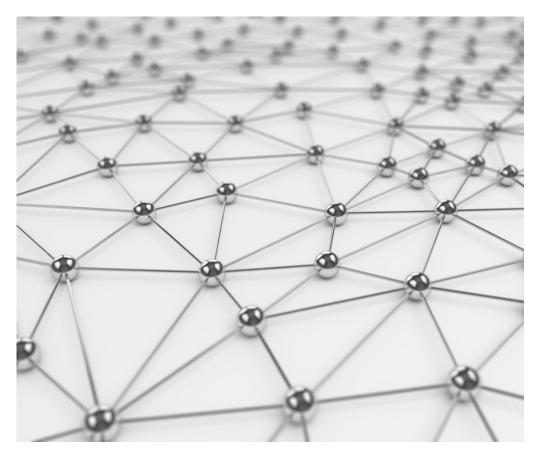
TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

Country Background Report of the Flemish Community of Belgium for the OECD TPL study



This report was prepared by the Flemish Department of Education and Training as an input to the OECD Teachers' Professional Learning Study. The OECD and the European Commission (EC) have established a partnership for the Project, whereby participation costs of countries which are part of the European Union's Erasmus+ programme are partly covered. The participation of the Flemish Community of Belgium was organised with the support of the EC in the context of this partnership. The document was prepared in response to guidelines the OECD provided to all countries. The opinions expressed are not those of the OECD or its Member countries. Further information about the OECD Study is available at www.oecd.org/education/teachers-professional-learning-study.



INHOUD

	OF TABLES AND FIGURES	
	UTIVE SUMMARY	
	DDUCTION	
1 C	HAPTER 1: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION	14
1.1	Part 1: Key features of the school system	14
1.1.1	Responsibilities of local, regional and central authorities	14
1.1.2	Structure of education	21
1.1.3	Number of schools and pupils	26
1.2	Part 2: Features of the teachers' work force	28
1.2.1	Pathways into the teaching career	28
1.2.2	Entering into the teaching profession	30
1.2.3	Key features of teacher policies	31
1.2.4	Profile of the current workforce	35
1.2.5	Main trends and dynamics shaping the teacher workforce	36
1.2.6	Recruitment and requirements for school leadership roles	39
1.2.7	Profile of the school leadership workforce	41
1.2.8	Recent changes to teacher policies	42
1.2.9	Specific measure on teacher induction	44
1.3	Part 3: Key features of teachers' professional development	46
1.3.1	System-wide data collection on teachers' involvement in continuing professional learning	46
1.3.2	Main stakeholders in CPL	47
1.3.3	- J	
1.3.4	· J · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
1.3.5	Recent and planned policy reforms and innovations affecting the overall CPL system	57
2 (HAPTER 2: TEACHERS' MOTIVATION TO ENGAGE IN CPL	. 59
0.1	Description and for too deare' and gament in CD	-0
2.1 2.2	Requirements for teachers' engagement in CPL	
2.2 2.3	Incentives for teachers' engagement in CPL	
2.3 2.4	Motivation and (dis)satisfaction with the learning activities available	
2.4	Mouvadon and dussausiacdon with the learning activities available	,01
3 C	HAPTER 3: ACCESS: HOW ACCESSIBLE IS CPL FOR TEACHERS	64
3.1	Funding of the teachers' professional learning	64
3.2	Barriers and constraints to accessing CPL opportunities	
3.2.1	* **	
3.2.2		
3.2.3		
3.2.4		
3.3	Support to fulfil professional learning requirements	68
3.4	Distribution of information about CPL opportunities	
	••	
4 C	HAPTER 4: PROVISION: HOW AND BY WHOM IS CPL PROVIDED	70

4.1	Time for professional development	70
4.2	Formats of CPL activities	70
4.2.1	Overview of formats	70
4.2.2	Teachers as providers of CPL	71
4.2.3	Collaborative CPL formats	72
4.2.4	Digital learning and online resources	75
4.3	Providers of CPL	
4.3.1	Providers: motivation and incentives	76
4.3.2	Regulations concerning the market for and provision of CPL	76
4.3.3	Profile of trainers providing CPL	77
4.3.4	Collaboration among providers	78
5 C	HAPTER 5: CONTENT OF CPL	80
5.1	Needs for CPL	80
5.1.1	General overview	80
5.1.2	Systems for forecasting teachers' professional learning needs	81
5.1.3	Tools for identification and alignment of CPL needs	82
5.1.4	Key actors in selection and development of CPL activities	83
5.2	Learning contents	
5.2.1		
5.2.2	Matching learning contents to teachers', schools' and system-wide needs	85
5.3	Transfer	
5.3.1	-r 0 r	
5.3.2	Transfer of CPL content to classroom and school	87
6 C	HAPTER 6: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CPL	89
6.1	Quality assurance systems and improvement initiatives for CPL	89
6.2	Definition and evaluation of the effectiveness of teachers' CPL	90
6.3	Common standards or guidelines for (evaluation of) high-quality CPL	91
6.4	Systems to monitor the quantity and quality of teachers' engagement in CPL	91
7 C	HAPTER 7: LEADERSHIP	92
7.1	Multifaceted leadership in The Flemish Community of Belgium	92
7.2	Professionalisation of school leaders	
8 C	HAPTER 8: CHALLENGES TO STRENGTHEN CPL	96
8.1	Challenge 1: Creating a sense of urgency and acknowledging teachers as professionals	
8.2	Challenge 2: Strengthening CPL with effect on teachers' practice	
8.3	Challenge 3: Strengthening collaborative and school based CPL	
8.4	Challenge 4: Supporting sustainable transfer	
8.5	Challenge 5: Strong leadership for teacher learning	
8.6	Challenge 6: Towards tailored and evidence informed CPL activities	
8.6.1		
8.6.2	Timely supply and innovation oriented	99
///////		///////////////////////////////////////

8.8.2 8.9	Towards a general and updated overview of CPL activities	10
8.10 cuts	Challenge 10: Providing sufficient CPL opportunities in the context of multiple re 102	forms and financial
	ENCES	

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

TABLE 1: A LIST OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION (GO!) AND THE UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS AND A LINK	TO
THE WEBSITES	16
TABLE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ACROSS LEVELS AND PROGRAMMES (2019)	27
TABLE 3: NUMBER OF TEACHERS (BY GENDER, AGE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION) ON JANUARY 2018	35
TABLE 4: FTE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED 2 AND 3) BY DIPLOMA ON JANUARY 2019	
TABLE 5: THE YEARLY NUMBER OF NEW TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IN FTE BY EDUCATIONAL L	
ADDE S. THE TEATER NOT DEN OF NEW TEATHER AND SCHOOL BEADERS IN THE BY EDUCATIONAL E	
TABLE 6: ATTRITION RATES FOR TEACHERS YOUNGER THAN 30 YEARS WITHIN A TIME FRAME OF 5 YI	EARS
Fable 7: Tension Ratio for Teachers and Other Occupations (2016-2019)	
TABLE 8: SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS (IN FTE AND %) BY SUBJECT AND TYPE OF QUALIFICATION IN SECONI	
EDUCATION (AVERAGE OF SITUATION IN JANUARY 2018 AND 2019)	
FABLE 9: MANAGEMENT STAFF (SCHOOL HEADS + TECHNICAL [ADVISOR] COORDINATOR AND DEPUTY SCHOOL HEADS [LATTER TWO ONLY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION])	ľ
TABLE 10: GENERAL AND COORDINATING SCHOOL LEADER, DIRECTOR COORDINATION SCHOOL CLUST	TER.
(ALGEMEEN EN COÖRDINEREND DIRECTEUR, DIRECTEUR COÖRDINATIE SCHOLENGEMEENSCHAP)	
ABLE 11: ANNUAL FUNDING FROM THE GOVERNMENT: AVERAGE AMOUNT IN EURO PER FULL-TIME JO	OB IN
2018-2019	65
TABLE 12: RESOURCES AND FTE FOR PBDS	
TABLE 13: EVOLUTION OF THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOLS, THE PEDAGOGICAL	
GUIDANCE SERVICES AND THE INSET BY THE MINISTER (AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE QUALITY DEC	REE
OF 8 MAY 2009) IN THOUSAND EURO	65
TABLE 14: STATISTICS ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SOURCE	3:
YEARBOOK EDUCATION STATISTICS ('STATISTISCH JAARBOEK VAN HET VLAAMS ONDERWIJS'),	
TABLE 15: STATISTICS ON SEPARATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCAT	'ION 111
TABLE 16: MANAGEMENT STAFF ('BESTUURSPERSONEEL')	113
TABLE 17: GENERAL AND COORDINATING SCHOOL LEADER, DIRECTOR COORDINATION SCHOOL COMM	iUNITY
FIGURES	
FIGURE 1: THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO STARTED AN ITP PROGRAMME FOR THE FIRST TIME (2006	
SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND AHOVOKS;	36
FIGURE 1: TENSION RATIOS BY AREA (ARRONDISSEMENT) FOR TEACHERS IN (PRE-) PRIMARY EDUCATION	
(ISCED 0 AND 1)	112
FIGURE 2: TENSION RATIOS BY AREA (ARRONDISSEMENT) FOR TEACHERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION	
(ISCED 2 AND 3)	112
FIGURE 3: REFINED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFER EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONALISATION	
INITIATIVES.	117

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strong, professional and motivated teachers are the main drivers of high-quality education, especially in a challenging context characterised by declining test results, the emergence of new and multiple innovations, and the current health crisis, to name only a few developments. This crisis has shown the creativity and professionalism of teachers whilst also uncovering and highlighting learning needs for teachers and schools. All teachers need to have the necessary pedagogical, subject-specific, didactic and linguistic expertise to be able to guarantee the highest teaching quality possible, which represents a challenges for teachers' professional learning. As societal contexts change and new challenges continue to arise, a permanent evaluation of current continuous professional learning (CPL) practices and policies as well as an exploration of evidence-informed, innovative practices, are needed. This need relates to teachers, school leaders, providers of professionalisation but also to the Ministry of Education and Training.

