centres (see 4.2.2). They all have the right to vote.

The central level is responsible for monitoring the statutory guarantees, such as free choice and overall quality assurance. The Flemish Community Education Board is responsible for general policy. This board is made up of 15 unpaid mandataries: 5 members elected by an election body made up of the directly-elected parents and co-opted members of the school councils, 5 members elected by an election body, consisting of the headteachers and the members of the school councils elected by the staff, 3 members appointed by the 3 Flemish universities with an education faculty and 2 members jointly appointed by the Flemish autonomous colleges of higher education. The mandated administrator is responsible for the day-to-day management and policy on behalf of the board. The managing director has an advisory function within the community education board.

3.3.1.2 Subsidized public-sector education

The provincial schools have the provincial council as a school board. The permanent deputation, with one deputy in charge of education is responsible for the day-to-day management. The municipal and city schools have the municipal council as a school board. The municipal executive or city council is responsible for the implementation of decisions, with one councillor responsible for education.

3.3.1.3 Grant-aided private education

A natural person, a group of natural persons or a not-for-profit organization act as the school board of private schools. The Ministry of Education and Training must be notified of the identity of the school boards. One school board can control several schools.

3.3.2 Elementary education²⁴

3.3.2.1 School boards in elementary education

The school board is the legal person or natural person responsible for one or several schools. Please refer to sections 2.1.2.1 and 3.3.1.1 for the powers of the school board in community education, where a more detailed description is given²⁵.

The school board freely determines the organization of its nursery and primary schools; which must be laid down in the school's work plan. This work plan comprises a description of the school's educational project, the organization of the school, the assessment method for the pupils' learning process and the way in which the care policy is implemented, among other things.

²⁴ This section is based on the elementary education Decree (17.04.97).

²⁵ It is worthy of note that the term 'school board' in community education must be understood firstly, as in the Constitution and secondly as in the elementary education Decree (25.02.97) and finally as in the Special Decree regarding community education (14.07.98).

The school board also has to draw up the school regulations, which regulate the relationship between the school board and the parents and pupils. These regulations comprise a list of contributions that can be asked of the parents, the order and discipline rules, the procedure for awarding elementary school certificates, arrangements related to homework, school diaries, reports and absence, among other things. The parents must be given written notification of the school regulations before they enrol their child. Every school board can suspend or exclude a pupil from its school.

The school board also determines the content of elementary education and the educational and teaching methods used. However, the board must take into account the developmental targets and final attainment levels as laid down by the Flemish Government. The school board must describe its own educational project in the curriculum. In special education, action plans must be drawn up for one or several pupils. These specify the choice of content and the educational and teaching plans for the pupil/pupils.

The school board is financially responsible for the organization of education in its schools. It receives funding provided for by the Ministry of Education and Training. These include an operation budget and the investment funding. The school board acts as the employer of the school staff. In other words, it decides staff appointments and dismissals.

3.3.2.2 Leadership in an elementary school

Every elementary school receives funding for the post of headteacher. In small schools²⁶ the headteacher receives an educational responsibility (see 4.3.1). A school created through a voluntary merger also receives funding for a post of deputy-head if the school has a sufficient number of pupils and if the headteacher and deputy-head hold permanent appointments as heads in one of the merged schools at the time of the merger.

An elementary school also receives funding for policy and support staff. The amount of funding a school is entitled to is calculated according to the number of pupils in it. The staffing points can be used to support and co-ordinate the care policy in mainstream education, and for ICT co-ordination and administrative support in mainstream and special education. This enables a school to appoint a care co-ordinator, an ICT co-ordinator and administrative staff.

Since 1 September 2001, the system of special educational tasks (*Bijzondere Pedagogische Taken*), BPT, has been in place in elementary education²⁷. These hours have been introduced with the aim of optimizing the organization of education and teaching. They can be used for non-pupil-related educational activities, e.g. ICT support or the introduction of a new reading method. A maximum of 3% of allocated lesson periods and hours at a school level can be set aside for special educational tasks.

3.3.3 Secondary education

3.3.3.1 School boards in secondary education²⁸

The school board is the legal person or natural person responsible for one or several schools. The members of a school board are responsible for ensuring that the school functions smoothly.

The school board must draw up a set of school regulations for each of its schools. School boards in subsidized and grant-aided education must consult the school councils (see 3.3.1) regarding the

²⁶ These are schools with fewer than 180 pupils.

²⁷ See the circular (15.06.2001) regarding specific measures commencing 1-9-2001 for the organization of special educational tasks in elementary education.

²⁸ This section is based on the circular regarding the structure and organization of full-time secondary education (25.06.99).

formulation and amendment of the school regulations. The school regulations comprise the following components at least: academic regulations, order regulations and discipline regulations. The academic regulations comprise the key elements of the academic organization. The order regulations comprise a description of the requirements regarding order as laid down by the school board. They include the measures that can be taken if a pupil does not meet those requirements. Order-related measures can be taken against the pupils by all staff members of the school who have been given a mandate to do so by the school board. The discipline regulations comprise the disciplinary measures, such as suspension and exclusion. Disciplinary measures may only be taken by the headteacher, the representative of the school board or the school board itself. The school board must give written notification of the school regulations to the pupil and his/her parents prior to the pupil's first enrolment. This must be signed as read and agreed at enrolment.

The school board enjoys guaranteed educational freedom. This means that the board itself draws up an educational project for a school. This document too must be provided to the pupil and his/her parents prior to enrolment and must be signed as read and agreed at the time of enrolment. The school board also enjoys the freedom to determine the educational concept and the educational methods. The timetables, curricula and assessment criteria are also determined by the school board, although these must take into account the final attainment levels/developmental targets.

The school board receives the operating resources for a school allocated by the Ministry of Education and Training. It appoints the school management and teachers of a school.

3.3.3.2 *Leadership in a secondary school*²⁹

Every school with at least 83 pupils receives resources for the post of headteacher. If the school has fewer pupils, the headteacher can take on teaching duties. For a secondary school to be entitled to a deputy-head, it must have at least 600 pupils. However, only 550 pupils are needed for a school to be able to retain its deputy-head. An additional deputy-head can be acquired for every additional 600 pupils. The deputy-head acts as a direct colleague of the headteacher.

In full-time technical and vocational secondary education, a school can receive support from a senior vocational training co-ordinator and a vocational training co-ordinator. The number of hours of practical subjects is taken into account when determining the number of senior vocational training co-ordinator and vocational training co-ordinator appointments. A maximum of one senior vocational training co-ordinator appointment can be made per school. This post exists mainly in large schools. The number of vocational training co-ordinators per school is in fact unlimited. The senior vocational training co-ordinator and the vocational training co-ordinator both have a co-ordinating function. The job description model for senior vocational training co-ordinator and vocational training co-ordinator describes the purpose of the posts as: co-ordinating and following up all activities related to material and educational aspects of technical, vocational and practical subjects. The fact that the post of senior vocational training co-ordinator and vocational training co-ordinator can vary from one school to another is also pointed out. The reasons for this are on the one hand the specialist practical study pathways offered by the school (e.g. carpentry and construction compared with beauty therapy) and on the other the way the school itself develops the post.

A specific regulation regarding special educational tasks (*BPT*) allows some teachers to fulfil part of their duties in a different way. Secondary schools are allocated a number of weekly teacher hours, which they use for the teachers' duties. The schools therefore have an overall package of teacher hours depending on the number of pupils they have. This package of teacher hours may be used for:

²⁹ This section is based on the circular related to the posts of headteacher and deputy-head (31.07.98), the circular regarding the posts of senior vocational training co-ordinator and vocational training co-ordinator (31.07.98), the circular regarding the structure and organization of full-time secondary education (25.06.99), the circular of 31 July 1998 with the Flemish Government order of 31 July 1990 for the determination of the 'teacher hours' package in full-time secondary education.

- teaching periods
- hours that are not teaching periods, i.e.: internal educational support (BSO), special educational tasks (ASO, TSO), additional training, extra tuition, class committee, class management.

A maximum of 3% of the overall teacher hour package can be set aside for special educational tasks. BPT hours can be used for instance for the co-ordination between the stages and pupil support.

All previously mentioned posts (senior vocational training co-ordinator, vocational training co-ordinator, internal educational support, stage co-ordinators, etc.) are part of a school's middle management. The middle management can play a part in the school's policy implementation.

As mentioned earlier, the government does not specify the bulk of headteacher's duties. This is mainly the job of the school boards. One of the few headteacher's tasks the government does explicitly specify is his/her responsibility for the functioning of the class committee.

The class committee is the central assessment body within a secondary school. It is responsible for the teaching of a specific group of pupils, the assessment of their progress at school, the decision regarding every pupil's move up to the next year, and the awarding of certificates. There are three types of class committee: the admissions class committee, the support class committee and the deliberating class committee. The headteacher is a member of all three class committees. His responsibilities are clearly laid down by decree.

The admissions class committee in some cases decides whether to admit a pupil to an education type, subdivision or year group. The headteacher is qualified to vote in this committee. The support class committee is responsible for the training and progress assessment of a specific group of pupils (except for the final end-of-year assessment that precedes the authentication of study). The headteacher or his/her representative chairs the support class committee. The deliberating class committee has to decide, once at the end of the school year for every pupil, whether he/she has passed his/her entire year or not. The headteacher or his/her representative also chairs this class committee.

3.3.4 The relationship between the school board and the school management

The study conducted by Devos et al. (1999) shows that the post of headteacher and his/her authority can vary greatly from one school board to another. Headteachers are sometimes members of their school's school board. Some headteachers are even mandated administrator. Other headteachers are not members of the school boards but do have far-reaching delegated powers so they can take many decisions themselves. Whereas the headteacher is given mainly educational and administrative powers by one school board, he/she is put in charge of educational policy and staffing and financial policy by another school board. A lot depends also on the network the school board belongs to.

In subsidized public-sector schools it is almost impossible for the school management to determine the management of the school completely autonomously because by law their school boards have to make the majority of their financial decisions. The headteacher therefore has no financial autonomy.

Given that there is no body monitoring the private school boards and that there are fewer rules obliging private school boards to make decisions, there is a chance that the headteachers of grant-aided private schools are isolated in their leadership position. This should not be generalized, however. The study conducted by Devos et al. (1999) shows that there are also school boards of private schools that are very closely involved in school policy.

In line with this, Devos et al. (1999) found that headteachers preferred not to have full autonomy over school policy. There is a need among headteachers for a school board that shares the responsibility for some decisions and acts as a sounding board for policies. This is corroborated in recent research. Devos et al. (2005) also show that there is a high level of satisfaction among elementary school headteachers regarding the freedom and support they receive from their school board. This includes

professional, instrumental and emotional support. They consider the school board as an effective sounding board for instance where problems and concerns can be shared or they are positive about the material and administrative support they receive from their school board. Whereas some headteachers are very pleased with their school board's professionalism and support, others complain about their school board's amateurism and lack of a sense of responsibility. The study by Devos et al (2005) shows that elementary school headteachers who feel their autonomy is impeded by their school board, also have a low level of satisfaction in general. They say they are given inadequate support and feel that their school board passes too much down to them. The same was found among headteachers in secondary education (Van Petegem et al., 2005).

3.4 Consultative bodies in Flemish schools³⁰

Both in elementary and in secondary education schools must further and support the organization and operation of participatory bodies. According to the legislator, participation increases the effectiveness of schools and guarantees the collaboration of those involved in education in carrying out the schools' teaching and educational duties. This increased participation in school policy has had a strong impact on the position of the headteacher.

3.4.1 The school council

Every school is in principle obliged to set up a school council. However, a number of exceptions are permitted by law: for instance the school boards that have several schools in the same municipality or within a radius of two kilometres. For such schools, one single school council may be set up.

In elementary education, the school council consists of directly elected representatives of the parents, the staff and co-opted members of the local community. In secondary education, directly elected representatives of the pupils also sit on the school council. The headteacher of the school holds an advisory function within the school council.

The members of the school council have general information rights and the right to be heard upon their own request or that of others. They do have to endorse the school's educational project. The school council may make a written recommendation to the school board regarding all matters related to staff, pupils and parents. A recommendation may also be made to the headteacher in writing regarding the general organization and operation of the school. Both the school board and the headteacher must respond within thirty days. The school board is also obliged to ask for recommendations regarding the following:

- drawing up the headteacher's profile
- study programme provision
- initiating collaborative partnerships with other school boards and external bodies
- bus stops and supervision within the transport framework provided by the school board
- deciding in-service training policy
- policy regarding experiments and projects.

The school board must also confer when:

- formulating or amending school regulations, the list of contributions the parents may be asked to make, the school's work plan and the policy plan that regulates the collaboration between the school and the *CLB*
- formulating any decision regarding the yearly plan for extra-curricular activities within and outside the school, certain infrastructure work, and determining the criteria for the implementation of lesson periods, hours, teacher hours and resources, for welfare and

³⁰ The secondary education Decree of 02.04.04 July 05.04.95 provides the legal framework for school communities in secondary education. The elementary education Decree and Flemish Government order regarding the points system for elementary education school communities provide the legal framework for school communities within elementary education.

safety policy, and for the length of pupils' work experience and time it needs to be organized.

3.4.2 The representative advisory board

The school boards of the schools that belong to one school community must set up by agreement a representative advisory board for the school community. This representative advisory board is consulted by the different bodies within the school community about all matters that are of interest to the represented sections. It has, at a minimum, consultative powers over the structuring of a rational provision of education and making arrangements regarding objective pupil orientation and support. There are no decretal provisions regarding the composition of the representative advisory board. There is no obligation for all sections of all school councils to be represented. Obviously an effort must be made to ensure that parents, staff, the local community and pupils (in secondary education) are properly represented. The way the composition of the board is determined is part of an agreement between the different school boards. This agreement must also include who will take up chairmanship.

3.4.3 The educational council

An educational council can be set up in any school when at least 10% of the staff request it. This must be at least 3 members of staff. The educational council is then made up of staff members elected by and among the school staff. This council may ask the representatives of the staff in the school council for information in a document or ask to examine it. It may also make recommendations, if the school council wishes. The recommendations it makes on its own initiative must bear relation to staff issues that are not within the jurisdiction of the school council. The education council must inform all staff members of their activities and viewpoints.

