

**ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING AND RETAINING  
EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

**OECD Activity**

**UPDATE OF COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT  
FOR THE NETHERLANDS**

**(MARCH 2004)**

**Ministry of Education, Culture and Science**

## 1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

### The Dutch economy and labour market, trends and development (p. 19)

1. With an annual economic growth of almost 4% the Netherlands was among the European leaders just a few years ago. This situation has changed radically since 2001. Although economic growth ground to a halt in most European countries, the Dutch recession was among the worst in the European Union. During 2002 and the first half of 2003 the economy even contracted by 0.5%.

**Table 1 Economic growth (gross domestic product)**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2003
Growth (%)	3.8	4.3	4.0	3.5	1.2	-0.5	-0.5

Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS)

2. Unemployment is rising rapidly. Between November 2003 and January 2004 an average of 444 thousand people were unemployed in the Netherlands. This is an increase of 126 thousand as compared with the same period during the previous year, bringing average unemployment to 5.9% of the professional population. The year before this had been 4.3%. It is expected that the unemployment percentage will increase to 7.0% in 2004<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND TEACHING WORKFORCE

### Trends in relation to teaching and non-teaching staff (p. 27)

3. Assistant teachers are increasingly being used in primary education. While there were only a few hundred in 1998, the number had increased to about 3,200 by March 2002 and to more than 4,500 in March 2003. In the Collective Labour Agreement, which expired at the end of 2003, it had been agreed to create an extra 900 jobs for supporting staff. The majority of the assistant teachers work in the western part of the country and mainly in the four large cities. This is not surprising as most of the schools with disadvantaged children are located in these areas. These schools have more financial resources to appoint supporting staff.

### The labour market for teachers, trends and developments (p. 29)

4. The number of vacancies declined considerably in 2003: from more than 2,400 fulltime positions in the third quarter of 2002 to about 1,000 fulltime positions in the third quarter of 2003 (see Table 2). One of the reasons for this is the sharp decline in the number of pupils (fewer asylum seekers). Another reason is that owing to the economic recession fewer people are leaving the teaching profession for positions in other sectors and that more people are leaving other sectors to take up teaching. Although the number of vacancies declined in 2003, the situation remains alarming. Many new teachers will be needed in the years ahead as older teachers reach retirement age.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Central Planning Bureau, Macro-Economic Surveys 2004

**Table 2: vacancies (fulltime positions)**

<b>Primary Education</b>			
	2001/3	2002/3	2003/3
Management staff	310	345	227
Teachers	1,121	1,153	405
Support staff	206	323	80
<b>Primary Education overall</b>	<b>1,637</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>712</b>
<b>Secondary Education</b>			
	2001/3	2002/3	2003/3
Management staff	48	58	41
Teachers	430	409	259
Support staff	169	133	50
<b>Secondary Education overall</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Total Primary and Secondary Education</b>	<b>2,284</b>	<b>2,421</b>	<b>1,062</b>

Source: Regioplan, Arbeidsmarktbarometer primair onderwijs en voortgezet onderwijs

### Regional covenants

5. The educational labour market is largely a regional labour market. It is imperative that schools and teacher training institutes as well as the trainers of assistant teachers pursue a balance between the demand and supply of teaching staff. Early in 2004, schools and teacher training institutes in about twenty regions (mainly those in which there were shortages), entered into a regional covenant together with local authorities about an approach to the teacher shortage for both the short and the (medium to) long term.

### Mirror forecast model

6. The Mirror forecast model was developed to support the regional alignment of demand and supply in the teaching labour market. The combination of an increase in both the growing demand for expansion as well as the rising demand for replacements is expected to lead to a growing shortage in staff in the short, medium and long term.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science developed the Mirror forecast model to facilitate the alignment between demand and supply. Mirror is a micro simulation model for the teaching labour market. This model offers regions and individual school boards the possibility to gain insight into developments in the labour market and to determine the effectiveness of the various policy measures. Mirror is able to provide important input for the development of a (regional) labour market policy.

### Teaching staff programme

7. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science launched the Teaching Staff programme at the end of 2002. This programme has two objectives.