In order to develop a CPL-policy attuned to these challenges, Flanders (Belgium) participates in the OECD review on teachers' professional learning. In addition to the questions that make up the OECD review, we raise the following questions:

- What role should the different actors in the devolved Flemish education system play?
- What are the opportunities, limits and conditions?
- What instruments are available to effect rapid and meaningful change?
- How can needs at the level of schools and teachers be met alongside systemic needs?
- How can (support for) local, team-oriented and collaborative CPL activities be encouraged and scaled up?

Please note that this report and the questions it addresses, focuses on elementary and secondary education. The other educational levels are not in the scope of this project.

This Country Background Report describes the state of play on legislation and common practice regarding teachers' professional development in the Flemish school system at the time of the OECD's review team's visit (January 2021). The Country Background Report is divided in 8 Chapters.

Chapter 1 describes the current landscape of the Flemish (compulsory) school education system. Part 1 gives an overview of the key features of the school system, the teaching profession, and policy on teachers' professional development. First, we focus on the distinctive features of the organisation of Flemish school education. The Belgian constitutional basis of "freedom of education" has created a system in which in principle every natural and legal person is allowed to establish a school and seek for recognition and funding, provided the legal requirements are met. The vast majority of schools in the Flemish Community of Belgium (serving more than 2/3 of the school population in mainstream education and near to 3/4 of mainstream secondary education) is privately run, while publicly recognised and funded. This implies that this type of schools remain legally bound to fully assume the public responsibility for education. The school landscape in Flanders is characterised by the omnipresence of educational networks, under which autonomous schools can be classified according to their legal status (i.e. Education of the Flemish Community, subsidised municipal, city or provincial schools, and subsidised private schools or so-called "free" schools of which the majority is of Catholic denomination). Privatelyrun schools without public recognition and funding are a marginal phenomenon in Flanders constituting less than 1% of the provision and are therefore left out of the scope of this review.

The school networks and their umbrella organisations play an important role in assisting their member schools in organisational and pedagogical matters, such as curriculum design and the professional development of teachers, about which schools – within the general outline provided by the legislation – can decide autonomously.

Part 2 covers the features of the teaching profession. The quality of education depends to a large extent on teaching quality. Teacher education is the first step in the teachers' professional continuum and was reformed in September 2019. Since the reform, teacher education programmes have been more focused on creating pathways for side entrants. ITE focuses on teachers' basic competences, the reference framework for knowledge, skills and attitudes that every graduate must have in order to be able to start work as a fully-fledged teacher. Access to the teaching profession is based on the 'open recruitment' principle. As school boards are the employers of teachers, they decide on the recruitment and assignment of teachers but have to respect the legally defined recruitment conditions in terms of qualifications, as well as the statutory rights of their teaching staff, especially regarding members of staff who have tenure. There is no general regulation on career progression in terms of roles and responsibilities. As the Flemish Community of Belgium faces an increasing teacher shortage, schools, especially in larger cities, encounter more difficulties to recruit experienced teachers. The Flemish government determines the certificates of competence ('bekwaamheidsbewijzen') for each level of education. A certificate of competence consists of a basic diploma, a certificate of pedagogical competence (teacher training) and/or experience. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, teachers and school leaders are evaluated on the basis of their individual job description. Teacher appraisal is regulated by the top-level authority.

Part 3 elaborates on the key features of teachers' professional development. The teachers' professional continuum starts with teacher training and induction, and further entails continuous professional learning. The basic competences and professional profile for teachers can serve as a guideline for the professional development of every teacher and enables teachers and schools to respond to evolving societal needs. In general, continuous professional learning in the Flemish Community of Belgium is conceived as an active learning and development process of education professionals to strengthen their professional expertise and commitment to improve the quality of their education for learners, as well as to implement innovations. It can take various forms: more traditional forms like courses or seminars or more collaborative forms within and among school teams. Other classifications include individual vs collaborative, external vs internal, face-to-face vs digital (or in between like blended learning) formats. Teachers can make use of different forms of CPL activities. Professional development goes hand in hand with school development and schools' HR policies and needs to be embedded in their strategic policy.

Due to the **devolved nature of the Flemish education system**, schools have a high autonomy regarding CPL policy. The government sets out the regulatory framework (the so-called 'what', e.g. targets), but it is up to the schools to determine how this is translated into a pedagogical project (the so-called 'how'). Schools are responsible and accountable for its implementation. In terms of CPL, the Reference Framework for Quality in Education stresses the expectations concerning the development of a school's professionalisation policy. Additionally, schools are autonomous in shaping their policy on CPL and HRM and can rely on support from the pedagogical guidance services (PBD) and other providers. The schools are inspected by the Education Inspectorate. The outcome of the Education Inspectorate's evaluation determines whether schools retain their recognition or not. It is possible that the outcome of the evaluation contains the obligation to address shortcomings. Schools have the option of appealing the Inspectorate' decision to search external guidance. An evaluation can however oblige schools to seek external guidance as a provision for retaining recognition.

The actors involved in the field of CPL are:

Teacher

Teachers (individually or collectively) can undertake multiple CPL activities (ranging from individually consulting research literature to collectively implementing new methods), depending on personal (e.g. motivation or need), organisational (e.g. opportunities at school level, available time) and contextual (e.g. opportunities, offer) factors. CPL is one of the tasks mentioned in any integrated teaching assignment. The specific form, content and frequency of these professionalisation activities are however not formally specified, but they might be specified in the teacher's job description. This is a matter between the teacher (employee) and their school (employer). The professional profile and basic competences of a teacher can be used as a baseline to define a future professional development path.

School

Schools annually draw up a **professionalisation plan** based on a needs analysis. Schools receive earmarked in-service training resources to organise and facilitate CPL activities. Depending on the form and intensity of the collaboration, **school communities and school groups** invest in the professionalisation of their staff.

• Pedagogical guidance services (PBD)

PBDs are subsided by the Flemish government and provide external support and in-service training for schools and teachers. Each PBD has a three-year guidance plan and reports annually on its work.

School inspectorate

During an audit, the Education Inspectorate examines the extent to which a school monitors its own quality in certain areas, including CPL.

Flemish Ministry of Education and Training

The Ministry facilitates CPL, e.g. by providing earmarked resources to schools, by organising a subsidy programme for teacher professionalisation (initiated by the Flemish Government), by providing furlough and content-related subsidies on a one-off or recurrent basis, by organising pilot projects and by providing an offer initiated by different units of the Ministry itself (e.g. Communication, Klasse, KlasCement and Canon Cultuurcel).

Local authorities

Some local authorities take initiatives to support schools and teachers in order to respond to specific educational needs they face.

• Initial teacher education (ITE)

The ITE institutions train candidate teachers to become fully-fledged teachers. They also have a role in the initial guidance of novice teachers. They develop as professionalisation institutes and can thus bridge the gap between initial teacher education, PBD and other CPL providers to create a professional continuum.

• Teacher associations

Teacher associations and unions unite teachers and offer professional added value to their teaching practice, for example by organising conferences and workshops, as well as by producing research. These associations are not set up by the government.

• Other organisations, such as private CPL providers, non-profit organisations

Schools have the autonomy to buy CPL support offered by any private provider on the market. There are no admission or restriction conditions for CPL providers.

TALIS 2018 shows that Flemish teachers, compared to the EU-14 and PISA top 6 countries, report a lower demand for professional development. In the following chapters, the reasons behind this trend are examined and challenges are defined.

Chapter 2 – Motivation, focuses on the motivation of teachers to develop professionally throughout their career. Aside from the right for temporary staff to participate and the obligation for schools to organise induction guidance (in place since 1 September 2019), there are few formal requirements or incentives for teachers' engagement in CPL. The level of participation in CPL strongly depends on teachers' motivation and the conditions set by the schools they work in. The school leader has a central role when it comes to making the opportunities to learn, inside and out of schools available. There are few incentives to participate in CPL activities, and often teachers only have little intrinsic motivation to participate, as the TALIS 2018 study shows. A balance between acknowledging teachers' autonomy and ownership on the one hand and stressing the importance' of CPL on the other needs to be found. The position of CPL would be strengthened by clarifying the role of teachers.

Chapter 3 – Access, examines the barriers teachers experience to participate in CPL activities. According to TALIS 2018, Flemish teachers in primary and secondary education experience fewer financial, family- and work-related obstacles compared to teachers in other countries. They also experience significantly more support from their employer compared to other countries. There are few formal restrictions for teachers to participate in CPL. The schools' professionalisation plan sets out the guidelines for participation and support. Despite attempts, there is currently no comprehensive overview of external CPL activities available to teachers and school leaders. Not all teachers and schools find their way to the appropriate support. Additionally, more information and good practices can be shared to invite teachers to learn in their schools, along with their colleagues. Finally, teachers not only need financial support for participation in CPL activities, but also opportunities (in terms of support and time) to transfer the learning experiences into their practice. Due to multiple challenges, this is not always the case in Flanders.

Chapter 4 – Provision, offers an overview of the various actors, apart from teachers and schools, that play a role in the professionalisation of teachers. In general, schools can decide for themselves which external provider they use for their professional development activities. A school can rely on resources which are earmarked for professional development according to its priorities. These providers can be local small non-profit organisations as well as teacher training courses offering continuous education. Some organisations receive subsidies, for example through specific calls for proposals. Organisations reach their target group(s) through newsletters, registration in the in-service training directory (nascholingsrepertorium), as well as through other ways.

The different providers do not (yet) collaborate in a structural way and their activities are not always based on common frameworks.

The reform of teacher education and the implementation of teacher induction (as a right for novice teachers and an obligation for the schools, see above) are levers to enhance collaboration in this respect. Conditions for this collaboration need to be created.