3.4.4 The student council

A student council must in principle be set up in every secondary school. Exceptions to this rule may arise when for instance the students' involvement in school policy is assured in a different way by the school regulations. A student council may be set up in any elementary school. This is obligatory when at least 10% of the eleven to thirteen-year-olds request it.

In secondary education, the student council members are elected by and from among the students. In elementary education the composition of the student council is determined by the school regulations.

If the student council wants information about a document from the school council or wants to examine a document, they must request this through their representatives in the school council. It may also make recommendations upon the request of the school council. Recommendations on its own initiative may only bear relation to matters of interest to the pupils that are not within the jurisdiction of the school council. The student council must keep all students informed of their activities and viewpoints.

3.4.5 The parent council

When at least 10% of parents ask for a parent council to be set up, the school is obliged to do so. The members of the parent council are elected by and from among the parents. The parent council may ask the school council for information in a document or ask to examine it. It may also make recommendations on request of the school council. Recommendations on its own initiative are permitted only if they bear no relation to the powers of the school council and if the matters concerns parents. The parent council has an obligation to provide information to and maintain communication with all parents.

3.4.6 *The local negotiation committee*

Every school board in grant-aided private education must set up a local negotiation committee (*lokaal onderhandelingscomité, LOC*) for all its schools. This committee is made up of an equal number of representatives from the school board and the staff. The headteacher of a nursery, primary or elementary school acts as a permanent advisor to the local committee. In secondary education, the headteacher can sit on the committee as a representative of the school board or as a permanent advisor of the committee. The local committees have information rights, powers of negotiation, supervisory powers and mediation powers. The information rights constitute, at a minimum, the yearly right to information related to employment, the administrative authority and the school, and the school's financial policy. The negotiation powers involve the following: the general principles of the staffing policy, the arrangements regarding staff assessment, etc. The committees also have supervisory powers over the application of social legislation and of social and administrative regulations stemming from education legislation. And finally there are the mediation powers, which enable the committees to mediate in any dispute or disagreement of a collective nature that occurs in the school.

In community education there are also local committees for the staff. The headteacher chairs the local committee.

3.4.7 *The negotiation committee of the school community*

One negotiation committee is set up per school community. Each school has 4 representatives on this committee. The powers of this committee consist of it being able to negotiate about issues over which the school community has jurisdiction.

A base committee is set up per school group within community education and the base committee is chaired by the general director.

3.5 Collaboration between schools³¹

3.5.1 *School communities*

As mentioned earlier (see 2.1.6) schools can enter voluntarily into a collaborative partnership with other schools. This enables them to form school communities. In elementary education, the opportunities for an administrative increase in scale and more efficient management and use of the resources available to individual elementary schools were given as benefits of and a stimulus for forming school communities. These benefits obviously also apply to secondary education, with the added plus-point that school communities make the study programme provision more transparent.

The school community can decide to use the staffing points it receives on the basis of the total number of pupils in the school community to release the school community co-ordinating director from the school and the classroom. His/her duties then consist of fostering the dynamic organizational and policy culture that dovetails with the powers of the school community.

The formation of school communities obviously has implications for the headteachers. Devos et al. (2005) found that the perceptions of elementary school headteachers regarding school communities are varied. Some feel that the school community enables them to see how fellow headteachers tackle problems. They feel less isolated. There were nevertheless a number of negative responses from headteachers regarding school communities: it is very time-consuming and the time spent is disproportionate to the benefits gained, it is an attack on autonomy (particularly in relation to staffing policy), and it is a forced structure that feels artificial. Van Petegem et al. (2005) also found that

³¹ This section is based on the elementary education school communities circular (30.06.05) and the secondary education school communities circular (30.04.99).

schools still have to warm to the added value of school communities. Local circumstances proved to be a determining factor in the relationship between headteachers within a school community. In some schools the school community was shown to have little influence, in others the school community is used as a good system to implement policy. Some areas of policy, such as staffing policy for instance, are developed at a school community level. Schools now collaborate more than before in the acquisition of teaching staff, for instance in setting selection criteria. In such cases the school community is a source of exchange and experience.

3.5.2 The 'broad' school

A broad school is a long-term collaborative initiative between schools and other organizations or partners to promote children's development. Schools decide together with their partners (e.g. sports clubs, child day-care centres, libraries, the police) what form this collaboration should take on the basis of local needs and circumstances. 'Broad' schools are also encouraged from a policy perspective because they work towards providing a broader education. Sports, physical education, the cultural and social development of children and young people are all areas in which the 'broad' school can make a contribution. Of course this will need to be supported by policy measures by removing a number of legal obstacles and funds must be put in place to support the collaboration. Content-related questions also arise, including what educational concept is being aimed at, and who bears ultimate responsibility. In order to answer these questions, examples of good practice are being tracked down and publicized. The minister also plans to set up a support fund to help fledgling 'broad' schools with the extra costs and efforts associated with establishing a 'broad' school. (Vandenbroucke, 2004)

3.5.3 Collaboration with companies

Collaboration with companies and other organizations is an important component for TSO and BSO schools. The aim of this collaboration is to enable schools to fulfil their social duty better. The arguments for encouraging such collaboration include:

- improving the quality of training
- increasing the pupils' competencies
- offering pupils certain insights and attitudes
- promoting the professional development of employees
- improving the school's organization and financial basis
- increase the school's social impact.

This kind of collaboration can also benefit companies: it enables them to appoint better trained graduates, it improves knowledge of the business world, etc. (Van den Berghe, 2006).

One of the most important aspects of this collaboration is work experience. Work experience is a form of training through a process of introduction to and/or supported participation in the activities of part of the work process for which an employee has to perform a number of tasks. Pupils can only do work experience once they have completed the first four years of secondary school. Work experience consists of a minimum of one school week per school year, i.e. one hour per week. The pupil has a work experience tutor at school who is a teacher and a work experience mentor, who gives guidance and support in the workplace³².

Schools often also work with companies and service organizations for the integrated test, in which a balance of professional skills, manual skills, general knowledge and communication skills are tested as befits the pupils' study pathway. BSO pupils sit this test, which gives pupils a reason to learn professional skills in a realistic setting for the entire school year.

There are of course a number of practical aspects involved in any collaborative activity. Contacts have to be established, roles and responsibilities have to be determined, the legal aspects have to be

³² See circular regarding work experience in full-time secondary education (16.09.02).

considered, etc. All of these should of course not be lost sight of in the collaboration. Only then will it be a win-win situation for all parties (Van den Berghe, 2006).

The government also stimulates collaboration between schools and companies. Minister Vandembroucke (2004) for instance has opted for better arrangements and stronger commitments in relation to the number and quality of work experience places.

3.6 Challenges for headteachers

The steering committee made up of stakeholders (headteachers and trade union representatives (see appendix) pinpointed a number of challenges for headteachers.

Firstly they noted that headteachers are increasingly expected to be managers as well. In addition to maintaining contacts with parents, pupils and the immediate environment, they must also continually motivate their team. Minister Vandembroucke's policy document (2004) also focuses on this issue. He points out that leading a school requires a considerable level of competence. He therefore wants to make the post of headteacher more attractive by providing greater opportunities for professional development, appropriate remuneration, more operating resources and a better infrastructure.

A second challenge is the inner-city areas, where the headteacher's task and workload are very different. A good care policy that can eradicate the lack of opportunities is a formidable task in such areas. Minister Vandembroucke's policy document (2004) also points out that the difference between town and country are a challenge for schools. He says that people of ethnic origin in Flanders live mainly in the cities. Given that the number of young people is greater in the immigrant population than in the native population, this would mean in future that the demand for education in the cities will increase more sharply than in the rest of Flanders.

The third challenge is the fulfilment of external requirements. Reforms require input from the headteacher, but also from the rest of the staff. Van Petegem and Devos et al. (2005) state that the headteacher plays an important role in the reform process in a school. He has to motivate his teachers, put forward a clear vision, encourage teachers to get further training, etc. The progress evaluations with teachers that will shortly have to be implemented are one example of such reform. The output records (see 4.2.1.1) that have been expected since 1 January 2006 for elementary school headteachers are a second. These constitute a considerable challenge. Unlike in the past, schools are now expected to measure, record and interpret their pupils' results and then to adapt their future approach accordingly. In his policy document, Minister Vandembroucke points out that the educational reform has to be stimulated from the ground up. He wants to ascertain how certain measures are implemented in real situations and what impact they have before introducing them across the board. He has set up a scheme of '*proeftuinen*' (experimental gardens), i.e. pilot projects, which were launched on 1 September 2005. Education Minister Vandembroucke wants to use these pilot schemes to try out educational reforms on a limited scale to then introduce them more extensively, if deemed appropriate, i.e. does the team support the project, is the project truly innovative and can it be used across the board. These projects are not allocated large budgets, since it has to be feasible to introduce them across the board. The projects are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Training with the help of the educational support services. They are assessed during the third year and a decision is made as to whether a particular reform can be adopted. This assessment is carried out by the education inspectorate and the administration as well as by umbrella organizations, trade unions and researchers. The themes for the pilot projects in the 2005-2006 academic year were technology in elementary education, the transition from primary to secondary education, schools' capacity to implement policy, talent development, the follow-on from education to the labour market, tertiary education and combining learning with work.

3.7 Recent reforms

Besides the challenges for headteachers described above there are a number of recently-introduced reforms that have meant changes for headteachers.

3.7.1 *School communities*

The recent introduction of school communities in both elementary and secondary education did bring about far-reaching changes in education in Flanders. As we saw in sections 2.1.6 and 3.4.1, this has obviously had an impact on the headteacher's job.

3.7.2 *Equal opportunities in education*

The Decree regarding equal opportunities in education (*Gelijke Onderwijskansen, GOK*) (28.02.02) comprises a provision for integrated support to ensure that all children are given the same optimal opportunities to learn and develop. The decree wants at the same time to combat exclusion, social division and discrimination and therefore focuses especially on children from underprivileged backgrounds. The equal opportunities decree is made up of three parts:

- Enrolment right: the right for a child to be enrolled at a chosen school and the way in which this right is safeguarded.
- Care: the provision of integrated support that allows schools to develop a broad care system aimed at underprivileged children.
- Tailored to needs following consultation.

In elementary education a staffing points system has therefore been in place since 1 September 2003 for the provision of care support in all schools. These resources can be used at a school level for appointing a care co-ordinator³³. A limited amount of resources can also be transferred at a school community level. A school's care policy is aimed at children who require special attention, for whatever reason. The school will provide adapted, tailored education. The way in which the school will implement its care policy must be set out explicitly in the school's work plan. The implementation of a care policy brings challenges for all staff members and is a duty for the entire team within the school. This therefore also constitutes a challenge for the headteacher.

3.7.3 *Inclusive education*³⁴

Inclusive education is seen as an educational reform process. Some schools are already spending time on this process. The key question is how education should be adapted to meet the needs of every child and what is needed to make this permanent and develop it further. Inclusive education concerns the right to an equivalent choice of a meaningful curriculum for every child/young person with specific educational needs within every school. This obviously constitutes a challenge for the headteacher and the teachers. There is a call, therefore, for a fair financing system with measures that will reinforce the structure and 'pupil-specific' financing to ensure that the school has sufficient resources to make inclusive education a reality.

A considerable number of pupils with a functional impairment are already attending lessons in mainstream elementary or secondary education (see 2.1.4) through the system of integrated education (*geïntegreerd onderwijs, GON*). In real terms there were 4,450 pupils in the 2004-2005 academic year. 3,041 *GON* children attended elementary education in 1,413 elementary schools. This means an average of 2.2 *GON* pupils per school. In secondary education, 1,334 *GON* pupils were spread over 559 schools. This means an average of 2.4 *GON* pupils per school. However, there is still insufficient

³³ The term 'care co-ordinator' (*zorgcoördinator*) was introduced in September 2005; previously the term was 'beleidsmedewerker'.

³⁴ This section is based on the memorandum and recommendations for policy, drawn up following the conference on inclusive education (*Symposium over Inclusief Onderwijs*), 16 January 2004.

support for teams in mainstream schools that accept these *GON* pupils. The efforts are in fact often mainly directed at the children (Vandenbroucke, 2005).

In the *CAO VIII* collective agreement the situation of the headteachers in special education is raised. Headteachers have to invest a great deal of energy into organizing integrated education provision and supporting *GON* tutors. Yet *GON* children are not included in the calculations for a possible teaching commitment for the headteacher, which means that headteachers who have more *GON* pupils than pupils in the school can be assigned a teaching commitment. In order to prevent this, *GON* pupils will in future be included in the count for the special education school when the headteacher's teaching commitment is calculated.

3.8 Relevant research

Even though the statutory definition of the post of headteacher in Flanders is very limited, as has been stated above, research does identify a number of important characteristics and competencies that headteachers must have to function well in their job and to steer the previously described collaborative partnerships, challenges and reforms in the right direction. These characteristics and competencies are set out below.

3.8.1 *General basic competency requirements for headteachers*

Devos (2004) identified a number of characteristics of good leadership, which he derived from research and practical examples:

- determining the mission/vision and being able to translate that into school objectives
- stimulating the acceptance of school objectives
- being decisive and develop busily
- convey high expectations to the staff
- leading by example so as to inspire confidence
- being able to communicate well
- stimulate participation
- offer support.

These characteristics influence each other: if the headteacher involves his/her staff in the decision-making, it will be easier to stimulate acceptance of the school objectives. The headteacher must also always strike the right balance between monitoring staff, the autonomy of the staff and the collaboration between staff and the headteacher.

In line with this, Van Petegem et al. (2005) found that effective headteachers work in a team and with individuals. These headteachers ensure that teachers are rewarded and stimulated and that they have adequate in-service training opportunities. Teachers are involved in decision-making processes, but are given sufficient autonomy to fulfil their primary task as teachers. Van Petegem et al. therefore suggest that the policy implementation in a school is not necessarily good simply because it has an effective headteacher. Good policy implementation requires a good rapport between the headteacher and the teachers.