- a. **Quantitative:** preventing the expected shortfall in teaching staff in the years ahead. By 2007 a shortfall is expected of 10,400 fulltime positions (primary and secondary education). The objective is to reduce this shortfall to 2,200 vacant positions.

- b. **Qualitative:** improving the quality of the personnel policy at school and modernising the educational system and with that a more prominent role for the schools.

The objectives of the programme have been translated into three programme lines.

- a. The personnel policy of the schools.
- b. A regional approach to the shortfall of teaching staff.
- c. A more prominent role for schools in the educational infrastructure, the development and implementation of a qualifications structure and the modernisation of the educational system.

It was decided to formulate concrete objectives for this programme. These objectives state what has to be achieved by 2007. The objectives are based on analyses of literature and figures, and interviews and workshops with experts in the field of education. It is expected that by June 2004 targets will have been formulated for dozens of central themes. These will then be submitted to the Dutch Lower House in a memorandum.

### **3 ATTRACTING COMPETENT PEOPLE TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

#### **New paths to becoming a teacher (p. 38)**

8. In recent years the teaching labour market has been opened up in the Netherlands. In view of the huge demand for teachers now and in the future it is important to attract more people to the teaching profession. Teaching as a second career or as a (temporary) career move is being stimulated by means of image campaigns, a competitive remuneration position and the introduction of lateral entry (*zij-instromers*). Lateral entrants are highly qualified people with related work experience who can gain their qualifications within two years through a customised training programme. After a difficult start the process has now become part of the regular recruitment channel. According to the latest figures (mid 2003), about 2,500 teachers have started as lateral entrants in primary and secondary education.

#### **Job differentiation**

9. Another key option is job differentiation. This will improve the quality of the work organisation and will enable the school management to cope with (temporary) personnel problems in the school. In turn this will improve the career policy and make it easier to arrange replacements (internally) in the case of illness for example. Furthermore, a new source can be mined of people who generally have secondary vocational education qualifications. In just a few years, the number of teaching assistants and teacher support staff has increased from almost nil to 5,000.

#### **Cooperation between government/business community and education**

10. In Jet-Net, the business community, the government, intermediary and teaching organisations work together to encourage students to take technical courses. Companies provide employees to demonstrate the social relevance of technology and the various ways in which technology is used in daily life. The schools and the companies are linked regionally. The two parties then draw up a programme that suits the school's curriculum. Career options for students with a technical education are also explained. For further information see [www.jet-net.nl](http://www.jet-net.nl). Companies participating in this project include several multinationals such as Shell, Philips, AKZO Nobel, Unilever and DSM.

## 4 EDUCATING, DEVELOPING AND CERTIFYING TEACHERS

### Education Professions Act (p. 43)

11. In February 2004 the Dutch Lower House adopted the Education Professions Act (the BIO Act). The BIO Act stipulates that competence requirements must be set as a quality standard for teaching staff. Teachers, assistant teachers and school leaders must be competent and remain competent. Employers are responsible for their staff retaining their level of competence. Schools must include this in their policy as laid down in the school plan / quality assurance report. In this they must describe which measures and instruments are to be used to ensure that the staff maintain their competence levels. The results must be recorded in a competence dossier of each member of staff by the competent authority. These dossiers become an important instrument in the schools' personnel policy.

12. The training colleges for teaching professions must adapt their programmes to the competency requirements. The colleges can also set additional specific requirements in a regional or local context. A flexible system of training and schooling is a precondition for an open teaching market. Such a system must be able to offer customised training.

13. A basic package of competency requirements for teaching staff must be drawn up on the basis of the act. A draft of the competency requirements to be met by teachers has already been drawn up. This was done under the auspices of the *Samenwerkingsorgaan Beroepskwaliteit Leraren* (SBL), a cooperative body for the professional qualities of teachers. The SBL involved many teachers and other interested parties in this process.

14. The government sets the competency requirements. After all, it is the government's responsibility to ensure the quality of education and the competency of those who teach. But the government itself does not define the content of these requirements. The professional group itself plays a key role in drawing up the requirements. The plan is that the profession will submit its requirements to a national platform, still to be appointed. The platform will consist of experts representing the teaching staff, employers and teacher training colleges. The platform will evaluate the proposed requirements for the various professions and will then submit these to the Ministry of Education.