TALIS 2018 shows that attending courses and/or seminars and reading professional literature are the most popular forms of professional development in Flanders. These (often) one-shot professionalisation activities often focus on knowledge-building, while little attention is given to integration and application of this newfound knowledge into teachers' daily practices. The effects of these CPL activities are thus rather low.

Nevertheless, a growing trend towards collaborative teaching, for example team-teaching and different forms of cooperation through project-based work or cross-school learning networks is visible in the Flemish Community of Belgium. Collective learning processes and activities, such as the development of professional learning communities, are also cautiously finding their way into Flemish schools. However, this is not the case in all schools and does not necessarily lead to effective learning. Moreover, TALIS 2018 shows that straightforward forms of cooperation (e.g. exchanging teaching materials with colleagues and attending team meetings) are more common in Flanders than complex activities (e.g. teaching alongside other teachers in the same classroom or observing lessons from other teachers and providing feedback).

There is a common need for direct support in order to effect changes in classroom practice. While Flemish teachers and CPL providers can point out numerous examples of classroom support provided by internal and external colleagues and experts, they still report this support is insufficient and needs to be provided more frequently and intensively. Not all CPL activities meet the teachers' needs: for instance, teachers often experience CPL as too academic, too short, and there are too little opportunities to translate the insights into changes in teachers' practices. More teacher-oriented support at classroom level is needed, as well as the development of crucial conditions - time, leadership, collaboration, to name a few - that need to be fulfilled in order to have a larger impact on teacher professionalism, and to offer targeted and practice-oriented support.

In **Chapter 5**, we elaborate on the **content** of CPL activities and its alignment with teacher, school and systemic needs. Generally, there is limited system-wide steering. Teachers mainly undertake professionalisation activities based on their own needs.

In view of the autonomy of the providers, the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training has no insight about how content is matched with the needs of the target groups. Aside from TALIS in Flanders, no systemic surveys on CPL are conducted, nor are demands and needs assessed centrally. There are various other ways of taking stock of needs, ranging from more ad-hoc practices, such as through networks and conferences, to more structural ways such as the Education Inspectorate, several international studies (e.g. PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS) and government-commissioned studies.

In general, there is a need for a strong alignment between teachers' self-reported needs, the school's needs and the CPL offer. Multiple organisations start CPL activities by identifying the participants' starting situation. They do so by using different methods, such as interviews or portfolios at individual or school level, in order to align the offer with the participants' needs. As a result, CPL activities can be adjusted to specific and context-related challenges. However, this is not the case for all CPL activities.

As mentioned above, the Flemish education system faces multiple challenges such as declining pupils' test results, the implementation of multiple innovations, and the current COVID-19 crisis.

At the same time, TALIS 2018 shows that Flemish teachers report a lesser need for professional development in almost all areas and domains compared to their international colleagues.

Although the CPL offer needs to meet the teachers' needs, teachers are not operating in isolation, and need to take into account the challenges at school- and system-level, too. These challenges can be identified by using surveys, performance assessments, and the implementation of new measures and innovations. A system wide overview identifying these needs is currently lacking. Teachers are confronted with societal changes, innovations and many reforms requiring them to adapt their practices to these challenges. Teachers often feel unprepared and overwhelmed when new policy measures are introduced. They demand quick, evidence-informed support to help them adjust to new policies, which in turn will lead to a better implementation of these policies as teachers will be better prepared. Providers are expected to anticipate to changes and innovations.

In this Country Background Report, we stress the importance of (attention to) data literacy. In order to create information-rich environments that strengthen the quality of education, it is necessary that teachers, school leaders and providers enhance their data literacy. School leaders should be able to make informed decisions as part of their school's internal quality assurance. Various initiatives to improve school staff's and school leaders' data literacy are being set up, some by PBDs, some by other organisations, and even by priority INSET by the Minister. Despite these efforts, a need for support and professionalisation regarding data literacy still exists and becomes increasingly urgent. The development of standardized, cross-network tests, as announced in the 2019-2024 Education Policy Note, implies that school teams should have the necessary data literacy skills as well as an inquisitive attitude to analyse and use data in order to enhance pupil guidance and internal quality assurance. Although its importance is generally acknowledged, research shows that there is room for improvement: systematic data use in Flemish schools is rare.

Apart from the PBD and the ITE, there is no external quality control system. Every organisation formulates its own principles on effective CPL and how to measure it. A shared and collectively developed framework would be useful to evaluate the quality of the CPL offer and to communicate it to the educational field. The framework of Merchie et al. (2015) can be a starting point. In **Chapter 6** we report on the **CPL quality assurance system**. No general, common standards for high-quality CPL and criteria guiding the evaluation of CPL activities have been defined at system level. Flanders does not monitor the quality and quantity of teachers' engagement in professionalisation activities. No records or portfolios are used at system level. However, there are studies that provide information on the engagement of teachers' in CPL. The TALIS studies for example, offers information regarding CPL participation. Participation in multiple cycles allows researchers to identify trends. Other research and national assessments regarding a particular topic can also offer indications of the extent to which teachers are committed to their own professional development.

Throughout the Country Background Report, the importance of school leadership is emphasised. Therefore, **Chapter 7** is dedicated to **leadership**. Strong school leadership is necessary to motivate and inspire teachers (teams) to professionalise continuously. By creating the necessary cultural (a culture of professional learning) and structural conditions is required, teachers will be able to participate in school policy and gain autonomy and responsibility for initiatives at school level. Existing instruments such as job descriptions and performance interviews can be used to this purpose. Strong leadership goes hand in hand with an integrated, strategic HRM policy that connects different interlinked practices (e.g. recruitment policy, professional development, teacher evaluation). A general observation is that strong school leaders know how to develop CPL activities, creating stronger teachers who feel supported.

The challenge is to provide sufficient support to all school leaders, including those who are less strong. As a consequence, professional leadership development is crucial. The development of a competence framework for school leaders in collaboration with stakeholders was announced in the 2019-2024 Policy Note. This competence framework will constitute the basis for the further development of a school leadership training course.

Not only school leaders should and can display leadership. It is a matter for everyone with a leading role in the school (e.g. Department chairs and other staff members) can also stimulate CPL and implementation of the learning results. **Shared leadership** and internal capacity to support teachers' needs to be strengthened. This evolution prompts reconsideration of the traditional organisation of schools.

This Country Background Report ends with **Chapter 8**, which identifies **challenges** the Flemish education system faces with regards to CPL. The challenges focus on the need, content, format and quality of CPL. They demand a holistic and coherent approach and cannot be read separately. Underlying these challenges, there is a need for defining the vision of 'being a teacher' and on teachers' CPL. Most challenges require actions from multiple actors: teachers, schools, CPL providers and policymakers. Finally, re-thinking teachers' CPL cannot occur in isolation but must be embedded in reflection about the teaching profession as a whole and about teachers' working conditions.

In this Country Background Report, the following challenges are identified:

Challenge 1: Creating a sense of urgency and acknowledging teachers as professionals

Challenge 2: Strengthening CPL with effect on teachers' practice

Challenge 3: Strengthening collaborative and school-based CPL

Challenge 4: Supporting sustainable transfer

Challenge 5: Strong leadership for teacher learning

Challenge 6: Toward tailored and evidence-informed CPL activities

- Tailored to the teachers' needs and context
- Timely supply and innovation oriented
- Evidence-informed approach on content and format

Challenge 7: Intensifying the collaboration among providers

Challenge 8: Enhancing coherence and quality assurance

- Towards a general and updated overview of CPL activities
- Towards a common framework for quality of CPL initiatives

Challenge 9: Supporting the data literacy of teachers and school leaders

Challenge 10: Providing sufficient CPL opportunities in the context of multiple reforms and financial cuts.

INTRODUCTION

Strong, professional and motivated teachers are the main drivers of high-quality education, especially in a challenging context characterised by declining test results, the emergence of new and multiple innovations, and the current health crisis, to name only a few developments. This crisis has shown the creativity and professionalism of teachers whilst also uncovering and highlighting learning needs for teachers and schools. All teachers need to have the necessary pedagogical, subject-specific, didactic and linguistic expertise to be able to guarantee the highest teaching quality possible, which represents a challenges for teachers' professional learning.

As societal contexts change and new challenges continue to arise, a permanent evaluation of current continuous professional learning (CPL) practices and policies as well as an exploration of evidence-informed, innovative practices, are needed. This need relates to teachers, school leaders, providers of professionalisation but also to the Ministry of Education and Training. In order to develop a CPL-policy attuned to these challenges, Flanders (Belgium) participates in the OECD review on teachers' professional learning. In addition to the questions that make up the OECD review, we raise the following questions:

- What role should the different actors in the devolved Flemish education system play?
- What are the opportunities, limits and conditions?
- What instruments are available to effect rapid and meaningful change?
- How can needs at the level of schools and teachers be met alongside systemic needs?
- How can (support for) local, team-oriented and collaborative CPL activities be encouraged and scaled up?

Please note that this report and the questions it addresses, focuses on elementary and secondary education. The other educational levels are not in the scope of this project.

This Country Background Report describes the state of play on legislation and common practice regarding teachers' professional development in the Flemish school system at the time of the OECD's review team's visit (January 2021). At the time of finishing this Country Background Report, additional initiatives have been set up, and more decisions regarding this report's topic have been taken. The OECD research team did not use this information for their report. However, by using boxes, we offer the most recent information at the time of publication of this report in April 2021.

The development of this Country Background Report is coordinated by the Department of Education and Training in close cooperation with a steering group. This steering group consists of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Training, the Education Inspectorate, Flemish Education Council, pedagogical guidance services, teacher unions and ITE representatives of the Flemish Council of University Colleges (VLHORA) and the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR). We want to thank all participants in this steering group for sharing their perspectives and for contributing to this report. We hope the OECD review will strengthen our collective attempts to realise a strong system for teacher professional learning in the Flemish Community of Belgium. We hope to continue this valuable co-creation process.