Other research (Devos et al., 2005) did identify a number of typical characteristics of headteachers in schools with the strongest school culture and with the highest level of satisfaction among teachers. They are:

- strongly performance-oriented
- coaching approach to the leadership role
- relationships with teachers and educational policy are a priority
- allocating time to tasks according to priority
- more pupil-oriented
- a pro-active, effective decision-making style.

3.8.2 Leadership types

Devos et al. (2005) found that the transformational leader has a positive impact on the school culture and the level of satisfaction among teachers. This transformational leadership style means that the headteacher has a lot of self-confidence, a strong desire to achieve and always do better, positive and high expectations of teachers, a coaching and supportive approach towards teachers, and values participation and commitment.

Researchers also make a distinction in a headteacher's work profile between a pupil-oriented headteacher and an organization-oriented headteacher. Pupil-oriented headteachers attach a great deal of importance to the educational aspect of their job. Education-related tasks are given priority over purely administrative tasks. An organization-oriented headteacher on the other hand spends a great deal of time on administrative tasks and less on the educational aspect of his job. Researchers found that the work profile of the headteacher is linked with the school culture. Research showed that the headteachers who scored the highest in relation to school culture and teacher satisfaction were always pupil-oriented. And conversely, the headteachers who scored the lowest in relation to school culture and teacher satisfaction were always organization-oriented.

CHAPTER 4: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND STIMULATING LEARNING

4.1 Points of interest in the policy regarding quality of education

In his policy document, Minister Vandenbroucke (2004) ascertains that although Flemish education ranks among the best in the world, it should be remembered that there is still inequality of opportunity in education in Flanders. Social background remains a determining factor in the educational level an individual achieves. Four key points are at the forefront of the current minister's education policy to achieve equal opportunity in education for everyone in the future. These four key points of course have an impact on Flemish schools and their school leaders.

- Better follow-on from education to the labour market

Learning and working increasingly intermingle in today's society. Better dovetailing of education with the labour market and the co-ordinated deployment of instruments from both sectors can improve people's competencies. Education and training play an important role in ensuring that people become and remain employed. This is particularly the case for certain sections of the active population that comprise a low proportion of employed.

- A new funding system for education

The minister wants to review the funding of the various levels of education in order to correct the inequality in starting opportunities. There needs to be a socially-justifiable distribution of financial effort from all players (authorities and users). This will allow a different kind of investment in education with an increased focus on staff professional development, the operation and equipment of the schools, etc.

- Increasing the capacity of schools to implement policy

This key point aims to enable schools to develop the talents of every child from elementary education and throughout the rest of his/her school career. In order to create a climate that encourages young people to learn, the policy seeks to increase participation opportunities in schools and strengthen the collaboration between schools within the school communities. Quality assurance is also a point of interest.

- Making teachers' careers more attractive and motivating

Teachers and headteachers work hard to ensure that pupils can enjoy quality education. This means that teachers must be able to work autonomously on their core task under favourable conditions. They must also be given space to work on their further professional development.

4.2 Accountability of the school in relation to pupil learning

4.2.1 The curriculum and pupil assessment

As explained earlier, the school boards are responsible for drawing up the curricula and timetables. They must take into account, however, the developmental targets and final attainment

levels as laid down by the Flemish Government. In reality, however, most schools follow the curricula drawn up by the co-ordinating bodies within the networks³⁵.

Schools also have a high level of autonomy regarding pupil assessment within the framework of freedom of education. There are no centrally-imposed tests in Flanders. Schools decide for themselves how to assess pupils. But their assessment structure does have to be explained in the school regulations for pupils and parents. Verhoeven et al. (2002) examined assessment practices in Flemish secondary schools. They found that a large proportion of the teachers questioned are well informed about the school's vision on assessment. Nevertheless two thirds of the teachers questioned have their own view on pupil assessment. Headteachers more than teachers, however, think that teachers work on the basis of the school's vision instead of on their own views on assessment. Verhoeven et al (2002) also found that the perceptions of teachers regarding school policy (more pupil-oriented or more performance-oriented) correlate with their assessment practices. The assessment policy of more pupil-oriented schools is more integrated than that of performance-oriented schools: teachers from pupil-oriented schools more than teachers from performance-oriented schools claim that their school has an assessment policy and that there are arrangements among colleagues and with the headteachers.

4.2.2 School inspection³⁶

4.2.2.1 Elementary education

Every school is inspected at least once every six years. The inspectorate notifies the school management of the school inspection in writing. The inspection team then visits the school during school time. The collected data is then processed into a draft report, which is submitted to the headteacher of the school a few days prior to the verification discussion. The purpose of this discussion is to explain the summary, the recommendations related to quality assurance and the opinion. 30 days after this verification discussion at the latest, the school board receives the final report. This must be fully discussed at a staff meeting in the school 30 days following receipt at the latest.

The inspection is carried out in accordance with the CIPO model (Context, Input, Process, Output). The inspection consists of an assessment of how the teacher and headteacher function within the overall functioning of the school. The local context within which the school operates is also taken into account. Data in the school is checked according to the CIPO model. In other words, the school has to give account. However, the aim is also to provide schools with the opportunity to improve the quality of their teaching. The development of the school is therefore an important component. The infrastructure of the school is also examined and the school's compliance with all statutory provisions.

A number of quality indicators are used to assess the efforts made by a school. The educational objectives are: providing an elementary education as a coherent whole, enabling broad development, and provide a breadth of care. A school must also have a number of organizational characteristics for the entire school: a common goal-oriented approach, internal leadership to implement internal policy, the capacity for communication and consultation, and the space for professional development.

Since 2004-2005 schools also have to be able to submit an output record to the inspectorate. This record is based on a number of output indicators showing the children's accomplishments in relation to the targets set by the government. The school must prove, by means of valid and reliable data at a

³⁵ These bodies within Flanders are: community education, the education secretariat of the Flemish town and municipalities *OVSG*, provincial education *POV*, the Flemish Catholic education co-ordinating body *VSKO*, the Flemish schools forum *VOOP*, the alternative schools federation *FOPEM*, the Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools, and the forum of small education providers *OKO* (see 2.1.2 for further explanation).

³⁶ This section is based on the information available on the inspectorate's website: <http://www.onderwijsinspectie.be/>.

school level, that the education it provides to its pupils shows a return. Schools were given two academic years to work on this output record. The output indicators are:

- The school proves by means of valid and reliable data at a school level, that pupils achieve the subject-related final attainment levels at the end of elementary school.
- The school proves with reliable and valid data that it works to achieve the developmental targets, cross-subject-area and attitudinal final attainment levels.
- The school proves pupils' progress and acquired learning by means of reliable and valid data in reviews of pupil groups and at a school level.
- The school keeps annual reviews of the number of pupils who are awarded the elementary school certificate.
- The school proves with reliable and valid data that pupils are contented at school.
- The school has reliable yearly reviews with career data on its pupils at a pupil, group, and school level. These reviews include data about pupil inflow and outflow.
- The school keeps annual reviews of the number, nature and frequency of pupils' absences.
- The school proves with reliable and valid data that the team is satisfied with how the school functions and with working conditions.
- The school proves with reliable and valid data that parents are satisfied with the education that is given and with school organization.
- The school proves with reliable and valid data that its education has made a contribution – overall or specific – to the success of secondary education and the further educational careers of the pupils.

4.2.2.2 *Secondary education*

A school inspection in secondary education focuses on the school. Schools that belong to the same school community are inspected in one successive period. The school is notified in writing at least 30 days before the inspection. The inspectorate expects the headteacher or the management team to inform the staff, pupils, parents and school board of the inspection.

A few weeks after the notification an information session is held, in which the inspection is explained to the school management. Just like in elementary education, the inspection in secondary education is based on the CIPO model (Context, Input, Process, Output). The school compiles an information file on the basis of this model. The file consists of a text file and an output file. The text file contains a description of the current situation, a strengths and weaknesses analysis, a comment on this analysis and points for improvement. The output file contains figure data for each school for the years preceding the year of the inspection. The school receives by e-mail a partially completed document with the data from the administration databases. The school must fill in the missing data and check the data already filled in. Besides the output file there is also a subject and study pathway information file, which serves to plan the inspection activities such as visits to lessons, examination of documents and discussions. There are some further inspection instruments in relation to the compliance with regulations, the questioning regarding pupil satisfaction, language policy, and the work towards achieving the cross-subject final attainment levels and developmental targets.

Once this data is gathered, the actual inspection takes place in the form of a school visit. This should in principle take one working week. After the inspection, the inspection team draws up a joint report. The structure of the report is as follows:

- Which school is it?
- What is the policy of the school?
- How well does the school work?
- What results does the school achieve?
- Conclusions
- Opinion.

The school management and the school board receive a copy to sign. The report can contain a favourable opinion, a time-limit favourable opinion, or an unfavourable opinion. A time-limit favourable opinion can become favourable if the conditions in the report are met. During the follow-up

process, the school must implement the urgent points of action from the adjustment plan issued by the inspection team. This follow-up normally takes place in the third academic year after the school inspection. An unfavourable opinion means that serious shortcomings have been found, for which the school may lose its official recognition.

4.2.3 The monitoring of pupils

There are very few institutionalized processes in Flemish education to monitor the behaviour and results of pupils. The teacher is expected to gather data systematically through tests, observations, self-assessment data and discussions. The teacher uses these to interpret and assess the progress and performance of the learner correctly and to suggest ways for improvement³⁷. However, the way in which he/she does this is not specified. As has already been said, the school and the teacher have the educational freedom to do this as they see fit.

All schools do have a care policy (see 3.7.2), focussing on children who require special attention, for whatever reason. For these pupils, a different provision is developed.

Every school in Flanders can also rely on support from the *CLB*³⁸. The task of the *CLB* centre is to contribute to the wellbeing of pupils now and in the future. Pupils are thus given the foundation for all learning to enable them throughout their school career to acquire and strengthen the competencies that form the basis for continuous development and social participation. A *CLB* centre supports pupils in the following:

- learning and studying
- their educational career
- preventative healthcare
- psychological and social wellbeing.

4.3 The role of the headteacher in teaching

4.3.1 The headteacher in the classroom³⁹

In small elementary schools in Flanders the headteacher has a teaching commitment. The number of teaching periods is determined by the number of pupils. In real terms this means 18 teaching periods in a school with fewer than 20 pupils, 14 periods in a school with 20 to 129 pupils, and 8 periods in a school with 130 to 179 pupils. Headteachers in special elementary schools are subject to a different calculation: 18 teaching periods in schools with fewer than 20 pupils, 12 periods in schools with 20 to 39 pupils, and 4 periods in a school with 40 to 59 pupils. The school board may decide to release a headteacher from the classroom completely. Funding from the elementary school's operating budget can be used to have the teaching commitment fulfilled by another member of staff.

In secondary education, headteachers have a 50% teaching commitment if their school has fewer than 83 pupils. They are entitled to a headteacher's salary with a full commitment or to the corresponding pay-level. In special secondary education, a headteacher has no teaching commitment if the school has at least 90 pupils. If the school has fewer pupils, the headteacher has 2 teaching periods for every multiple of 9 pupils the school is short.

³⁷ See the Flemish Government order regarding basic competencies for teachers (29.09.98).

³⁸ See the Decree regarding the *CLBs* (01.12.98).

³⁹ This section is based on the Flemish Government order regarding staff information in mainstream elementary education (12.07.97), the circular regarding the increase in the operating budget application for policy support and releasing the headteacher/deputy-head from the classroom (27.07.98) and the circular regarding the posts of headteacher and deputy-head (31.07.98).

There are currently 413 headteachers with a teaching commitment in mainstream elementary education in Flanders. In special elementary education there are 20. In mainstream secondary education there are 8.7 headteachers with a teaching commitment, and in special secondary education there are 26.5.

4.3.2 *The headteacher as a mentor*

Research by Devos et al. (2004) showed that headteachers find it difficult to give their teachers support. Headteachers often complain of a lack of time, preventing them from giving this sufficient attention. Researchers found a form of educational support by the headteacher to his/her teachers mainly in elementary schools. Devos et al. give as possible explanations the small teacher-teams in elementary schools and the fact that elementary schools work differently from secondary schools. Providing educational support is done more informally in elementary schools: the headteacher walks into classrooms spontaneously and gives educational advice. This educational support can take various forms: giving educational and teaching tips to the team or to individuals, setting up consultation platforms or study groups that benefit professional collaboration, facilitate in-service training, and intervening personally when there are problems. A considerable number of teachers, particularly in secondary education, say they do not mind that the headteacher does not provide educational support. They realize that the headteacher is very busy. Teachers do say, however, that they think it is important that the headteacher supports them in dealing with parents. Indeed, support from the headteachers is then more than just educational support. Material support, complimenting, and personal and emotional support are important.

The way new teachers are looked after also varies from school to school (Devos et al. 2004). Schools are given the space to implement their own policy. The research by Devos et al (2004) showed that secondary schools more often have a strong policy for new staff compared with elementary schools. Schools have various initiatives for new teachers: the new teacher is shadowed by a senior colleague, new teachers are given a school brochure or handbook, or a guided tour by the headteacher or the senior vocational training advisor or vocational training advisor. The headteacher or school board sometimes also imposes in-service training on new teachers, but this is in a minority of cases. In secondary education, meetings are sometimes organized for all the new teachers to familiarize them with the educational project or give them tips. In conclusion, therefore, few schools have a formal system for looking after new teachers, particularly in elementary education. It is worthy of note, however, that in the *CAO VIII* collective agreement it was agreed that the resources for mentorship were to be increased from 1 September 2006 for the development of the support given to teachers who are newly starting.