Finally, we thank the OECD review team, coordinated by Deborah Nusche for the constructive and insightful collaboration. A special thank you goes to Andreea Minea-Pic for her support throughout the entire process.

1 CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

This chapter describes in three parts the Flemish education system. First, it addresses the school system. In the second part, it elaborates on the key features of the teaching force and finally, the characteristics of teachers' professional development in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

1.1 PART 1: KEY FEATURES OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Part 1 elaborates on the specific features of the school system in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the key characteristics of the teaching profession and teachers' professional development.

1.1.1 Responsibilities of local, regional and central authorities

As the **Flemish educational** system is devolved, all education institutions have a high level of autonomy.

1.1.1.1 Educational competence

In Belgium the **Communities** are responsible for education, with the exception of three competences which remain a **federal** matter:

- the determination of the compulsory education age,
- the minimum requirements for the issuing of diplomas,
- the legislation of retirement for employees in the educational system.

Education in each community is provided in the official language of the community in question. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Ministry of Education and Training is competent for all stages of education and training starting from pre-primary education. Childcare is a competence of the Flemish Ministry of Wellbeing, Public Health and Family.

1.1.1.2 Freedom of education and school choice

Freedom of education' is a constitutional right in Belgium¹. This 'freedom' has a double meaning: it implies on the one hand that every natural or legal person is free to start a school (freedom of organisation) and on the other hand that every parent can choose freely in which school to enroll their child. This freedom of choice includes the (legal) guarantee that all children must have access to a school of their choice within a reasonable distance from their home. Schools are free to develop their own policy and educational approach within the boundaries set by the regulatory framework. Similarly, schools are also autonomous in their staff hiring decisions.

¹ Art. 24 of the Belgian Constitution.

1.1.1.3 School autonomy

Schools and school boards

School (governing) boards are the providers of education and enjoy considerable autonomy to provide quality education. They are free in choosing teaching methods and are allowed to base the school's pedagogical and education approach on a certain philosophy or pedagogy. They can also determine their own curricula and timetables as well as appoint members of staff of their own choosing. Student assessment processes and the awarding of qualifications is also the responsibility of the school. However, school boards wishing government recognition and financing or subsidising should meet the legally defined attainment goals and developmental objectives² and comply with a set of government regulations.

Research (e.g. Devos, 2008) has shown that the way in which school boards use their autonomy to manage and support schools, varies a lot which has a considerable impact on the daily policy-making capacity of schools. School boards need to deal with complex issues and regulations, for example related to personnel and financial management making it sometimes difficult to recruit school board members.

Legislation (i.c. the participation Decree of 2004)³ gives key stakeholders (parents, pupils,...) the right to an official voice in school policy making. The school council comprises representatives of the parents, pupils (in secondary education), members of staff and the local community. They can advise on matters concerning the school self-evaluation and the results of the internal quality monitoring should be presented to the school council.

Educational Networks

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, there are three educational networks:

- **GO! Education** is the official education network organised by the Flemish Community. They serve about 17% of the pre-primary schools and 15,72% of the primary schools and 23% of the secondary schools. Schools of GO! are grouped in school groups (see supra).
- Subsidised public education comprises schools run by the municipal or provincial authorities and serves about 22% of the elementary schools and 8% of the secondary schools. Both GO! Education and subsidised public education have to offer pupils Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Jewish, or Islamic religion or morality.⁴
- Subsidised private education under private law is organised by a private person or organisation. The network consists primarily of catholic schools. Apart from these schools there are alternative schools (based on the ideas of Freinet, or Steiner) which apply specific teaching methods. Private education serves about 62% of the elementary schools and 69% of the secondary schools.

² Final objectives are minimum goals for knowledge, insight, skills and attitudes that the government deems necessary and accessible for a particular student population. The government wants to achieve these minimum goals so that young people can function independently in our society and be able to be successful in higher education and on the labor market.

³ Decree of 2 April 2004 concerning the participation on school and the Flemish Education Council (VLOR)

⁴ These are official recognised philosophies of live and are only offered at the request of the parents.

⁵ Some of the method schools belong to another educational network.

⁶ https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/flemish-education-in-figures

The vast majority of schools in the Flemish Community of Belgium (serving more than 2/3 of the school population in general and near to 3/4 of mainstream secondary education) is government-aided privately run, while nevertheless publicly recognised, funded and regulated. A small number of schools (less than 1%) are not recognised by the government. These private schools do not receive government or public funding.

The educational networks consist of **umbrella organisations**, in which school boards can unite. This association represents the school boards in government consultations and offers services to their schools such as drafting the curricula (based on the final objectives, see further) and timetables.

GO! Education	GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap	
Catholic Education The Flemish Community of Belgium	<u>Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen</u>	
Umbrella organisation of Local authorities Education	Onderwijskoepel van Steden en Gemeenten vzw	
Provincial Education The Flemish Community of Belgium	Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen	
Federation of Steinerschools	Federatie Steinerscholen	
Federation of Independant Pluralistic Emancipatory Methodology schools	Federatie Onafhankelijke Pluralistische Emancipatorische Methodescholen	
Council Schoolboard Protestant-Christian Education	n Raad Inrichtende Machten Protestants- Christelijk Onderwijs	
Flemish Education Consultation Platform	<u>Vlaams Onderwijs OverlegPlatform</u>	

Table 1: A list of community education (GO!) and the umbrella organisations and a link to the websites

The school networks and their underlying umbrella organisations play an important role in supporting their member schools in organisational and pedagogical matters, such as curriculum design and professional development of teachers, for which schools – within the general outline provided by the legislation – can make autonomous decisions.

Communities of schools

Communities of schools are collaborative partnerships between schools from the same geographical area, created in 1999 for secondary education⁷ and in 2005 for primary education.⁸ Schools can form these communities voluntarily and receive funding by the Flemish government by way of additional staff or other resources.

8 Decree of 25 February 1997 on primary education

⁷ Codex Secondary Education

The 'competences' of communities of schools are defined by decree: communities can be created to consult and collaborate on matters such as course offer, pupil guidance, personnel (and professionalisation), and infrastructure. School communities are normally formed for a period of 6 years.

The (financial) incentives proved successful: 96% of all secondary schools are part of one on of the 116 secondary school communities for secondary education. 328 communities for primary education represent 98% of the primary schools. On average, a school community is made up of 6 to 12 schools. An evaluation of the school communities revealed the variation in practices of school communities (Devos et al., 2010). Some have elaborated the concept and created a position for a full-time coordinating director of the community while other communities are rather minimalistic.

1.1.1.4 Curriculum

On the level of the education system, **attainment targets and developmental objectives** are legally defined as learning outcomes and descriptors to guide (mainstream) schools on the minimal levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes that children should acquire in school. As these attainment targets and developmental objectives represent the societal expectations towards the education system, they are enshrined in legislation and voted by the Flemish Parliament. Attainment targets should be reached by all children; developmental objectives should be strived for.

The first attainment targets and developmental objectives are implemented in 1997. Currently, the Flemish government is **reforming and updating the educational curriculum** (in terms of attainment targets and developmental objectives) in **compulsory education**, **starting in secondary education**. After the introduction of new attainment targets in the 1st year of the 1st stage of secondary education in September 2019, new attainment targets for the 2nd year and 2nd and 3rd stage of secondary education are defined in 2021. These attainment targets will be implemented in the second stage on 1st of September 2021 and in the third stage on 1st of September 2023. New attainment targets for primary and adult education will be developed as well.

The new attainment targets are developed based on 16 key competences, covering almost all areas. They are no longer ordered by subject or discipline. The school governing boards decide on the connection between the attainment targets and specific subjects. Nearly all attainment targets have to be reached at the level of the complete student population. The attainment targets on basic literacy (Dutch, mathematics, digital and financial competences) have to be reached by the end of the first stage by every pupil individually.

Since 2002, a **system of yearly assessments** ("peilingen") has been put in place to see which share of the pupils reaches the attainment targets. Every school year, a representative sample of pupils in primary (always in grade 6) and in secondary (can be in grade 8, 10 or 12) is asked to complete a standardised test. In principle all subjects can be part of these assessments. The results are used for evaluation at system level (not at the level of the school or the pupil). International comparative large-scale assessments such as TIMSS or PISA are considered to complement Flemish assessments.

The Flemish government proposed in the 2019-2024 Policy Note that **standardised and validated tests** will be taken at 4 moments in the educational career of pupils.

⁹ Information on these assessments and the policy research centre for test and assessments: https://peilingsonderzoek.be/

This instrument is intended to measure three aspects: the extent to which pupils achieve the attainment targets, the learning gains of individual pupils and the learning gains at school level. These tests are not intended to be used to rank schools, but to increase learning gains. Schools whose pupils achieve significantly lower learning gains from these validated and standardised tests will enter into a freely chosen guidance pathway to improve the quality of their education.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

The new attainment targets for secondary education are the result of a participatory process. In development committees in which representatives of the various education providers, teachers and scientific experts were represented, the content of the new attainment targets was discussed for a long time. In the meantime, the new attainment targets for the 2nd and 3rd stage of secondary education have been adopted by the Flemish Parliament in February 2021. However, during the approval process, concerns about the feasibility of these attainment targets in relation to the available teaching time and the specific training, and about the extent to which the attainment targets still leave enough room for the schools' own pedagogical project arose in the educational field.

For this reason, in school year 2021-2022, a **practice committee** will be set up to address the concerns that exist in the field. The practice committee will consist of a diverse group of teachers who, based on the practical implementation of the new attainment targets in the 2nd grade, can formulate recommendations and proposals for adjustments to the attainment targets of the 2nd stage, but also to the (specific) attainment targets of the 3rd stage. Certain education providers find that the practice-based commission does not sufficiently respond to their concerns and has therefore taken the step to the Constitutional Court.