4.3.3 *The headteacher as an evaluator*

4.3.3.1 *Community education*⁴⁰

The headteacher or general director within community education must evaluate every staff member of both elementary and secondary education at least once within a period of 3 years. The evaluator must keep a record file for every staff member. This file contains the reports from the educational support services and the inspectorate regarding the staff member, the personal notes of the evaluator and staff member, the performance data for professional development and if applicable the status of disciplinary punishments. The staff member is given a copy of this file and has a right to examine his/her file at any time. The evaluation report can be concluded with a rating of 'unsatisfactory'. If the staff member does not agree with this rating, he/she may submit a reasoned reply to the evaluator within seven calendar days. This is then added to the evaluation report. The evaluator gives notification of his/her final decision within 7 calendar days from receipt of the reply. If

⁴⁰ This section is based on the Flemish Government order regarding evaluation, measures of order and discipline in community education (11.04.92) and the Decree of 27.03.91 regarding the legal position of certain staff members in community education..

a staff member has been given a rating of 'unsatisfactory', he/she is re-evaluated at the earliest eight months after the previous evaluation and during the next school year. The staff member is then also evaluated separately by someone appointed by the board of headteachers.

In mainstream and special secondary education, every staff member who has been appointed for more than 104 days must have a job description. A staff member cannot be evaluated without it. The evaluator and staff member draw up the job description together. This job description includes tasks and responsibilities as well as the way in which they must be carried out. Besides personal and developmental objectives, it includes objectives specific to the school. The latter usually stem from arrangements made at the end of the evaluation period. Rights and obligations related to continuing professional education and in-service training are also included.

4.3.3.2 *Subsidized and grant-aided education*⁴¹

There are no statutory staff evaluations in subsidized and grant-aided elementary education. There are models of job descriptions that can help determine the task of staff in elementary education. Job descriptions in elementary education are not obligatory as yet. However, the Flemish Government has identified a number of tasks that cannot be considered part of staff duties in elementary education. These are:

- organizing bus transport
- carrying out maintenance and/or repair work for and in the school
- attending and assisting in religious, philosophical or socio-cultural activities outside school
- supervision of children during afternoons when there are no lessons and during school holidays
- giving extra lessons or therapy before and after school hours
- home visits
- lunch-time supervision
- bus supervision
- directing traffic on the public highway
- performing administrative and/or organizational tasks for the headteacher or the school board.

The school board must appoint one or two evaluators per staff member for the evaluation of staff members in subsidized and grant-aided education. At least one of these evaluators must be a headteacher or deputy-head. They must also be employed at an establishment that belongs to the same school board and to the same school community (if applicable to the establishment in question).

The evaluator and staff member draw up the job description together, taking into account the general arrangements determined by the school community management or the school board. This job description comprises the same elements in relation to content as the job description in community education (see 4.3.3.1). Staff members cannot be evaluated without a job description. Since 1 September 2004, every staff member who has been appointed for more than 104 days must have a job description. An evaluation must be carried out at least every three years from 1 September 2006. An evaluation report must be drawn up with a description of the teacher's overall performance in relation to the previously-agreed job description. The objectives, included in the subsequent job description, are a direct result of the teacher evaluation.

No detailed requirements have been laid down by decree in relation to the content of a job description and teacher evaluation. The areas of application of a job description are not laid down either. The content and application of job descriptions and the procedure for evaluation can therefore vary from school to school.

⁴¹ This section is based on the Decree of 27.03.91 regarding the legal position of certain staff members in subsidized and grant-aided education and at subsidized centres for pupil support, and the Flemish Government order comprising the tasks that cannot be included in the job description of staff in elementary education (10.06.97).

As said earlier, job descriptions have to be used in subsidized and grant-aided education since 1 September 2004. This means that schools have dealt with job descriptions certainly for two successive school years. The starting date for obligatory teacher evaluations in subsidized and grant-aided education was recently set for 1 September 2007. However, an appeals committee must be set up before evaluations with ratings of 'unsatisfactory' can be concluded so that teachers can appeal against the conclusion. Minister Vandembroucke has recently reached an agreement with the trade unions regarding the setting-up of this appeals committee.

4.3.3.3 *Research*⁴²

Research by Devos et al. (2004) showed that teacher evaluation is more informal and more frequent in elementary education than in secondary education. The headteacher walks into the classroom more often and has a clear picture of how the teachers are doing. In respect of elementary education, researchers therefore refer to support rather than assessment, since the headteachers give educational tips, feedback and support. The assessment is therefore less systematic than in secondary education.

In their research, Devos et al. (2004) found that secondary schools often have a moderate policy for performance assessment. The school does, however, often put a great deal of time and energy into assessing new teachers, whilst there is usually no assessment for permanently-appointed teachers. One of the main reasons for this is the status of the permanently-appointed teachers. Many headteachers feel there is little point in assessing them because no reward or sanction can be attached to it. A large proportion of the headteachers in the research said that lack of time prevented them from assessing all teachers. The size of the team is of course also significant here.

As has been said earlier, the teacher evaluation does depend on the network to which the school belongs. Evaluations are still not obligatory in subsidized and grant-aided education. Researchers have found, however, that arrangements have been made within school communities for the evaluation of temporary teachers. In community education, where teachers have to be evaluated, Devos et al. (2004) found that the evaluation of permanently-appointed teachers is often limited to a formality.

4.3.4 *In-service training policy*⁴³

Since 1996, the Flemish Community has every year made funding available to the school boards for both elementary and secondary education for in-service training for the staff of their schools. The school board can only use the funding for in-service training for the staff of the school that is entitled to funding. The amount of funding each school is entitled to is calculated according to the number of organic appointments in the school. The education level for which the funding is destined is also taken into account.

A school must devise an in-service training plan every year at the headteacher's suggestion. The in-service training needs are identified in the plan, allowing the school to devise a priority plan for the short and the long term. The in-service training programmes the staff members wish to attend with funding received through the school boards must be in accordance with the school's in-service training plan.

Community education and representative groups of school boards in subsidized and grant-aided elementary education also take in-service training initiatives. And finally the Flemish Government also sets policy priorities for in-service training initiatives for education staff. These initiatives serve to support the implementation of education reforms and to meet the needs created by market deficiencies.

⁴² This section is based on Devos, G.; Verhoeven, J.; Stassen, K. & Warmoes, V. (2004). *Personeelsbeleid in Vlaamse scholen*. OBPWO-project 01. 04.

⁴³ This section is based on the Decree regarding teacher training and in-service training (12.06.96).

In the 2005 budget year, 4,314,000 euros was made available for in-service training in elementary education, 6,091,000 euros for in-service training in secondary education, and 1,522,000 euros to the umbrella organizations.

However, Devos et al. (2004) found that not all the schools they investigated use an in-service training plan. The elementary schools in particular showed a lack of such a plan. These schools have set no priorities for in-service training and teachers often attend in-service training on their own initiative. However, the secondary schools in their research do regularly call on the services of an in-service training co-ordinator, particularly if the school has a clear vision. The co-ordinator devises an in-service training plan, sets priorities and distributes information on in-service training. He/she also provides follow-up. Devos et al. (2004) state, however, that not all schools with an in-service training co-ordinator have a strong in-service training policy. Only if the co-ordinator fulfils his duties with determination does the school have a strong policy. This research also showed that newly-appointed headteachers often do not consider the development of an in-service training policy as a priority. More experienced headteachers find more time for developing such a policy. The size of the school is also important: small schools often find it difficult to replace teachers who are away on in-service training.

CHAPTER 5: THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

5.1 Candidates for school leadership

5.1.1 Figures

Indications from school boards show that it is getting increasingly difficult to find candidates for the job of headteacher, particularly in elementary education. There are also an increasing number of headteachers who leave the job for other reasons than retirement. Reasons given include the demands of the job and conflicts with colleagues. This is a significant development, which was unseen 15 years ago. There are no further figures available for the demand for school leaders, the number of candidates, the number of headteachers who give up the job for another, etc. Cf. 5.1.3 for figures on the characteristics of school leaders today.

5.1.2 Motivating candidates

Vandenbergh et al. (2003) questioned newly-appointed elementary school headteachers about their reason for becoming a headteacher. The following reasons were given:

- to develop a career as headteacher (41%)
- the opportunity to work on an educational project and reforms (38%)
- to lead, support and co-ordinate a team (29%)
- being the only candidate or having been asked explicitly (28%)
- to use the experience gained in leadership tasks for the benefit of the school (17%).
-

The conclusion can therefore be drawn that the job of headteacher is seen by newly-appointed headteachers as progress in their career and a challenge to realize a vision, work on an educational project and reform education where necessary. Newly-appointed headteachers indicate that they want to lead a team and take responsibility.

Nevertheless Vandenbergh et al. (2003) also found that newly-appointed headteachers had doubts:

- concern that they would not be able to combine the job with their family and social lives (30%)
- doubts about whether they are the right person (23%)
- anxious that they will miss teaching and the pupils (22%)
- concerned about pressure of work, possible stress and the comparatively insignificant extra remuneration (18%).

The researchers also questioned the newly-appointed headteachers about what they perceived the reasons for their permanent appointment to be. 64% of respondents gave a number of personal qualities (social and communication skills, organizational skills, leadership skills, and dovetailing of their own vision with that of the school). 23% of the newly-appointed headteachers said that given the circumstances they thought they were the most suitable candidate. 23% also pointed out the importance of previous experience, either as a teacher or because of previous leadership tasks. 17% said that the school board knew them and recognized their qualities.

A study into the level of satisfaction and functioning of elementary school headteachers (Devos et al., 2005) showed that these headteachers are generally overburdened and do not receive sufficient support. This seems to be the case in some grant-aided private schools because they often cannot rely on their school board or school group for administrative support in the same way that subsidized public-sector and community schools can. The researchers did find, however, that newly-appointed headteachers have a lower level of satisfaction than experienced headteachers. Neither age, nor seniority, nor professional experience were significant variables in relation to elementary school headteachers' level of satisfaction and functioning.

5.1.3 The profile of a school leader⁴⁴

In 2000 there were 4,229 school leaders⁴⁵. In 2006, that figure rose slightly to 4,804.

In relation to the gender of school leaders (see table 5.1), there is a slight rise in the number of women between 2000 and 2006. In 2000, 32.8% of school leaders were women. In 2006, that figure rose to 40.6%. It is worthy of note that the majority of nursery school leaders are women (on average 89.7%). The trend is falling, however, with 92.9% of nursery school leaders being women in 2000 compared with 86.5% in 2006. In elementary and secondary education the majority of school leaders are men. But here again there is a slight fall, with 66.8% being men in 2000 compared with 57.9% in 2006. In secondary education this decrease is less marked: from 77.8% in 2000 to 71.3% in 2006.

The age of school leaders (see table 5.2) ranges from 24 to 66. In both 2000 and 2006, the majority of school leaders (60% on average) are over 50 years of age. In nursery, primary and secondary education, the largest group is aged between 50 and 54 or between 55 and 59. Few school leaders (on average 8.1%) are under 40 years old.

Most school leaders (on average 77.5%) are permanently appointed (see table 5.3). There is a slight fall from 80% of school leaders being permanently appointed in 2000 to 75% in 2006. In 2006 there were therefore slightly more temporary headteachers. In 2006, 61 headteachers were in their probationary period (see 5.2.1.1).

There are separate figures for general and co-ordinating directors (school group/school community level) who were released to take up this position and who receive remuneration for it. In January 2006 there are 229 in these posts; 191 were men and 38 were women. In elementary education there are 26: 21 of these are general directors in subsidized and grant-aided education and 5 in community education. In secondary education there are 184, 69 of whom are general directors in subsidized and grant-aided education. There are 76 co-ordinating directors in subsidized and grant-aided secondary education. In community secondary education there are 21 general directors and 18 co-ordinating directors.

5.2 The job and working conditions

5.2.1 Selection of school leaders⁴⁶

5.2.1.1 Legislation

Community education

The selection procedure for a headteacher in community education is laid down by decree⁴⁷. The board of governors of the school group to which the school belongs gives notice at least once a year of the positions it has published as vacant, following consultation with the heads of the institutions and the management of the school community. This includes a description of the way in which applications for mutation⁴⁸ and permanent appointment⁴⁹ have to be submitted. A position that has

⁴⁴ Figures published by the Ministry of Education and Training.

⁴⁵ The figures include headteachers and deputy-heads of schools as well as wardens of boarding establishments and directors of medical educational institutions.

⁴⁶ The mandate system is not taken into consideration here because it has not yet been introduced (see 3.7.3).

⁴⁷ See the Decree regarding the legal position of certain staff members in community education (27.03.91).

⁴⁸ The term mutation is understood to mean the appointment and assignment to another school group or establishment of another school group to a position in a post to which the staff member is permanently appointed.

been published as vacant must first be filled through the re-assignment or redeployment⁵⁰ of a staff member who has become available because of lack of employment⁵¹, or through mutation or a new assignment, before other candidates can be considered for a probationary period.

The board of governors of the school group decides whether to accept a candidate for the probationary period. Candidates must fulfil the following conditions:

- He/she must have applied by registered mail to the board of governors of the school group in the form and within the time stated in the call for candidates.
- He/she must have the required qualification or 'satisfactory' rating (see 5.2.1.2).
- He/she may not have received an 'unsatisfactory' rating at the last evaluation or assessment.
- He/she must fulfil the general recruitment conditions (e.g. comply with the provisions of the language laws, be of irreproachable conduct).
- He/she must have the competencies required for the post.

The competencies referred to in the last conditions are laid down by the community education board. They are assessed in a test organized under the responsibility of this board. Therefore, in order to acquire a permanent appointment in community education, you have to have a training certificate. This certificate can only be obtained after two years of training. This training consists of one basic model and specialist models that vary according to the level or education type (see 6.2.2).

Candidates used to have to fulfil the condition of having to be permanently appointed in at least a part-time position in the relevant staff category in community education, but this condition was scrapped. This means that the school board has greater choice because the selection is made from more suitable candidates. The scrapping of this condition also does justice to the management-oriented vision of the post of headteacher, because candidates who did not yet work in education are now able to take up the position (Ornelis, 2001).

The probationary period referred to earlier consists of 12 months actually in the position and can be extended once for 12 months. During the probationary period, the staff member can always lay claim to the position to which he/she was previously assigned. In other words, the previous position is not published as vacant during the probationary period. If the general director does not issue an unfavourable opinion regarding the candidate for the headteacher's post to the board of governors of the school group at the end of the probationary period, the staff member is appointed permanently upon completion of the probationary period. If it has been decided not to appoint the staff member permanently, he/she has the right to a hearing in the presence of his advisor. The board of governors must make its motives known to the staff member prior to the hearing. The same procedure applies if the staff member is removed from the post during the probationary period. The staff member may also at any time voluntarily relinquish the permanent appointment in the post in question.

A headteacher of a nursery school that is expanding into an elementary school has priority for a permanent appointment in the post of headteacher of the elementary school. The board of governors may decide, however, first to admit the candidate to the probationary period. If the board of governors subsequently issues an unfavourable opinion regarding the permanent appointment, it has to give its reasons.

⁴⁹ The advantages of a permanent appointment are job security, a state pension and the possibility of enjoying various holiday systems. Teachers must have 720 days of seniority before they can gain a permanent appointment.

⁵⁰ Re-assignment means that a staff member who has become available is deployed by the school board or re-assignment committee to the same post, subject or speciality. The staff member is basically obliged to accept the re-assignment. Redeployment is when a staff member who has become available is redeployed to another post than the one in which he/she was permanently appointed. In some cases the staff member is obliged to accept the redeployment.

⁵¹ Lack of employment is understood to mean that a staff member loses his/her working hours because, for instance, the school where he/she works has fewer pupils. If a staff member is permanently appointed, he/she is made available and is then eligible for re-assignment or redeployment.

If the holder of a post is temporarily absent, or for an appointment in which no permanent appointment is possible, or pending the admission to the probationary period, the board of governors of the school group may appoint a staff member to take up the selected post or promotion. This is done on the recommendation of the board of headteachers. The replacement staff member must in principle fulfil the same conditions as described above (except the first).

Subsidized and grant-aided education

The Decree⁵² lays down less stringent regulations for the selection of a headteacher in subsidized and grant-aided education. A school board can allocate a position in a selected post or promotion that has become vacant because of an appointment. In subsidized and grant-aided education too the position must first be allocated through re-assignment or deployment to a staff member who has become available due to lack of employment or through mutation. In order to be permanently appointed in a selected post or promotion, the staff member must fulfil the following conditions:

- He/she must have the required qualification or ‘satisfactory’ rating (see 5.2.1.2).
- He/she may not have received an ‘unsatisfactory’ rating in his/her last evaluation.
- He/she must fulfil the general conditions of recruitment.

As a counterpart to the admission to the probationary period and the replacement appointment in community education, a staff member in subsidized and grant-aided education can be appointed temporarily. This temporary appointment is more specific in subsidized and grant-aided education (Ornelis, 2001). The staff member who wants to be appointed temporarily must fulfil the same conditions as those required for a permanent appointment. If the staff member was appointed temporarily pending a permanent appointment, the school board must, at the end of the second full academic year at the latest, take a decision either to appoint the staff member permanently or to allow him/her to return to his/her previous job. If the school board fails to do so, the staff member is automatically permanently appointed in the selected post or promotion. Like in community education, the staff member may relinquish the permanent appointment. In subsidized and grant-aided education there is no procedure for removing a staff member from the post, however.

Just as in community education, the headteacher of a nursery school that is expanding into an elementary school has priority to be permanently appointed to the post of headteacher of the elementary school. The school board can appoint the headteacher temporarily for one year but must reach a decision once that year has elapsed. If the school board decides not to appoint the headteacher permanently in the post of headteacher of the elementary school, it must give its reasons.

5.2.1.2 Valid qualifications for becoming a headteacher

A teacher’s qualification is always required for a permanent appointment to the post of headteacher (see also 6.2.1). The required qualifications vary according to the education level.

The following qualifications are acceptable for a headteachership in mainstream elementary education:

- nursery teacher
- elementary school teacher
- qualified for lower secondary education, supplemented with the certificate of further teacher training for elementary education
- qualified for secondary education – group 1, supplemented with the certificate of further teacher training for elementary education
- graduate + certificate of educational competence
- qualified for lower secondary education, general subjects
- qualified for secondary education – group 1, general subjects

⁵² See the Decree regarding the legal position of certain staff members in subsidized public-sector and grant-aided private education and subsidized centres for pupil support (27.03.91).

- qualified for secondary education – group 1, general training
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence (on the basis of the *CAO VIII* collective agreement, from 1 September 2007)
- at least higher education of the extended type and proof of educational competence (on the basis of the *CAO VIII* collective agreement, from 1 September 2007).

One of the following qualifications is required for a headteachership in special elementary education:

- nursery teacher
- elementary school teacher
- qualified for lower secondary education, supplemented with the certificate of further teacher training for elementary education
- qualified for secondary education – group 1, supplemented with the certificate of further teacher training for elementary education
- graduate + certificate of educational competence
- qualified for lower secondary education
- qualified for secondary education – group 1
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence (on the basis of the *CAO VIII* collective agreement, from 1 September 2007)
- at least higher education of the extended type and proof of educational competence (on the basis of the *CAO VIII* collective agreement, from 1 September 2007).

In mainstream secondary education, the qualifications required for becoming a headteacher vary according to the school. A school that provides education at the third stage requires the headteacher to possess a certificate of higher education of the extended type and proof of educational competence. The following qualifications are required in schools providing just stage four vocational secondary education:

- qualified for secondary education – group 1
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence
- at least higher education of the extended type and proof of educational competence.

A school that does not provide third stage education can appoint a headteacher if he/she has one of the following qualifications:

- qualified for secondary education – group 1
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence.

For deputy-heads in secondary education, the requirements are different again. A deputy-head in a school providing third stage education must be able to present one of the following qualifications:

- qualified for secondary education – group 1
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence
- at least higher education of the extended type and proof of educational competence.

A deputy-head in a school that does not provide third stage education must have one of the following qualifications:

- qualified for secondary education – group 1
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence.

In special secondary education, the following qualifications suffice for headteachers of an establishment providing education type 4 and other types and third stage:

- all the qualifications required for general and social training and vocational training in special secondary education provided this is at least higher education of the short type supplemented with proof of educational competence
- all the qualifications required for first and second stage education, provided this is at least higher education of the short type supplemented with proof of educational competence
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence
- at least higher education of the extended type and proof of educational competence.

The latter is not valid as a required qualification when the establishment does not provide education type 4. For a deputy-head of an establishment without education type 4, the aforementioned qualifications for the first and second stage are not valid qualifications either.

Special secondary education establishments providing education type 4 and other education types, but which do not provide third stage education require one of the following qualifications from the headteacher or deputy-head:

- all the qualifications required for general and social training and vocational training in special secondary education provided this is at least higher education of the short type supplemented with proof of educational competence
- all the qualifications required for first and second stage education, provided this is at least higher education of the short type supplemented with proof of educational competence
- qualification of religious instructor or teacher of religion, provided this is at least higher education of the short type (full-time or not) and proof of educational competence
- at least higher education of the short type and proof of educational competence.

5.2.1.3 In practice

Devos et al. (1999) questioned 12 school boards about their selection procedure for headteachers. They found that these school boards have different ways of selecting their headteachers. Most of the school boards examined in their research use the candidates' qualities as selection criteria. Some school boards also consciously look for a candidate among the staff of the school for which a new headteacher is needed because he/she would know this school best. Other school boards prefer an external candidate so as to increase the potential of reform in school policy. These school boards also see this as a way of avoiding tension between several candidates from that school. There are also school boards that attach no importance to whether they recruit a candidate from inside or outside the school. The researchers also found that most school boards draw up a candidate profile and use a systematic process in which the following criteria are important: the candidate's social skills, their vision of the post and of education, and the candidate's personality. Some Catholic school boards also consider the candidates' Christian commitment.

Another study by Devos et al. (2004) showed that the majority of schools publicize the vacancy for a headteacher through advertising, publications from the educational umbrella organization or trade union, job announcements, etc. In practice, however, candidates from the school or school board seeking a headteacher were often found to have an advantage over external candidates. The procedures for selecting a headteacher may vary, but there is a similar pattern. Usually a committee is set up with experts from the school board and from outside the school.

In community education, the school groups are responsible for the selection procedure for a headteacher, as commented on earlier. Devos et al. (2004) found that vacancies for headteachers' posts are initially publicized through various channels to allow candidates from all across Flanders to apply. In practice, however, they found that criteria such as familiarity with the school and the region are also considered in the selection process. In community education, a candidate can also only be permanently appointed as headteacher once he/she has completed his/her headteacher training (see 6.2.1.1). The selection procedure for headteachers in community education always consists of two elements: a file and an interview with a committee. The file comprises the candidate's experience in teaching, leadership, information about the candidate's publications, his/her input outside lessons, his/her efforts within community education, etc. The committee asks questions about all kinds of subjects during the interview. The general director of the school group chairs the committee. The other members are either other headteachers or external members, from the business world for instance (Devos et al., 2004).

In subsidized and grant-aided education the procedures are less standardized and the school board itself can determine how it will select a headteacher. Candidates are not required to have any specific

training. Some schools draw up a headteacher's profile together with the teachers. Devos et al. (2004) found that the selection process is fairly uniform. A selection committee is set up with members of the school board and external members (from education and the business world). This committee proposes a candidate on the basis of an interview. The criteria for selection include fitting in with the educational project, experience, management skills, and personality. Some subsidized and grant-aided schools also bring in an external recruitment specialist to ensure that the process is as objective as possible.

5.2.2 Evaluation of school leaders

5.2.2.1 Legislation

Legislation makes no separate provision for the evaluation of headteachers in community education or subsidized and grant-aided education. Headteachers are therefore subject to the evaluation procedure described in 4.3.3.

5.2.2.2 In practice

Devos et al. (2004) found that the headteacher in the schools they examined always has to go through a probationary period before being appointed permanently. The probationary period lasts one or two years and can be extended if doubts still exist. The researchers found that only a limited number of schools had a formal evaluation procedure for assessing the headteacher during his/her probationary period. Administrative and educational skills, efforts towards the educational project, etc. are key factors in this assessment. Sometimes the teachers are also involved in the evaluation of a headteacher before the latter is permanently appointed. On the whole, however, the evaluation is done by the chairperson of the school board or the general director of the school group. In most schools the evaluation of the headteacher takes place at the end of his/her probationary period in an informal manner. The headteacher is usually automatically appointed permanently if there have been no negative reports from teachers, parents, etc. The principle of 'no negative reports means that everything is going fine' is also used for permanently appointed headteachers. They are rarely evaluated. Devos et al. (2004) therefore conclude that headteachers' evaluations are mainly associated with the permanent appointment and are usually carried out in an informal manner.

5.2.3 School leaders' salaries⁵³

Pay (community education) and subsidized pay (subsidized and grant-aided education) is determined on the basis of a number of factors (Heyvaert & Janssens, 2001)

- the post
- the statutory status (temporary or permanent appointment)
- administrative status (active, non-active, etc.)
- qualifications and related pay scales
- the nature of the post
- the scope of the post
- previous length of service (seniority)
- personal and family situation.

The pay scales correspond to a particular qualification and indicate the corresponding minimum and maximum pay for one year, with in addition, a number of periodic increases (annual, biannual and at the end) depending on the number of years of service. The pay scale amounts are linked to the rise in consumer prices based on the index number.

⁵³ This section is based on Devos, G. & Vanderheyden, K. (2002). Attracting, developing and retaining teachers. Thematic Review – OECD: background report Flanders. Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department.

In 2001 a comparative pay study was conducted by the Hay Group comparing salaries in education with those in other sectors. The study found that remuneration for the management positions in education are far below the average of the labour market. The study examined salaries at two levels:

1. basic salary: 12 times the monthly salary, plus holiday pay and end-of-year bonus
2. overall salary package: basic salary, plus consideration of the following factors:
 - permanent appointment
 - variable pay
 - total number of working hours
 - additional pension scheme
 - other perks (company cars, meals and other expenses).

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 staff members 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 management posts). The advantage for the private sector in this respect is estimated at 6%.
- The difference in total working hours between education and the private sector is so small that it was not included. (The study was based on an average of a 42-hour working week for education and a 45-hour week for the private sector [salary survey *Vacature 2000 – Luc Sels*]).
- The number of working days a year was taken into account, however. A teacher gets 29 days holiday (6 weeks) more than workers in the private sector. (Headteachers get only 9 days more). For the key posts this means an advantage of 11% (and for management posts only 2%).
- Pensions in education are considerably higher than the statutory pensions. The additional cover in the private sector does not weigh up against this. This therefore means a 3% advantage for education.
- Other remuneration in the form of perks, such as company cars, expenses, meals, is common in management jobs in the private sector. Management posts in education are 5% worse off in this respect.

The basic salary for management posts is clearly lower than the market and there is no compensation for this when we look at the overall salary package. In fact, people in management posts enjoy considerably fewer benefits compared with other groups in education. Their holiday advantage over the private sector is smaller than for teachers for instance. Moreover it was found that additional elements such as variable pay and a company car, which management staff in other sectors receive, have a significant value. In education, there are no such benefits for management posts. The study also showed that the difference in pay between teaching staff and headteachers is small.

After this pay study, elementary school headteachers (depending on the number of pupils in their school) received a pay increase as agreed in the *CAO VI* collective agreement.

The *CAO VIII* collective agreement comprises a pay increase for headteachers in elementary education and full-time secondary education, leading to a greater difference in pay between a headteacher and a teacher. The pay increase for headteachers means that the salary of a headteacher of an elementary school with more than 350 pupils is brought in line with that of a headteacher of a middle school. In concrete terms, elementary school headteachers are receiving an average increase of 7% from 1 September 2007. Various differentiation mechanisms are taken into account, so the increase may vary. Headteachers in secondary education already enjoyed a better deal and improvements are therefore less great there. Deputy-heads in secondary education are also receiving a pay increase. 102 deputy-heads in middle schools are receiving a 1.4% pay increase on average. For 194 deputy-heads in upper schools, the pay increase is 2.7% on average.