1.1.1.5 Quality assurance

The decree of 8 may 2009 on the quality of education¹⁰ stipulates that schools have the task of ensuring quality education in an autonomous way. Each school is responsible for the quality of the education they provide. As already outlined, quality education means: respecting the education regulations and meeting the quality expectations, as stipulated in the Reference Framework for Quality in Education, by the Flemish government.

As such, schools are obliged to monitor their own quality. Schools are free to decide how to shape their internal quality system and how to demonstrate the quality of the education they offer, e.g. via self-evaluation. The Education Inspectorate makes no direct use of the school self-evaluation or other form of internal quality assurance. However, if the Inspectorate notices problems, it will take into account the ability of the school to monitor its quality in order to determine whether the school is capable to make the necessary improvements, with or without external support.

The task of the Education Inspectorate and the pedagogical guidance services is to ensure - together with the school- the quality of education, each from its own specific point of view.

¹⁰ Decree of 8 May 2009 on the quality of education

The Education Inspectorate examines the quality of schools and the pedagogical guidance services supports schools. The "Reference Framework for Quality in Education" sets out the expectations for good quality education.

Reference Framework for Quality in Education

The **Reference framework for Quality in Education** ('Referentiekader Onderwijskwaliteit'¹¹) sets out expectations for good quality education (as of school year 2015-2016). These are expectations on which there is a general agreement. The framework applies to all levels and forms of education, with the exception of higher education.

This Reference Framework for Quality in Education describes a number of context and input characteristics which schools should take into account in the organisation of education. The starting point of every action is the 'development of the learner'. The core of the Reference Framework consists of 37 quality expectations. They are divided into four categories: 'results and effects', 'development of learners', 'quality development' and 'policy'. The Reference Framework for Quality in Education resulted from a collaboration of all major umbrella organisations and the Education Inspectorate.

Education Inspectorate

The Education Inspectorate has an independent status within the educational landscape and assesses and stimulates the quality (development) of education. It is responsible for both primary and secondary education, as well as for part time arts education, boarding schools, centres for pupil guidance, adult education and adult basic education.

The Education Inspectorate audits all (financed and subsidised) schools with an average interval of six years. The Inspectorate sees to it that attainment targets and developmental objectives are respected and pursued. In its annual report called Mirror on education ('Onderwijsspiegel'), the Inspectorate compiles the various evaluation results into a number of general conclusions and reports on their research of topics that were examined in greater depth that school year.

With the adoption of the decree of 14 March 2018 on "Education Inspection 2.0", a new audit approach was introduced and the Education Inspectorate recognises the quality triangle, i.e. school – Education Inspectorate – pedagogical guidance services. Each partner plays its own role in the realisation of quality education for each pupil or student. The schools' internal quality assurance has a central place.

After the school audit, the Education Inspectorate formulates an advice on the recognition of the school. Two advice are possible, both of which have two variants.

Favourable opinion:

- Favourable opinion without major shortcomings.
- Favourable opinion with the obligation to address the shortcomings. There is no deadline and no follow-up by the Inspectorate. For the next audit the shortcomings can be mentioned in the audit focus.

¹¹ https://www.onderwijsinspectie.be/en/ok-reference-framework

Unfavourable opinion:

- Unfavourable opinion with the possibility of not starting the procedure for withdrawal of the recognition, provided the school board commits to calling on assistance from external parties to eliminate the shortcomings. If the school board invokes the right not to initiate this procedure and to have itself assisted by external parties, a new audit will be carried out after a term specified by the inspectorate in the audit report. This term depends on the seriousness and nature of the shortcomings.
- Unfavourable opinion with the obligation to undergo the procedure for withdrawal
 of the recognition. The school board can appeal this obligation. Within 60 calendar
 days following submission of the appeal, the appeal audit is carried out by a new
 audit team.

Pedagogical Guidance Service (PBD)

Each educational umbrella organisation and GO! has its own **Pedagogical Guidance Service** ('Pedagogische begeleidingsdienst', hereafter PBD), which ensures professional support to schools. This is regulated by the Quality decree of 2009. Schools can call on the PBD for educational, and organisational counseling (e.g. on the school specific education project, innovation projects, self-evaluation projects, support initiatives, transferring legislative frameworks into daily school and class practice). Pedagogical counsellors work across schools and provide in-service training, on site guidance and support of school heads and school teams. They also support and stimulate the (further) development of quality assurance mechanisms in schools and school development. There has been a shift from supporting individual teachers towards support at the school level. The pedagogical guidance services are financed by the government (directly or indirectly) and by other ways of funding. This is not the case for the educational umbrella organisations¹².

1.1.1.6 Flemish policy domain of education and training

The Flemish policy domain of education and training consists of the following entities:

• The Flemish Minister of Education.

Four autonomous entities which together constitute the Flemish educational administration:

- The Department of Education and Training ('Department van Onderwijs en Vorming', DOV), in charge of policy preparation, evaluation, communication and support;
- Two internal autonomous agencies in charge of policy implementation: Agency for Educational Services ('Agentschap voor Onderwijsdiensten', Agodi) and Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances ('Agentschap voor Hoger Onderwijs, Volwassenenonderwijs, Kwalificaties en Studietoelagen', AHOVOKS).
- The Agency for School Infrastructure, which partly subsidises and funds ('Agentschap voor Infrastructuur in het Onderwijs', AGIOn), the purchase, construction and renovation of school buildings for compulsory education and university colleges.
- The Education Inspectorate is an autonomous service within the policy area of Education and Training (see above).
- The <u>Flemish Education Council</u> ('Vlaamse Onderwijsraad', VLOR), which functions as a strategic advisory council. Representatives of all stakeholders meet in the VLOR and formulate advices to the Minister of Education.

¹² Exceptionally for the GO!, because it is not really an umbrella organisation but an organisation of the Flemish government.

The policy domain of education co-operates closely with several other Flemish policy domains, in particular with 'Welfare, Public Health and Family' and 'Work and Social Economy'.

1.1.2 Structure of education

1.1.2.1 School age and duration of compulsory education

In order to guarantee the constitutional right to education, compulsory education has been introduced for all children residing in Belgium. Education is **compulsory from the age of 5 to 18** as of September 1, 2020. The previous starting age was set at 6 years. Compulsory education does not equal the obligation to attend school. Parents may choose home schooling for their children.¹³

The Flemish Community of Belgium is committed to maximising participation to pre-primary education and more than 97% of children do so. A pupil must attend fulltime compulsory education until the age of 15. From the age of 15 of 16 onwards students may engage in part-time schooling and opt for a structured learning path which combines part-time vocational education in an educational institution with part-time employment.

1.1.2.2 Educational levels¹⁴

Elementary education

Elementary education (*basisonderwijs*) comprises both pre-primary education (*kleuteronderwijs*) (264.575 toddlers) and primary education (*lager onderwijs*) (467.059 primary school children).

- **Pre-primary education** is accessible for children from the age of 2,5 to 6. Although it is not obligatory¹⁵, almost all children participate in pre-primary education (see above).
- **Primary education** is targeted at children from 6 to 12 years old and comprises six subsequent school years. A child usually starts primary education when it is 6 years old and thus required to engage in education.

After successfully completing primary education children are granted a certificate.

Secondary education

Secondary education (*secundair onderwijs*) is targeted at pupils ages 12 to 18. Currently 456.854 pupils are enrolled in secondary education. Fulltime secondary education contains three stages and various types of education.

Each **stage** consists of two grades. Only vocational secondary education has a third grade in the third stage. Completion of this grade is necessary in order to obtain the secondary education diploma. The first stage in secondary education exists of a general basic programme: the Astream. This stage is not divided in various types of secondary education (see below). Pupils who enter secondary education without having obtained the certificate of primary education or pupils who are less apt at theoretical education have to enter the so-called B-stream.

¹³ Home schooling in the Flemish Community of Belgium can be organised individually (parents teach themselves or appoint a private tutor) or collectively (subscribe to a private school or organise home teaching together with other parents). Home education is financed by those who exercise parental authority or who have legal or factual custody of the underage pupils. When parents choose home education, they are obliged to let their child participate in the exams organised by the Examination Board of the Flemish Community at certain points in time.

¹⁴ For more information: https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/flemish-education-in-figures

¹⁵ Previously compulsory education started at 6 years. From 1 September 2020, compulsory education starts at the age of 5.

When successfully finishing the first grade of the B-stream pupils can move to the first grade of the A-stream or they can continue with a pre-vocational second grade.

From the second stage onwards, four different **types of education** are offered. In the Flemish Community of Belgium a pupil chooses a course of study within one of the following types of education:

- General secondary education (gse/aso), which focuses on broad general education. It does not prepare pupils for a specific profession, but rather lays a firm foundation for higher education.
- 2 **Technical secondary education** (tse/tso) focuses on general and technical-theoretical subjects. After tse, a pupil may enter the labour market or transfer to higher education, depending on the course of study. This type of education also contains practical training.
- 3 **Secondary arts education** (sea/kso) combines a broad general education with art practice. After secondary education in the arts a pupil may enter the labour market or transfer to higher education.
- 4 In **vocational secondary education** (vse/bso) the pupil receives general education but the primary focus is on learning a specific profession. After successfully completing the third stage, pupils can enter the labour market or transfer to higher education (HE only after completing the full third stage).

In Belgium, a qualification of upper secondary education grants unrestricted access to higher education.

In the third stage it is also **possible** to enrol in a 3rd year, the **7th school year**. For example, in vse a 7th year is necessary in order to be granted a certificate of secondary education and both gse and sea offer a preparatory year for higher education. In technical secondary education and secondary arts education, labour market oriented programmes can be organised within the second grade of the third stage. Since 2009-2010 these programmes are grouped under the heading of **Secondary-after-Secondary** (*Secundair-na-secundair*, Se-n-Se). Se-n-Se programmes last one to three semesters and are organised by secondary schools. A pupil can only start the programme after obtaining a qualification of secondary education in the same study area, although exceptions are possible. After successfully completing a Se-n-Se programme, a pupil is granted a certificate.