In concrete terms, the salaries of headteachers of an elementary school with fewer than 350 pupils will be 35 % higher on average than those of nursery school teachers (see table 5.2) once the *CAO VIII* has been introduced. For headteachers of an elementary school with more than 350 pupils the difference will be 37.66 % (see table 5.3). This difference is the same for headteachers of a school providing lower stage secondary education compared with the salary of a non-graduate teacher (see table 5.4). If we compare the salary of a teacher with a degree with that of a headteacher of a school providing higher stage secondary education, we see that the headteacher's salary is on average 29.75 % higher (see table 5.5).

5.3 School leaders' pension

5.3.1 Pension provision

Pension provision is not under the control of the Flemish Minister for Education and Training but that of the Federal Minister for Pensions. In order to be entitled to a state pension, a staff member must:

- submit an application
- have a permanent appointment
- have reached the required age (60)
- have a sufficient number of years in service (5).

These conditions are the same for management and teaching staff.

5.3.2 Figures

A total of 284 headteachers left teaching in the 2005-2006 academic year. The reason for their departure was either retirement if they were over 60, or joining the retainer scheme prior to retirement. The retainer scheme is a kind of early retirement, which headteachers can take voluntarily from the age of 55 if they have had few absences due to illness during their career. In 2004-2005 this involved 257 headteachers. In the 2003-2004 academic year, 284 headteachers left due to retirement or early retirement (see table 5.6). More detailed figures on the average retirement age are not available.

5.4 Policy initiatives

5.4.1 Planned policy initiatives

In his policy document (2004) Minister Vandenbroucke makes a commitment to making the post of headteacher more attractive in order to attract enthusiastic and professional people into the job. Some of the measures proposed are appropriate pay, more opportunities for professional development, more operating resources, and a better infrastructure. School leaders in elementary education are being promised good support.

In the *CAO VIII* collective agreement a number of these proposals have been turned into concrete measures. Five measures are being taken to give headteachers a sense of being valued, to attract good headteachers and to professionalize school leadership further:

- From 1 September 2007 a pay rise for headteachers in elementary and secondary education (see 5.2.3).
- Extra support for headteachers of small schools in elementary and secondary education in order to reduce their teaching commitment by 4 hours a week, also from 1 September 2007.
- A relaxation of qualification requirements for headteachers: from 1 September 2007 candidate headteachers with an HOKT (higher education of the short type) or HOLT (higher education of the extended type) qualification as well as proof of educational competence can take up a headteacher's post in elementary education. From that date, a

- headteacher with at least an HOKT qualification can be appointed to a secondary school providing the third stage provided he/she also has ‘another’ qualification.
- Budget for training and in-service training for headteachers: during their career, headteachers will be allocated 1,500 euros to cover costs related to training. They will also receive 75 euros per headteacher for in-service training. These measures will be introduced in 2008.
 - Replacement of a headteacher who is absent for a prolonged period from 1 September 2007.

The *CAO VIII* also commits to extend the policy and support framework in secondary education. The school communities in secondary education have for a considerable time been working with a staffing points system for recruiting support staff and supporting policy at a school community level. From 1 September 2007 there is an additional allocation to expand the policy and support framework within the school communities, but especially at the level of individual schools. This allows for better support and organization in schools and a greater variety of posts and tasks can be created within the staff group. The system of teacher hours for special educational task periods will therefore no longer have to be used for tasks such as stage co-ordinator, prevention advisor and ‘green teacher’. The number of additional jobs will depend on the profile of the new appointments. Commencing 1 September 2009, management staff posts, except the post of headteacher, will also be converted into resources that will be added to the existing staffing points system. The school communities and schools will then have full autonomy in their decisions on how to use these resources.

5.4.2 Policy recommendations

Devos et al. (2005) examined the level of satisfaction and functioning of elementary school headteachers. On the basis of their research they make the following policy recommendations:

- There is a need for a focussed competency profile to facilitate the recruitment and the evaluation of headteachers in the future. According to the researchers, this competency profile must mainly emphasize leadership skills and people management skills on the one hand and educational competencies on the other.
- There must be more support at the supra-scholastic level. Legislation, financial management, administration and ICT are vital to a school. The headteacher him/herself must have the crucial competencies referred to above, but capable, well-trained employees are also vital to a school. The formation of school communities within elementary education could help achieve this. Indeed elementary schools are too small for each one of them to have these posts individually.
- There is a need for additional qualifications for the post of headteacher. Besides the previously mentioned competency profile there must be sound training to enable headteachers to acquire the necessary competencies and so fit the required profile. The research showed that a background in education is desirable in a headteacher because it gives him/her empathy with the teachers and what is important to them.
- The salary of elementary school headteachers needs to be upgraded.
- A candidate’s performance-oriented approach must be a key consideration in the selection process. Indeed this is considered an important personal characteristic in the literature on leadership.
- The role of the government and the inspectorate should become more positive. The research found that headteachers feel overwhelmed by the extent of education regulations, the rate at which all kinds of new measures are imposed and the associated administrative load. These issues must of course be examined in their context, but better support for the school to accommodate these external requirements is not an excessive luxury.
- Further professionalization should also be provided to the school board to enable them to bear their responsibility fully.

Van Petegem et al. (2005) support the last recommendation. In the policy recommendations following their research they claim in relation to the schools' ability to implement policy that school boards are

of great importance, since these can assist school leaders and their team in a supportive manner to implement policy effectively. School boards could support their school leader better during his/her career. The professionalization of headteachers therefore seems expedient and can be achieved through in-service training. The researchers consider that professional administrators in smaller school boards are also necessary.

In the same research report, Van Petegem et al. (2005) also call for middle management to be developed further. A middle management within a school can be a helping hand to the school leader. This also creates more 'shared leadership' within the school, which in turns means that everything does not fall on the shoulders of one single school leader. A middle management can then also optimize the school's ability to implement policy. The government is acting on these recommendations with the recent *CAO* measures.

CHAPTER 6: THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we endeavour to give an overview of the possibilities open to a headteacher or candidate headteacher for his/her professional development for school leadership. In Flanders, however, the training opportunities for headteachers are rather limited. This is particularly so when it comes to training for candidate headteachers. Training for headteachers varies according to the education network. The government imposes no requirements for training for headteachers. Neither does the government impose any requirements regarding an additional qualification to be able to become a headteacher. A teaching qualification is sufficient. The investment by the government in training for headteachers is very limited, although things are gradually changing in this respect.

6.2 The preparation of school leaders

6.2.1 School leader training programmes

6.2.1.1 Community education

As was said in the previous chapter (see 5.2.1), school leadership training is only obligatory in community education. This training consists of two years of pre-service training, which aims to develop the necessary skills for a participant to then carry out the duties of a headteacher. A training certificate is awarded on completion of the training. This certificate comprises a strengths and weaknesses analysis drawn up by the mentors who observed and supported the candidate during his/her training. The certificate also states the education level or education type (headteacher in elementary education, headteacher in secondary education, head of an adult education centre, headteacher in part-time art education or headteacher in special education) for which the candidate received training. This training certificate does give the candidate access to all posts of headteacher provided he/she also has the necessary basic qualifications (see 5.2.1.2) required for those posts.

In order to be admitted to the training programme, the candidate must be designated by the school group for the training, stating for which education level or education type. A candidate who wishes to receive the training must therefore first put him/herself forward as a candidate to a school group. The latter then invites the candidates for screening and informs them of the assessment criteria that will apply. These criteria have been centrally determined and negotiated beforehand. The criteria are divided into four categories:

- length of service in community education
- educational insights and skills
- leadership skills
- social and communication skills.

The school group first devises a number of scenarios, which are then divulged to the candidates. At the beginning of the selection process, the candidate draws one scenario. He/she is given 30 minutes to prepare. The scenarios are of a general nature. Specific knowledge is not tested. What the interviewers do gauge are the skills and competencies in respect of the aforementioned criteria.

The school group must notify the candidates in writing of their decision whether or not to admit them to the training. There is a fixed number of candidates that can be admitted to the training per school group. Every year, around 125 candidates are accepted for training. Each candidate must pay 500 euros a year for his/her training. In order to limit the number of contact days, an electronic learning platform is used, which allows candidates to communicate with their mentor and fellow participants about the course content, tasks, subjects for discussion, etc. The syllabus is based on the policy

developments that affect schools and the consequences these have on the way in which the headteacher experiences and performs his duties. There are 6 areas:

- education policy
- policy on participation, pupil support and well-being and satisfaction of pupils and teachers
- the legal and administrative framework
- staffing policy
- financial policy
- material policy.

Besides the pre-service component of the training there is an in-service component. This consists of a training package put together by the in-service training centre for headteachers, who are either appointed as replacements or not, or headteachers who have been admitted for the probationary period (see 5.2.1.1). This part of the training is put together according to the candidate's specific needs and in consultation with the school group who has put him/her forward.

6.2.1.2 Subsidized and grant-aided education

Besides the training for candidate headteachers in community education, the only other training available to candidate headteachers is that organized by the Flemish towns and municipalities education secretariat *Onderwijssecretariaat van de Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten (OVSG)*. The *OVSG* is one of the co-ordinating bodies within subsidized public-sector education (see 2.1.2.2). This training is not mandatory in order to be appointed in education organized by the local authorities, however. Both candidate headteachers and new headteachers who have been appointed in their first year as headteacher can do the training. The training is only open to headteachers and candidate headteachers in elementary education.

It is made up of two components: a standard package of 4 course days with 8 sessions and an optional package also of 4 course days with 8 sessions. The standard package comprises the following sessions:

- brief introduction to *OVSG*
- the task of the elementary school at various levels
- school and classroom organization
- the profile and tasks of the headteacher
- the role of the headteacher in the consultation process (both internal and external)
- the place of the headteacher within the care policy
- the headteacher's exam.

The optional component focuses on issues related to education legislation:

- the problems associated with appointment and the elementary education decree
- permanent appointment and notification
- re-assignment and redeployment
- calculation and application of the teaching periods package
- consulting legal sources and a further look at the teaching periods package.

The standard package costs 170 euros per participant. The optional package costs 140 euros per participant.

6.2.2 Training for new school leaders

There are few training programmes for candidate headteachers in Flanders. The training programmes that support newly-appointed headteachers, however, are more numerous among the different co-ordinating bodies of the education networks.

As was said earlier, community education considers the support of newly-appointed headteachers as a continuation of the mandatory training they attended as candidate headteachers. Newly-appointed

headteachers have the opportunity to attend in-service training that is developed according to need by the community education in-service training centre in consultation with the school group to which the headteacher belongs.

The Flemish Catholic education co-ordinating body *VSKO* does things differently. For its newly-appointed headteachers in mainstream and special elementary education it organizes a three-year training programme that aims to give participants greater understanding of the job and of themselves, to develop the competencies to work in a leadership position within a constantly changing school environment, to increase the school's capacity to implement policy and to adopt an approach of constant learning within a continual interplay between action and reflection. Various ways of working are used in the training programme. There are training sessions with interim tasks, reflection groups and an electronic learning environment. It is a three-year programme with different modules each year. Newly-appointed school leaders can start the training in their first year as school leader. They attend the training together with other newly-appointed school leaders in their diocese. The programme in all the dioceses is made up of the following:

- personal leadership
- communication and consultation
- optimal time management
- care policy.

The cost is determined by the diocese, but is at least 400 euros per year of training. The school leader receives the Catholic Education School Leader's certificate when he/she has completed the training.

The *VSKO* advises its newly-appointed headteachers in secondary education to attend the basic training course in school policy at Antwerp University's *Centrum voor Andragogiek VZW*. This is a three-year programme and includes the following:

- social and communication skills
- school management
- education legislation and administration
- external relations.

The cost is 1,150 euros for the three years.

The *OVS* also runs a basic training course for new headteachers. This is a two-year programme, which is open to new headteachers who have been in service for a maximum of three years. The first year consists of 4 course days, 1 seminar and an optional package. This includes the following:

- introduction to the *OVS* and visit to the Education Department
- dealing with school inspections
- devising the policy plan
- thematic class visit and processing
- pursuing a staffing policy within the school team
- internal school analyses and communication
- school's work plan
- the position of the headteacher within the participation decree
- nursery education
- introduction to special education.

The second year consists of the same number of course days, a seminar and a practical, and includes the following:

- enrolment policy and school regulations
- communication and relationship with the school board
- vision and concept of the *OVS* curricula
- in-depth look at areas of learning
- efficient communication for effective conflict resolution
- effective and efficient negotiation towards resolving conflicts
- examine own style of approach to conflict and dealing with conflict

- devise an action plan for own school
- discussions with the team
- giving feedback to dysfunctional teachers
- self-care.

The costs for the participant for the first year are a minimum of 285 euros and for the second year a minimum of 395 euros.

6.3 The professional development of school leaders

In addition to the initiatives to prepare candidate headteachers and new headteachers for their job as headteacher, there are other in-service training initiatives that are open to all headteachers. The co-ordinating bodies within the various education networks also provide training programmes. And besides these, there are also in-service training programmes for headteachers provided by other training establishments such as universities, higher education colleges, private training centres, etc.

6.3.1 Training providers

Community education and the not-for-profit organizations of the various co-ordinating bodies within subsidized and grant-aided education receive funding from the Flemish Community to run in-service training programmes specifically related to their own educational project. The Flemish Government therefore recognizes these organizations if their objective is in-service training. The recognized organizations⁵⁴ are:

- Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen Pedagogische Ondersteuning V.Z.W.
- Nascholing in het Katholiek Onderwijs V.Z.W.
- Navormingscentrum van het Onderwijssecretariaat van de Steden en Gemeenten van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap V.Z.W.
- Federatie van Steinerscholen V.Z.W.
- Studie- en Vormingscentrum voor het Methodeonderwijs
- VONAC V.Z.W.

Every year the Flemish Government publishes priority themes for in-service training (see 4.3.4)⁵⁵. In-service training organizations can submit proposals for projects on a specific theme. These proposals are then assessed for relevance and quality. The approved projects are funded and evaluated by the Flemish Community. These in-service training projects are free for the staff member. In the past, school leadership was a priority theme. No priority themes have been published for the 2005-2006 academic year, however.