A school can offer one or more stages. Offering only the second or third grade or only the first and third grade is not allowed since the purpose is to allow a pupil as much as possible to pass through an entire secondary study pathway in one school.

In order to offer all pupils the best education tailored to their talents, interests and possibilities, secondary education is now being reformed. On 1 September 2019 the **gradual implementation of the renewed system of secondary education** started in the first stage¹⁶. From 1 September 2020, the modernisation of secondary education will continue and will be rolled out in the second year of the first stage. In the second year of the first stage, pupils will make a first choice of study through the choice of a basic option or package. These basic options include economics and organisation; classical languages; arts and creation; modern languages; society and wellbeing; sports, STEM and others. In 2B (B-stream), pupils can also choose a combination of up to 3 basic options and/or packages. In this way, the 2nd year of the 1st stage prepares pupils for their transition to the 2nd stage where they will make a deliberate choice for a field of study and a domain of study.

^{16 &}lt;a href="https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/waarom-moderniseren">https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/waarom-moderniseren

Additionally, as already mentioned, the Flemish government is **reforming and updating the educational curriculum in secondary education**. After the introduction of new attainment targets in the 1st year of the 1st stage of secondary education, new attainment targets for the 2nd year and 2nd and 3rd stage of secondary education are defined. All SE courses of study must meet either the needs of the labour market or the initial qualifications of higher education, or both. The complete SE supply of courses is brought together in one simple and uniform table which gives parents and pupils a clear overview of all possible courses of study. This table includes both the matrix developed by the government with the domains of study, finals and forms of education (artistic, general and vocational education) and the basic options and packages of the first stage.

The renewed system of secondary education allows pupils to make a more transparent and motivated choice of study on the basis of their interests and capacities. A better transition to higher education or the labour market is intended.

System of alternating learning and working

At the age of 15 or 16 a pupil may enter a system of alternating learning and working. All pupils in part-time education are obliged to take part in learning and working for at least 28 hours a week. Part-time learning and working is organised in:

- a centre for part-time education
- a centre for apprenticeships¹⁷

Since 2016, a gradual reform of part-time vocational secondary education and apprenticeship systems has been launched on the basis of a number of pilot projects and as of 2016, pupils in the participating schools can opt for dual learning.

This pathway lets young people from the age of 15 combine workplace learning with learning at school, a Syntra training centre or a Centre for part-time education. In other words, they obtain a professional or educational qualification as they prepare for the labour market. It is a fully-fledged learning pathway. In order to support teachers in teaching in the new dual system, the Flemish Community of Belgium developed the SRSP project: 'Dual Learning in the Flemish Community of Belgium: Professionalisation of Teachers' in 2019 with support from the EC. This project provided technical assistance to set up a professionalisation trajectory that meets the training needs of teachers in dual learning in vocational education.

Since 1 September 2019 dual learning has been fully implemented and a total of 186 (out of 1,060) schools offer 79 courses, including healthcare, electromechanical techniques, management of green areas and gardens and painting. In addition, the Flemish Parliament adopted a decree which allows for dual learning within special needs secondary education (Buitengewoon Secundair Onderwijs/BuSO). Finally, dual learning will be extended to higher and adult education (currently being explored through 14 pilot projects).

¹⁷ In a Centre for part-time Education pupils take classes for 15 hours a week. These classes are supplemented with a working experience which matches the programme unless they are not ready yet in which case they follow additional training. Apprenticeships are organised in a SYNTRA training centre. In the case of an apprenticeship pupils enter in a formal learning agreement which provides four days of practical training in a small to medium-sized enterprise or with a self-employed person, and one day of theoretical training a week.

Higher education

Higher education offers programmes and courses of study that result in the degree of bachelor, master and doctor. Higher vocational education leading to a short cycle higher education degree or associate degree is also part of tertiary higher education.¹⁸

Bachelor's degree programmes in the Flemish Community of Belgium may be both professionally oriented and academically oriented. Professionally oriented bachelor programmes are primarily aimed at practicing a profession and offer a direct access to the labour market. Academically oriented Bachelor's degree programmes focus on a broad academic education or an education in the arts. They aim to offer access to a master's degree programme or to the labour market. Both professionally and academically oriented Bachelor's degree programmes comprise at least 180 credits. In theory a student takes 60 credits a year, but variations are possible.

Master's degree programmes focus on advanced scientific or artistic knowledge or competences which are needed for the independent practice of science or arts, or for practicing a profession. They are completed by a master's thesis. A master's degree programme comprises at least 60 credits. An institution of higher education can, in addition to a general master, also offer a research master, which comprises 120 credits.

Lifelong learning

Part-time education in the arts

Part-time education in the arts (Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs - DKO) is an extracurricular education and is targeted at children, youngsters and adults. Participants may register on a voluntary basis and need to pay enrolment fees. DKO aims at the artistic training of children and adults. The DKO-reform brought about important changes of which we highlight the most important ones. In addition to the new final goals and updated structure, children from the age of 6 can now also join in for music and word art drama. Before the reform, children from the age of 6 used to be able to follow only dance or visual art. Above that, an academy can choose to work in the 1st grade (6 and 7 year olds) either cross-domain or domain-based. More information see link.

Adult education

Adult education is complementing the initial educational career. Course participants may obtain a recognised qualification or certificate in adult education. Adults of at least 18 years old and youngsters under 18 that have completed compulsory education may enroll in adult education. Adult basic education is a specific form of adult education in which semi- and low-skilled adults learn basic competences at the level of primary education and the first stage of secondary education. Areas of learning can be, for example, Dutch, mathematics and societal orientation.

1.1.2.3 Pupil guidance centres

Pupils, parents, teachers and school boards of elementary and secondary schools may address a pupil guidance centre ('Centrum voor leerlingenbegeleiding', CLB) for guidance, information or advice. The services of these centres are free and can be primarily situated within the following four domains:

- Learning and studying
- School career

¹⁸ On 1 September 2009 higher vocational education (Hoger Beroepsonderwijs - HBO5) was introduced in the Flemish educational system. HBO5 programmes are professionally oriented programmes situated between secondary education and professionally oriented bachelor programmes.

- Preventive health care
- Socio-emotional development and psychological wellbeing

Pupil Guidance Centres are financed by the government. All <u>58 centres</u> are independent but each can be attributed to one of the three educational networks.

The recent decree of 27 April 2018 on **pupil guidance** in elementary and secondary education and centres for pupil guidance defines the roles and the tasks of the various actors in order to optimise pupil guidance. Important changes include:

- School support is no longer a task of the CLB.
- The CLB will have to cooperate increasingly across networks as of 2023.
- Schools are obliged by law to develop and implement a policy on pupil guidance. The school has the final responsibility for this policy. Schools need to appoint one or more staff members in charge of pupil guidance

1.1.2.4 Special needs education

Special needs education ('buitengewoon onderwijs') is organised for children who need temporary or permanent specific support because of a physical or mental disability, serious behavioral or emotional problems or severe learning disabilities.

On 12 March 2014 the Flemish Parliament approved a parliamentary act on measures for pupils with specific needs ('*M-decreet*) with the aim to make education more inclusive. The act contains measures which allow pupils with specific educational needs to participate fully, effectively and on equal terms in mainstream schools and classrooms that are bound to provide for reasonable adaptations to cater for students with special needs.

In school year 2017-2018, a new support model for pupils with specific educational needs ('support network', ondersteuningsnetwerk) was launched in mainstream elementary, primary and secondary schools and in part-time vocational secondary education centres. This support model replaced previous systems. Schools for mainstream education that require an extension of care¹⁹ or that have a pupil following an individually adapted curriculum can call on extra expertise from special education. Not only the needs of the pupil are central to this support; there is also more focus on teacher- and team-oriented support.

The starting point of the support model is the equality in which mainstream and special education schools combine their expertise in co-creation to support pupils with specific educational needs and the teachers (teams).

Depending on the type of education in which support is needed, either bilateral cooperation between a mainstream school and a special needs school or the regional support network to which both types of schools belong, is called upon. The mainstream school, in cooperation with the parents and the CLB, determines the support needs and formulates its support questions based on those needs. The support offered can be pupil-, but also teacher- or team-oriented. The aim is to support teachers (teams) in mainstream education to act (more) effectively in their teaching of children with specific educational needs. An evaluation in 2019 found that the support provided is still mainly pupil-oriented. Good steps are being taken in the area of teacher- and team-oriented support, but there is certainly still room for growth.

¹⁹ Care expansion is the third phase in the care continuum. Phase 1 is basic care, phase 2 is increased care.

The education Policy Note (2019-2024) announced the replacement of the M-decree by a **guidance decree** ('begeleidingsdecreet'), in order to give every pupil a place in the education system that best suits its needs.

1.1.2.5 Equal opportunities in education (GOK)

The Parliamentary Act on equal educational opportunities²⁰ contains three major provisions:

- The right to enrolment: each student has the right to enroll in the school of their (parents') choice. Only in a strictly defined, limited number of cases may a school refuse an enrolment or refer a newly enrolled student to another school.
- The establishment of local consultation platforms to ensure, amongst others things, the right of enrolment and to co-operate in implementing a local policy on equal opportunities in education.
- Extra support for additional needs provision in schools with additional teaching periods or additional teaching hours per teacher.

The policy on equal opportunities is commonly known as the 'GOK'-policy ('Gelijke Onderwijskansen', Equal Educational Opportunities). The current education policy note (2019-2024) includes measures to guarantee equal opportunities: lowering the compulsory school age from six to five years, the installation of an uniform and standardised cross-network and cross-umbrella screening for all five to six-year olds. Based on the results of language screening, pupils who do not have a sufficient command of Dutch will have to follow a Dutch language integration course. This includes a language immersion class or a fully-fledged alternative that leads to the same results. Another measure is the provision of language integration pathways for children with a limited knowledge of the Dutch language.

1.1.3 Number of schools and pupils

In the Flemish mainstream education there are 162 autonomous pre-primary schools, 2,114 schools with both pre- primary and primary education and 940 fulltime secondary education schools. In special needs education there are 75 schools for primary education, 123 schools which offer both pre-primary and primary education and 126 schools for secondary education. Schools in secondary education can offer both vocational and general education, or opt to only offer one type of education. The Flemish government does not collect data on the schools' offer. More detailed data on the number of schools can be found in Annex 1. Table 2 provides an overview of the distribution of students across levels and programmes in 2019.

²⁰ Decree of 28 June 2002 concerning equal education in pre-primary and primary education.

The resources are integrated, in secondary education, schools receive separate resources.

Full-time education

Elementary education			
Pre-primary education	262,435		
Special needs pre-primary	2,140		
education			
Primary education	442,275		
Special needs primary education	24,784		
Total	713,634		

Secondary education			
Full-time mainstream secondary	427,456		
education			
Special needs secondary education	20,544		
Total	448,000		

Tertiary education			
Associate degree nursing	6,589		
Higher vocational adult education	15,940		
Specific teacher training	6,916		
University colleges	119,223		
Universities	112,325		

Table 2 Distribution of students across levels and programmes (2019)

Part-time vocational secondary education			
Part-time vocational secondary education	8,854		

Adult education	
Secondary adult education	299,079
Adult basic education	66,205

Part-time arts educati	on
Part-time arts education	n.a.

- Elementary and secondary education: number of pupils enrolled (all enrolments) on February 1, 2019
- Associate degree nursing: number of pupils enrolled on February 1, 2019
- Higher vocational adult education, specific teacher training, secondary adult education and adult basic education: number of unique enrolments on a programme for the reference period 1/4/2018 – 31/3/2019
- University colleges and universities: Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Data refer to all active enrolments in a degree contract in an institution for higher education on September 30, 2019. A student may have several enrolments.
- Part-time arts education: number of students eligible for funding individuals on more than one study are counted more than once

1.2 PART 2: FEATURES OF THE TEACHERS' WORK FORCE

1.2.1 Pathways into the teaching career

The quality of our education depends to a large extent on the teaching quality. Initial teacher education is the first step in the professional continuum of the teaching profession.

The <u>basic competences</u> are the reference framework for teacher education. This framework sets out the knowledge, skills and attitudes that each graduate must have in order to be able to embark on a successful teaching career, moving through the professional profile for teachers.

The <u>professional profile for teachers</u> serves as a guide for the professional development of all teachers and enables them to respond to the changing expectations from society. Both the basic competences and the professional profile describe ten important skills for teachers such as learner mentoring, being an educator, developing subject expertise, organisational skills, being an innovator and researcher, and working as part of a teaching team. In addition, eight required attitudes are described, such as a critical thinking, eagerness to learn, flexibility and collaboration.

Since 2018, the basic competences have been reduced to one generic set for all educational levels and together with the professional profile they form the basis for the professional continuum of the teaching profession, which runs from the start of initial teacher education until the end of the teaching career.

Regardless of the level of qualification, the basic competences are the same for all teachers. The grading of the teacher's degree (at graduate, bachelor's or master's level) therefore does not imply any hierarchy between these levels: the basic competences and the professional profile serve as a reference framework for all teacher training programmes.

1.2.1.1 Six types of teacher training

The legislation on teacher education was changed in 2018, leading to the introduction of new teacher education programmes, tailored to the students' needs. Since September 2019, the Flemish Community of Belgium has six teacher education programmes:

- Educational graduate programme for secondary education (for VET subjects only);
- Educational bachelor's programme for pre-primary education;
- Educational bachelor's programme for primary education;
- Educational bachelor's programme for secondary education;
- Educational master's programme for secondary education;
- Educational master's programme for art subjects.

The **educational graduate courses for secondary education** are offered by the university colleges. The programmes are aimed at prospective teachers who have already gained several years of professional experience and wish to pass on their knowledge in technical or practical subjects (ISCED 5). The educational graduate programme for secondary education requires 90 credits, of which the practical component consists of at least 30 credits.

Those who aspire to become (pre-)primary teachers, choose the **educational bachelor's programme for pre-primary or primary education**. These programmes are offered by the university colleges (ISCED 6). They require 180 credits. The practical component consists of at least 45 credits.

The **educational bachelor's programme for secondary education** is aimed at those who intend to teach one or more subjects in the first or second stage of secondary education, in the third stage of vocational secondary education or in adult education. This programme requires 180 credits of which the practical component consists of at least 45 credits (ISCED 6).

Since the academic year 2017-2018, future students are obliged to take a **compulsory**, **non-binding admission exam for the educational bachelor's programmes** (pre-primary education, primary education or secondary education) (the so-called 'instaptoets lerarenopleiding') as a condition for enrolment. It is a generic test that prospective students can take online. The test aims to provide prospective students insights on the expected initial competences for the specific programme and into their own strengths and weaknesses. Student cannot be refused enrolment based on the results.

Candidate teachers who wish to teach one or more subjects in the second and/or third stage of secondary education, part-time arts education or adult education can opt for an **educational master's programme in secondary education**. These programmes are offered by universities (ISCED 7). They require 90 or 120 credits and are taken after the academic bachelor's programme. The practical component consists of at least 30 credits.

The **educational master's programme for art subjects** is aimed at prospective teachers who wish to teach one or more subjects in the second or third stage of secondary education or in part-time arts education. These programmes are offered by university colleges within the framework of a School of Arts. The educational master's programmes for art subjects requires 90 or 120 credits and are to be taken after the academic bachelor's programmes.

1.2.1.2 Pathways into the teaching career for side-entrants

Since the reform in 2019, teacher education programmes increased their focus on creating pathways for side-entrants, a group of students starting their teacher education after completing another higher education programme and/or after gaining professional experience. Most teacher education programmes offer **flexible pathways** organised in the evening, during weekends or via distance learning. For side-entrants without any relevant prior training or work experience, flexible or tailor-made pathways are available in most of the university colleges, as well.

A specific type of 'flexible pathway', is the **teacher-trainee pathway** ('Leraar In Opleiding', LIO). Through this pathway side-entrants can combine working as a teacher with one of the six teacher education programmes. They undertake the practical component of the programme by working as a member of staff in one or more educational institutions. They need to fulfill at least 500 teaching hours (corresponding to a maximum of 30 credit hours).

The reform of teacher education training has also led to **shortened pathways** in secondary teacher education for particular groups of students:

Students who have already obtained a bachelor's degree and intend to teach subjects within the field of this degree, can follow the shortened educational bachelor's programme for secondary education. This shortened course focuses on teaching within a unit of 60 credits, of which at least 30 go to the practical component. The focus during these 60 credits is mainly on pedagogy or developmental psychology and not on subject content which is assumed to be acquired before.

Those who have already followed an educational bachelor's programme of secondary education and intend to acquire an additional teaching qualification for a specific subject can follow a shortened pathway.

Students who have already obtained a (domain) master's degree and intend to teach subjects within the field of this degree, can follow a shortened educational master's degree course. This course focuses on teaching and requires 60 credits. Of these, at least 30 credits are for the practical component.

The educational graduate programmes and the educational bachelor's programmes for preschool and primary education offer shortened pathways as well. However, the provisions for these paths are not laid down by decree. Most of them are only accessible to those with relevant prior education.

1.2.2 Entering into the teaching profession

1.2.2.1 General conditions of admission (Decrees of 27 March 1991)²¹

The Flemish legislation formulates the following admission requirements for those who aspire to be appointed as staff members in education:

- to be a citizen of the European Union or the European Free Trade Association (exceptions are possible and defined);
- to be in possession of their civil and political rights;
- to meet the language requirements. Dutch is the official teaching language (however, the Flemish government may grant an exemption). Teachers working in the third stage of primary education must have a good knowledge of French.
- to be of impeccable quality as evidenced by a certificate of good character issued not more than one year previously;
- to be medically fit (i.e. not to pose any danger to the students);
- to have a certificate of competence for the position (or subject) in question.

As long as candidates fulfil these conditions, schools are free to recruit those they consider suitable (taking into account the priority rules applicable to permanent and temporary staff who are entitled to a temporary assignment of indefinite duration).

1.2.2.2 Certificates of competence

The Flemish government determines the certificates of competence ('bekwaamheidsbewijzen'), for each level of education. These certificates take into account the basic competences for teachers. For teachers in secondary education, the certificates are defined down for each office, subject, degree and type of education (gse, tse, vse, sae). A certificate of competence consists of a basic diploma, a certificate of pedagogical competence (teacher training) and/or experience.

There are three types of proof of competence, namely 'required', 'deemed sufficient' and 'other':

- 'Required' means a person has followed a specific training in accordance with the subject to be taught. The requirements set for the diploma in terms of level depends on the type of subject, the degree, the type of education, the module and/or the training.
- A certificate of competence is 'deemed sufficient' if a person holds a basic diploma of the same level as the certificate of competence required but not on the specific topic to be taught.

²¹ Decree of 27 March 1991 on the legal status of certain members of the staff of Community education.

• Exceptionally, the school may deviate from this general rule and appoint a person with an 'other certificate of competence'. In this case, the person holds a basic diploma of a certain (minimum) level. For some subjects, three years of 'useful experience' is sufficient. Assignments under an 'other certificate of competence' are limited in time and compensations are lower.

Having a **certificate of pedagogical competence** (teacher training) is a necessary condition for a 'required' and 'deemed sufficient' certificate of competence. The 'open recruitment' system guarantees the school board's freedom to choose between candidates with a 'required' or a 'deemed sufficient' certificate of competence at the time of recruitment.²² In principle, schools should always give priority to someone with a 'required' or a 'deemed sufficient' certificate of competence.