There are many other training providers who run in-service training programmes. Schools can find information on the various in-service training organizations and their programmes on the Education Department's website.

6.3.2 Provision from the co-ordinating bodies

A few years ago, Provincial Education Flanders (*Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen, POV*) decided no longer to target candidate headteachers explicitly. They previously ran a highly successful course for candidate headteachers. However, there was a demand from participants for a follow-up course that would provide a more in-depth study. The *POV* therefore decided to develop a school management in-service training programme aimed at a wider target group than just candidate headteachers. The target group was widened to management members (headteachers, deputy-heads,

⁵⁴ See the Ministerial order regarding the recognition of not-for-profit organizations in subsidized public-sector and grant-aided private education in charge of running in-service training projects (17.01.95).

⁵⁵ See the Flemish Government order regarding the regulations for the approval procedure for in-service training projects instigated by the Flemish Government (22.10.96).

etc.), senior vocational training co-ordinators and vocational training co-ordinators, co-ordinators, management secretaries, etc. People could enrol for the course through the provincial school boards, who decide who can and who cannot take part. This is a modular course, consisting of five modules, each of 3 to 4 course days spread over 3 calendar years:

- education legislation and regulations
- quality assurance systems
- financial/budget management
- human resources management
- external communication.

Participants do not have to do all modules but can enrol for every module separately. The cost of the whole course is 1,500 euros. The course started in the spring of 2003 and ended in the spring of 2005. There are no plans to run the course again at the moment. However, the *POV* is running a number of short courses for managements in 2006. Two examples are:

- Leadership: your challenge too?
- Voice coaching.

The Flemish Catholic education co-ordinating body *VSKO* also runs a number of in-service training programmes aimed at managements. Some of the programmes for the 2006-2007 academic year include:

- Gain time by making time for time: time management.
- Team consultation as an element for leadership. About meetings with a process, a procedure and even a product.
- Implementing changes and resistance. Increasing the capacity to implement policy.

These are all training programmes with a limited number of sessions. Besides these in-service training programmes that accommodate all education levels, there are also programmes for specific education levels.

The *OVS* runs more specialist training courses for experienced headteachers in elementary education. These take the form of three-day seminars. Examples include coaching via discussion and altering disruptive team dynamics.

6.3.3 Provision from other training establishments

Mahieu (2001) rightly points out that it is remarkable that there are no specific qualification requirements for school leadership posts. He states that a school leader must have the ability to implement policy. The teacher qualification, which is currently the only requirement for a permanent appointment as headteacher, offers no guarantee for this. He therefore argues for a university-level of professional training for headteachers. For the past few years, Antwerp University has run an academic training programme in education management for school leaders or candidate school leaders. This is a post-Master's Master's programme. This means that it is only open to candidates who already possess a Master's degree. In practice, these are therefore mainly just secondary school headteachers. The training programme works on a system of credits, with 60 credits spread over a two-year period. The curriculum comprises the following components:

- management and strategic control of a professional organization
- internal and external communication
- financial management and policy
- education reform
- management of the education process
- marketing policy
- personnel management
- applied educational sociology
- education policy and law
- economics of education

- education management and ethics
- training in social skills
- training in communication skills
- practical project.

This curriculum is based on the professional profile for headteachers developed by the government (see 3.2). A balance was sought between knowledge transfer, skills training and practice-oriented projects.

There are a number of other training providers who run a three-year training programme, which leads to the certificate in higher educational studies *Getuigschrift Hoger Opvoedkundige Studiën, GHOS*, after two years, or to the diploma *Diploma Hoger Opvoedkundige Studiën, DHOS*, after three years. These programmes often mainly focus on aspects of education rather than on leadership or school management. Many school boards in private education specify the *DHOS* diploma as a prerequisite for a headteacher's appointment. Management and teaching staff who have a *GHOS* or *DHOS* qualification are also entitled to annual additional pay.

There are also numerous short in-service training programmes for school leaders organized by various organizations. These usually consist of one or several short sessions on a specific theme.

6.4 Relevant research

6.4.1 *Towards certified training*

Various researchers argue for appropriate training for headteachers:

- Within the framework of a strong staff policy within a school it is important that school managements are adequately prepared for their task and are given adequate support. Training that provides a broad understanding of the different aspects of staffing policy is therefore recommended. (Devos et al., 2004)
- If the policy effectiveness of schools is to be increased, investment in the professionalism of the school leadership and in a systematic way of training that leads to valorisation recognized by the government and school boards is no excessive luxury. (Van Petegem, Verhoeven et al., 2005)
- Devos et al. (2005) state that in order to familiarize potential candidate headteachers with the job of headteacher in elementary education, additional training leading to a qualification can be useful. Such training would inform participants of what the job means and entails and what competencies a headteacher needs. Such training must also show who has a minimal level of competence in vision-development, leadership and people management and who does not. (Devos et al., 2005)
- School leaders perform an important function within the school. For that very reason the government should give some incentives towards the professionalization of school leaders. Taking into account the concept of freedom of education, the restriction of the number of training programmes available is not desirable. The government should instead introduce an accreditation system for school leader training programmes. This would allow the government to guarantee the quality of a number of programmes. (Van Petegem, Devos, et al., 2005)

6.4.2 *Content of the training programme*

Following their research into the level of satisfaction and functioning of headteachers in elementary education, Devos et al. (2005) argue for an additional qualification for the post of headteacher. The teacher training that is currently required to become a headteacher in elementary education is relevant as far as development of educational competencies is concerned, but the management component is completely lacking. However, the researchers do not suggest fitting this

management component into the teacher training currently provided, but favour a situation where a separate qualification is needed to become a headteacher. The aim of this additional training would then be to familiarize candidate headteachers with the job of headteacher. The researchers suggest developing training at the level of the current Master's programmes, which would be open to people with a teacher training Bachelor's degree and a number of years of experience. This would prevent the appointment of headteachers who lack vital basic skills in relation to leadership.

According to Devos et al. (2005) this training programme should be made up of three components: vision development, leadership skills and social skills. A grasp of the regulations and administration should also be included, albeit to a lesser extent. According to the researchers, these last aspects are more important in training programmes for the staff who provide legal and administrative support within the school. Time management is also an important element of the training. The researchers do state that this should be seen mainly as following on from self-management, with the school leader looking at what he/she considers a priority and what he/she needs to focus on. The training could also include a significant practical component. Indeed, the skills needed to be a good headteacher cannot be developed through theoretical courses alone.

Vandenberghe et al. (2003) also highlight a need for extended and systematic training for newly-appointed headteachers in elementary education. They also specify a number of important components:

- the task-oriented component: headteachers must learn to handle legislation, procedures, regulations, time management, the organization of meetings, etc. The researchers state that some headteachers master this component relatively quickly, whereas others need support in this. The support for this component should consist of the following, according to them: information sessions, help in developing a network of colleagues, learning to use information sources, etc.
- the person-oriented component: this includes the motivation of team members, and bringing about common interest within the team. Systematic training to master these skills is certainly not superfluous, according to Vandenberghe et al. (2003).
- the component related to strategic content: dealing with reforms that are imposed externally and develop internally is part of this component, which the researchers suggest should comprise balanced support with systematic planning that takes into account the different contents and functional confrontation between theory and practice.

A training programme for newly-appointed headteachers should comprise a balance of these three components. Indeed the researchers believe that a headteacher must be capable of mastering the three components or finding a functional personal balance between the three.

6.4.3 *The added value of training*

Mahieu (1998) makes a number of comments regarding the training of headteachers that are not related to training content. Firstly he says that training programmes are just one way of achieving further professionalization of headteachers. Home study, professional contacts and logic are also important according to him. Indeed a school leader needs more than just knowledge.

Managing a school is a team-oriented activity. According to Mahieu, skills are therefore better learnt in a team context. This fits in with the findings of Devos (2001), who says that the link between individual learning and organizational learning is a fundamental element in the professional development of headteachers. A team-oriented and practice-oriented approach in training therefore gives added value.

Thirdly, school leaders also greatly value the fact that they come into contact with fellow-headteachers during their training. Mahieu (1998) also states that training programmes are more effective when they are run by an organization that can also provide follow-up in the form of support in the workplace.

Devos (2001) adds that external feedback is very important. School teams often find it difficult to evaluate themselves because they are often biased when they look at their own practices.

A fourth comment relates to the fact that it is better if school management courses are spread over a longer period. The positive effect of this is that the different components can be viewed in a wider perspective on school leadership. Participants can also work in groups. Furthermore participants can focus on a number of objectives that reinforce each other. It is important, however, to avoid creating an artificial training culture. In that sense, several one-off training sessions are ideal, because participants are not isolated from their day-to-day work so much and can also immediately try things out in practice.

A fifth comment relates to the fact that working with a group in which the members do not know each other yet can be an advantage. It means that participants can speak freely about their experiences without running the risk of being confronted with it at a later date. This does not mean that a group spirit cannot develop in such a group after a time, stimulating the exchange of knowledge and experience. This could even lead to material and personal collaboration.

6.5 Recent policy measures

Minister Vandenbroucke already promised in his policy document to work towards providing more opportunities for professional development for headteachers and this was translated into more concrete measures in the *CAO VIII* collective agreement. From 2008, there will be a training fund for headteachers which will recognize training programmes that aim to strengthen the professional competencies of headteachers. These training programmes lead to a diploma or certificate. The headteacher will then be entitled, throughout his entire career, to 1,500 euros to cover the costs of such training. More in-service training funding will also be provided so that a headteacher can spend 75 euros on in-service training.

There is also further investment in training evaluators who will have to conduct the performance reviews and progress evaluations that are being introduced in September 2007. These evaluators are primarily headteachers and deputy-heads.

Middle management in schools will also be developed better. As stated previously (see 5.4.1), from 1 September 2007 there will be an additional allocation in secondary education to expand the policy and support framework within the school communities, but especially at the level of individual schools. This allows for better support and organization in schools and a greater variety of posts and tasks can be created within the staff group.

6.6 Current needs and developments

Below is a list of the main trends related to the professionalization of school leaders as a summary:

- Several researchers point to a need for certified training for headteachers. The teacher qualification that is currently sufficient to be appointed as a headteacher is being called into question. Specific training is needed for headteachers and candidate headteachers to develop the management-related skills that are not catered for in the usual teacher training.
- Current headteacher training programmes focus on the development of a vision, on leadership, social skills, etc. And whereas the emphasis used to be on the legal and administrative component, this is now just one of the components of training. The practical component is now also included in many training programme. Participants are given practical assignments, which they have to complete and on which they are then given feedback.
- Investment in middle management in schools means better support for the headteacher. This can also be an opportunity for middle management staff to evolve to the job of

headteacher, since they enjoy a kind of on-the-job-training in the middle management position.

- The school communities can also bring added value to the professional development of headteachers, as they enable school leaders to develop professional networks, providing support through the exchange of ideas, opportunity for reflection, etc. The school community can be a significant support to new headteachers in particular.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Freedom of education: a lot of scope, little clarity

The constitutional freedom of education is one of the mainstays of Flemish education. As a result of this freedom, school boards enjoy a high level of autonomy. The school boards in Flanders are grouped in three education networks: community education, subsidized public-sector education (towns/cities, municipalities and provinces) and grant-aided private education (mostly Catholic school boards). Like the entire education provision in Flanders, the status, position, job description, selection, training and professional development of headteachers vary according to the education network within which they work. The government prescribes few regulations and leaves the school boards a lot of scope, which means there is a lot of room for manoeuvre and flexibility in the way the position of headteacher is fulfilled. This translates into big differences between the various school boards. Some school boards take on almost sole responsibility for financial and material policy, whereas others remain completely absent and leave all the responsibility to the headteacher. Some headteachers feel supported by their school board, which acts as a sounding board for them and with which they can discuss important decisions (educational project, investment, dismissal of permanently appointed staff, etc.). Other headteachers either feel completely left to their own devices by their school board or they feel patronized by the school board and feel they have insufficient autonomy.

A consequence of this lack of regulations and of freedom of education is that there is little clarity about what precisely is expected of a headteacher and what the specific requirements are that headteachers must fulfil. There is currently no additional qualification for headteachers that transcends the networks. Any teacher can be appointed as a headteacher, provided he/she has a teacher's qualification. Only community education demands a prior additional certificate, which is obtained following specific training. The absence of a generally-recognized diploma or certificate means that the difference in salary between teachers and headteachers is still relatively small. According to a comparative inter-sectorial wage study, headteachers in schools are paid too little compared with comparable positions in other sectors. This is not the case for teachers.

7.2 The school leader: crucial for the development of the school, less focussed on testing

Much research in Flanders has shown that the headteacher plays a crucial role in the development of the school, the culture of the school, the commitment and motivation of the teachers and the level of satisfaction among pupils. These findings are in line with those of international research.

Not much research has been conducted in Flanders into the direct impact of the headteacher on pupils' results. This is partly due to the fact that in Flanders there are no central, standardized tests for pupils. Schools have the autonomy to assess their pupils as they see fit. It is therefore difficult to compare schools on the basis of pupil results. The accountability of schools in Flanders is therefore completely different from that in many Anglo-Saxon countries. Schools in Flanders are inspected. These inspections ascertain how well schools are doing in meeting the final attainment levels (minimum targets all pupils must achieve) and look at how the school functions as a whole. A report is then published. The inspectorate has made a conscious decision not to compare schools on the basis of these reports.

This approach means that headteachers are not explicitly held to account for the pupils' test results. The way headteachers in some countries focus so strongly on tests and pupil results is not something that is found in Flanders.

7.3 Increased complexity and stress

Much of the research conducted in Flanders shows that the job of headteacher has become much more complex and stressful in recent years. Headteachers have to confer with far more parties within and outside their schools. Schools are increasingly held accountable, as society becomes ever more demanding of schools. This means that schools are not just concerned with teaching. The care policy, which is aimed at all children who need extra attention for whatever reason, has become a key factor in all schools. The job of the school, and of the school leadership, has therefore increased dramatically. This translates into a feeling of work overload, which is significant particularly among headteachers in elementary education. Elementary schools have limited administrative support. Elementary schools of small school boards in grant-aided private education often struggle most with this because they cannot fall back on the services of the school board (as in subsidized public-sector education) or on the support of the school group to which they belong (as in community education).

7.4 School communities: a new development

The formation of school communities in both elementary and secondary education is an important new development. These school communities are special in that they group schools together and enable them to work together on a voluntary basis. That is both the strength and the weakness of the school communities. When schools have a good mutual understanding, collaboration within the school community can go very far. They can have a common staffing policy for recruitment, staff evaluation criteria and staff deployment. Resources can be managed and used more efficiently. This allows for a common ICT policy or a more co-ordinated care policy for instance. In secondary schools it can also lead to better harmonization in the range of subjects offered by each school.

Research has shown that both in elementary and secondary education, school communities sometimes also work far less well. A lack of mutual understanding between schools, whether inspired by competitive motives or not, means that all the school community does for the headteacher is create more meetings and administrative hassle, without giving any real added value. Collaboration remains limited and the school community leads a rather formalistic, paper existence.

One of the great challenges for the future is to optimize the function of these school communities. In the best-case scenario they could provide sound support to headteachers. A wider support framework would make it possible – certainly in elementary education – for financial, ICT-related and legal expertise to be developed on which the headteacher could fall back. This would allow headteachers to focus more on their key tasks as educational and transformational leaders. Many headteachers say that they cannot focus sufficiently on these key tasks and this has often been a significant problem for many headteachers in the past.

School communities can also be an interesting medium for the development of networks between headteachers, middle management staff and teachers in the different schools. This can also be an important link in the professional development of school leaders, with possibilities of exchange of information, but also of reflection, mutual feedback and even intervision.

7.5 A greater interest in professional development and certification

There is a significant recent trend in Flanders towards training and professional development for school leaders, an issue that has not been considered much in the past. Here too, freedom of education meant that the government did not take many initiatives in this respect. The education networks on the other hand did take a number of initiatives. These changed often or were no longer organized due to a lack of resources. The government has recently concluded a collective agreement, which touches on the issue of a certified recognition of training for headteachers. Limited funding (1,500 euros per headteacher) is also provided, which every headteacher can use for such training during his career.

Research in Flanders has more than once pointed to a need for more professional training for headteachers and for training initiatives that further build on that as part of a long-term in-service training programme. An important question at this point is: should people receive training before they become headteachers or should training only start once they are headteachers? It is undoubtedly more cost-effective to train people who already have experience. Training in management and leadership is most effective for people in the job. The question poses itself, however, whether prior training is not important as well. Prior training meets several needs: it focuses interested parties better on what the position of headteacher entails and whether it is something for them; such training can obviously also develop and strengthen the competencies required for the position of headteacher; and finally, it can make it clear who has the minimum competencies for the job and who has not. Research suggests that such training should be comparable with the level of a Master's degree. This would certainly be a fundamental change in elementary education, where only a teacher qualification is needed for the complex job of headteacher.

7.6 Selection and headhunting

Which brings us to the important aspect of selection. Not everyone has the necessary competencies to be a headteacher. Training can be part of the solution, but not always. Which is why a reliable selection mechanism is also needed. The only education network that runs an extended training programme in school leadership is community education. The other networks focus their attention more on newly-appointed headteachers. In community education candidates for the school leadership training programme are selected beforehand by the school groups. In other words, there is a prior selection process. A brief evaluation also takes place during training, before the candidates obtain the certificate that is required to be appointed as a headteacher. This is not the case with the other networks. Their efforts are aimed more at in-service training, in which community education invests less. It is important to develop an integrated training scheme, in which training (pre-service and in-service) for newly-appointed headteachers and for headteachers with longer length of service complement one another. This kind of broad training is currently not available in Flanders. No doubt the lack of resources is an important factor in this. Freedom of education, which leaves scope for initiative and creating one's own distinct profile, also brings its limitations in this respect.

Besides training, the headhunting of potential candidates for school leadership is also important. Although there are no figures available on this, indications from school boards show that it is getting increasingly difficult to find candidates for the job of headteacher. This is a growing need in Flanders that school boards have to face.

7.7 Middle management posts as a link in the development of school leadership

Closely linked with this is the need to see school leadership in a wider context than just headteachers and deputy-heads. Middle management posts, in which people hold a limited responsibility, are increasingly needed because of the new social developments schools are facing. The government also recognizes this, since the last collective agreement provides for specific resources for middle management posts in secondary education. This need is still limited in elementary schools, even though here too such posts are relevant, if merely in view of the development of candidates for school leadership. Indeed the selection and development of candidates for school leadership is not just a question of formal tests/interviews on the one hand and formal training programmes on the other. School leadership is also better developed in practice and through reflection on this practice. Which is why middle management posts can be an important link here. It is also vital for leadership training to comprise a significant practical component that involves reflection and feedback. This is vital for the effective professional development of school leaders. Regardless of this practice-oriented experience for school leaders, a reliable series of instruments for spotting leadership potential among people who

are not in a position of leadership in Flanders has not yet begun to be developed. Even though there is also a need for this.

7.8 A need for the professionalization of school boards

And finally one last thought about the role of school boards. There is a need for the professionalization of school boards in Flanders. They fulfil an important task in the selection, support and evaluation of school leaders. It is further more important that they concentrate mainly on strategic policy and setting out the basic ideas. They must leave the operational management to the autonomy of the school leader. And this presents a significant training need. But not everything can be resolved with additional training. An increase in scale, which would allow school boards to make use of professional managers, could also provide a solution. This does not mean that local volunteers no longer have a role on these boards. On the contrary, their input is important for the embedment in the local community, among other things. These volunteers often also bring in additional professional expertise. But actively attracting board members with experience in education is also important. School boards can also buy in expertise through consultancy, and they can share expertise and experience through mutual networks (including the school communities).

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Appendix I: Tables

Table 1.1: Unemployment level (15-64 year-olds) in the Flemish Region, 1996-2004

(%)	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total	6.1	5.1	5.3	5.4	4.3	4.0	4.9	5.7	5.4
Men	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.4	3.2	3.6	4.3	5.2	4.6
Women	9.1	7.3	7.1	6.8	5.9	4.5	5.7	6.3	6.6

Source: NIS EAK (Bewerking Steunpunt WAV)

Table 2.1: Schools in elementary education

	Community education	Grant-aided private education	Development-oriented education	Total
Nursery education				
Mainstream	353	1,314	460	2,127
Special	23	61	7	91
Nursery education total	376	1,375	467	2,218
Primary education				
Mainstream	354	1,316	476	2,146
Special	35	124	32	191
Primary education total	389	1,440	508	2,337

Note: The schools that provide both nursery and primary education are included in the figure for nursery schools and in the figure for primary schools. The sum of the figure for nursery schools and the figure for primary schools is therefore higher than the figure for elementary schools.

In the 2005-2006 academic year there were 168 autonomous nursery schools and 187 autonomous primary schools in mainstream education and 1,959 elementary schools providing nursery and primary education. In special education there were no autonomous nursery schools, 100 autonomous primary schools and 91 elementary school providing special nursery and primary education. There were also a further 6 schools in both nursery education and primary education providing type 5 special education. These schools are not included in the figures.

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community (2006), *Vlaams onderwijs in cijfers: 2005-2006*. Brussels: Ministry of Education and Training.

Table 2.2: School population in elementary education

	Community education	Grant-aided private education	Development-oriented education	Total
Nursery education				
Mainstream	32,406	147,480	52,823	232,709
Special	537	1,136	148	1,821
Nursery education total	32,943	148,616	52,971	234,530
Primary education				
Mainstream	53,522	248,114	87,337	388,973
Special	5,910	16,565	4,278	26,753
Primary education total	59,432	264,679	91,615	415,726
Elementary school total	92,375	413,295	144,586	650,256

Note: In order to avoid counting pupils twice, the pupils who attend lessons in special education (known as type-5 pupils) because of prolonged illness are not included in the figures for special education. On 1 February 2006 there were 132 and 203 pupils in type 5 special nursery and special primary education respectively.

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community (2006), *Vlaams onderwijs in cijfers: 2005-2006*. Brussels: Ministry of Education and Training.

Table 2.3: Schools in secondary education

	Community education	Grant-aided private education	Development-oriented education	Total
Full-time secondary education				
Mainstream	228	624	75	927
Special	19	74	17	110
Full-time secondary education total	247	698	92	1,037
Part-time secondary education				
Part-time vocational education	16	23	8	47
Part-time secondary fishery education	1	-	-	1
Part-time secondary education total	17	23	8	48

Note: There are another 4 schools that provide type 5 special education. The schools are not included in the figures. The centres for part-time secondary education are always linked with a school for mainstream full-time education.

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community (2006), *Vlaams onderwijs in cijfers: 2005-2006*. Brussels: Ministry of Education and Training.

Table 2.4: School population in secondary education

	Community education	Grant-aided private education	Development-oriented education	Total
Mainstream secondary education	72,323	332,601	34,626	439,550
Special secondary education	3,988	11,491	2,322	17,801
Full-time secondary education total	76,311	344,092	36,948	457,351

Note: In order to avoid counting pupils twice, the pupils who attend lessons in special education (known as type-5 pupils) because of prolonged illness are not included in the figures for special education. On 1 February 2006 there were 240 type-5 pupils in special secondary education.

Source: Ministry of the Flemish Community (2006), *Vlaams onderwijs in cijfers: 2005-2006*. Brussels: Ministry of Education and Training.

Table 5.1: Gender of school leaders in Flanders in 2000 and 2006

2000	Men	Women	Total
nursery	13	170	183
primary	1,923	956	2,879
secondary	908	259	1,167
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,844</i>	<i>1,385</i>	<i>4,229</i>
2006	Men	Women	Total
nursery	34	217	251
primary	1,842	1,342	3,184
secondary	976	393	1,369
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,852</i>	<i>1,952</i>	<i>4,804</i>

Note: The figures include headteachers and deputy-heads of schools as well as wardens of boarding establishments and directors of medical educational institutions. Nursery here refers to the autonomous nursery schools.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.2: Age of school leaders in Flanders in 2000 and 2006

2000	24-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-66
nursery	1	10	23	17	33	51	45	3	/
primary	8	45	208	380	441	899	827	68	3
secondary	0	6	25	132	257	284	357	101	5
<i>total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>529</i>	<i>731</i>	<i>1,234</i>	<i>1,229</i>	<i>172</i>	<i>8</i>
2006	24-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-66
nursery	3	6	25	57	38	53	58	11	/
primary	10	81	217	483	676	641	844	230	2
secondary	3	14	46	109	271	435	353	133	5
<i>total</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>288</i>	<i>649</i>	<i>985</i>	<i>1,129</i>	<i>1,255</i>	<i>374</i>	<i>7</i>

Note: The figures include headteachers and deputy-heads of schools as well as wardens of boarding establishments and directors of medical educational institutions. The lower limit for the first category varies according to the age of the youngest school leader in that year. The upper limit for the last category varies according to the age of the oldest school leader in that year. Nursery here refers to the autonomous nursery schools.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.3: Status of school leaders in Flanders in 2000 and 2006

2000	Permanently appointed	Temporary in vacant post	Temporary in non-vacant post	In probationary period
nursery	144	24	15	0
primary	2,288	283	275	33
secondary	950	93	92	32
<i>total</i>	<i>3,382</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>382</i>	<i>65</i>
2006	Permanently appointed	Temporary in vacant post	Temporary in non-vacant post	In probationary period
nursery	197	20	32	2
primary	2,379	401	365	39
secondary	1,028	141	180	20
<i>total</i>	<i>3,604</i>	<i>562</i>	<i>577</i>	<i>61</i>

Note: The figures include headteachers and deputy-heads of schools as well as wardens of boarding establishments and directors of medical educational institutions. Nursery here refers to the autonomous nursery schools.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.4: Comparison of salaries of headteachers and teachers in elementary schools with less than 350 pupils

Length of service	Teacher/nursery teacher salary	Headteacher salary – elementary school with fewer than 350 pupils.	Difference in %
0 years	1984.55	2888.52	45.55 %
13 years	2711.33	3615.31	33.34 %
27 years	3456.30	4360.27	26.15 %
average			35 %

Note: The salary figures are euros and are index-linked gross salaries.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.5: Comparison of salaries of headteachers and teachers in elementary schools with more than 350 pupils

Length of service	Teacher/nursery teacher salary	Headteacher salary – elementary school with more than 350 pupils.	Difference in %
0 years	1984.55	2956.94	49.00 %
13 years	2711.33	3683.73	35.86 %
27 years	3456.30	4428.69	28.13 %
average			37.66 %

Note: The salary figures are euros and are index-linked gross salaries.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.6: Comparison of headteachers and teachers in secondary schools providing only lower stage

Length of service	Salary of non-university qualified teacher	Salary of headteacher of a secondary school providing only lower stage	Difference in %
0 years	1984.55	2956.94	49.00 %
13 years	2711.33	3683.73	35.86 %
27 years	3456.30	4428.69	28.13 %
average			37.66 %

Note: The salary figures are euros and are index-linked gross salaries.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.7: Comparison of headteachers and teachers in secondary schools providing higher stage

Length of service	Salary of university graduate teacher	Salary of headteacher of a secondary school providing higher stage	Difference in %
0 years	2485.52	3457.91	39.12 %
13 years	3479.66	4452.06	27.95 %
27 years	4382.97	5355.36	22.19 %
average			29.75 %

Note: The salary figures are euros and are index-linked gross salaries.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training

Table 5.8: Number of headteachers leaving education because of retirement or because they have joined the retainer scheme prior to retirement in elementary and secondary education

Academic year	Number of staff leaving	Retirement	Joined retainer scheme prior to retirement
2003-2004	232	122	124
2004-2005	257	133	134
2005-2006	284	133	157

Note: The figures represent heads, not full-time units. The figures include both appointed headteachers and replacement headteachers. Some headteachers have a retirement date and a date for joining the retainer scheme in the same academic year.

Source: Ministry of Education and Training