1.2.2.3 Entry into the profession: recruitment and assignment of teachers

Access to the teaching profession is based on the 'open recruitment' principle. School boards recruit staff members. If the staff member meets a number of specific requirements – laid down in the aforementioned decrees on legal status – the Flemish government will finance or subsidise this staff member.

School boards decide on the recruitment and assignment of teachers but have to respect the legally defined recruitment conditions in terms of qualifications, as well as the statutory rights of their teaching staff, especially regarding members of staff who have tenure. As the Flemish Community of Belgium faces an increasing teacher shortage, schools, especially in larger cities, encounter more difficulties to recruit experienced teachers. This has encouraged some cities such as Brussels or Antwerp to launch local recruitment campaigns resulting in a specific recruitment platform, job days, network events (e.g. teachers at the movies) and other measures.:

Assignment of tasks

Assignment of teaching and other tasks to teachers is the decision of the school. There is no general regulation on stages in a career in terms of roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities besides teaching, such as coordinating work, mentoring, etc. can indeed be taken up by teachers according to the needs of each school.

1.2.3 Key features of teacher policies

1.2.3.1 Contract types and employment status

Teachers can have a fixed term contract or a contract of indefinite duration (permanent contract). The career of a temporary teacher always starts with a fixed-term contract. The maximum duration of the appointment is one school year (or shorter in the case of a replacement). The school board can renew the contract for the temporary teacher in the following school year. After a minimum of two school years and 580 days of service (of which at least 400 are actually performed) and a positive review from their first evaluator, the temporary teacher is entitled to a contract of indefinite duration.

²² Provided the priority rules with regard to the rights of teachers with tenure or with an assignment of permanent duration were applied.

Once the temporary teacher is entitled to a contract of indefinite duration he can apply for a permanent appointment (tenure) if he fulfills the following conditions:

- meet a number of personal requirements (i.e. general conditions of admission);
- have at least 690 days seniority, including at least 360 days in the office that the teacher is appointed to;
- have an appointment of indefinite duration prior to the permanent appointment (tenure);
- have not been evaluated as 'insufficient' during the most recent appraisal.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

From 1 September 2021:

- a temporary teacher will be entitled to a contract of indefinite duration after a minimum 290 days of service (of which at least 200 are actually performed) and a positive review from their first evaluator.
- teachers will be eligible for a permanent appointment sooner, i.e. after 360 days of performance, whereas this currently requires 690 days of performance.

1.2.3.2 Statutory working time

The Flemish government sets out the number of teaching hours or teaching time for a full-time assignment per educational level and per office. The assignment is expressed in the form of a fraction, where the numerator represents the required number of teaching hours. The denominator expresses how many hours a full-time teaching assignment covers per week. The salary is based on this fraction.

In addition to teaching, a teacher's assignment consists of other tasks, too. These include meetings, drawing up reports, correcting, grading, supervising and participating in continuous professional development. This set of tasks is imposed by the school board that took the appointment decision (GO!) or agreement (other networks). This is part of the teacher's job description.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

Institution-specific tasks no longer belong in the job description. The job description will only include the core tasks for all staff categories from 1 September 2021 on. Legislation will not define the time spent on these additional tasks. They is considered as an integral part of the teacher's assignment

1.2.3.3 Career structure

The Flemish Community of Belgium has a flat career structure, i.e. a **single level career structure** for teachers. Nevertheless, there are some opportunities for task and function differentiation within schools. For many teachers however, a career in education de facto means a flat career, unless the teacher leaves the teaching profession and takes a position of deputy director, school leader, technical advisor, inspector, pedagogical supervisor or advisor.

1.2.3.4 Task and function differentiation

A teacher can include another assignment in addition to or instead of their core task (teaching).

Elementary education

Task and function differentiation in primary education is made possible by the resources for management and support staff awarded to the school community or school. This makes it possible to open positions such as:

- IT coordinator:
- pupil guidance coordinator ('zorgcoördinator');
- school community staff member.

In addition, a school can always allocate up to a maximum of 3% of its teaching time or teaching hours for special pedagogical tasks. These special pedagogical tasks are school-related tasks aimed at optimising the pedagogical-didactical organisation. For example, schools can assign specific coordination roles and tasks to staff members, who are then fully or partially exempt from their teaching tasks.

Secondary education

Both within the school and within the school community there is room for function and task differentiation. This includes an assignment as a teacher in the context of IT coordination (usually at the level of the school community), performing special pedagogical tasks or being a teacher in the framework of internal pedagogical guidance (only in vocational education). There are also resources at the school community level to hire teachers for specific tasks.

1.2.3.5 Teacher appraisal

In the Flemish Community of Belgium both individual teachers and school leaders are evaluated on the basis of an individual job description. This teacher appraisal is regulated by the top-level authority.

A teacher with an **individualised job description** is evaluated at least once every four school years. The government does not intervene as to how the evaluators (should) arrive at their evaluation or conclusion. Official evaluators can be the school head, other members of school management and school board but not a mentor. Each staff member has two evaluators, the first evaluator is in charge and takes the final decision. The second evaluator needs to ensure the quality of the evaluation process. This means they do not evaluate themselves but have a supporting role towards both the evaluated staff member as well as the first evaluator. They can, for example be asked by to be present during evaluation interviews.

Possible outcomes of teacher appraisal are:

- Feedback for improvement;
- CPL activities:
- CPL training plans;
- Appointment of a mentor.

The evaluation can also be a reason for dismissal if a teacher receives multiple evaluations deemed 'insufficient' during their career. For a temporary teacher with a fixed term contract, dismissal follows if they receive one 'insufficient' evaluation.

A permanent appointed teacher or a temporary teacher who is appointed for indefinite duration will be dismissed if they receive two consecutive 'insufficient' evaluations or when they receive an 'insufficient' evaluation three times in their career. Dismissal of permanently appointed teachers is very rare. Between 2011 and 2016 only 115 permanently appointed teachers were forced to resign.²³ Research has suggested that many school heads think the procedure to dismiss someone is burdensome and sensitive to procedural mistakes explaining partly why dismissals are so rare.²⁴ The evaluation procedure is currently being reformed.

A school leader is also evaluated once every four years by the school board. The members of the school board are not members of the school staff. The decrees on legal status of teachers do not apply to them.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

The reform of the teacher appraisal will enter into force on 1 September 2021 and includes that the evaluation that now takes place every four years will no longer be mandatory.

Instead, the evaluator must conduct a performance review with the staff member on a regular basis.

Additionally, it is determined that:

- the staff member has the right to a performance review on request;
- the performance review can be formal or informal;
- a report of the performance review can include personal and developmental objectives (POD).

In case the evaluator concludes that a teacher's performance is not satisfactory, they can conduct a formal performance review. This formal review has to result in a written report in which the evaluator records identified shortcomings and points for improvement of the teacher.

As a result of this report the evaluator has to initiate a guidance trajectory for the staff member, which, if it cannot sufficiently eliminate the points for improvement, can then be followed by a negative evaluation.

1.2.3.6 Salary (progression)

The salary scales of educational staff are determined by the Flemish government. For each office, the certificates of competence and the salary scales associated with them are drawn up in consultation with the social partners. Salaries are indexed according to inflation. Statutory salaries of Flemish teachers vary according to a number of factors, including the certificate of competence, the type of the office held, the statutory situation, the administrative status, seniority, and other allowances.

The <u>salary scales</u> consist of a starting salary (minimum), a number of periodic increases (annual, bi-annual and at the end of the career) and a maximum salary, in accordance with seniority. There is no differentiation in the teacher's salary on the basis of merit, place of employment and difficultly of the assignment. The salary scale of a teacher that holds a master's degree is higher than that of a bachelor's degree. This is the basis for considerable salary differences between teachers at the upper secondary level and other teachers (cf. Nusche et al., 2015: 155).

24 https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/onderwijsonderzoek/?nr=143

²³ http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/pfile?id=1231318

1.2.3.7 Conditions for retirement with full pension

Currently, the official retirement age is set at 65 years but as of 1/1/2025 the retirement age will be gradually increased. From 1/1/2025 to 1/1/2030 to 66 years and from 1/2/2030 to 67 years.

From September 1, 2012, a staff member may, under certain conditions, continue to participate fully in education after the age of 65^{25} .

Premature full retirement is possible subject to a sufficiently long career: at the age of 60 subject to 44 career years, at the age of 61 subject to 43 career years, and at the age of 63 subject to 42 career years. Tenured pre-primary teachers born after 1959 can stop teaching and still be partially paid (about 60% of the salary) two years before their retirement. This is not possible for other teachers.

1.2.4 Profile of the current workforce

Table 3 presents the number of teachers, their gender and age per level of education in 2018. Particularly in pre-primary and to a lesser extent primary education, the profession is highly feminised. In secondary education most teachers are women (64%) too. The data also shows that a considerable share of teachers (19.3% in total) are under 30.

	Number of teachers	Proportion of females	Proportion of teachers aged less than 30	Proportion of teachers aged 50 and over
Pre-primary education	21,720	97.0%	22.7%	21.6%
Primary education	41,223	83.2%	22.9%	23.9%
Secondary education	69,449	64.3%	16.0%	27.6%
Total	132,392	75.6%	19.3%	25.5%

Table 3: Number of teachers (by gender, age and level of education) on January 2018 Source: UOE data

According to the latest TALIS survey²⁶ (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019), Flemish teachers are relatively young compared to teachers in other countries. The average age is 39.6 in primary education (ISCED 1) and 39.4 in lower secondary education (ISCED 2). Despite their young age, Flemish teachers have quite some years of experience. Primary school teachers have on average 16.7 years of experience in total and 13.9 years of experience at the school where they are currently employed. Teachers in lower secondary education have on average 15.7 years of experience in total and 13.2 years at their current school.

The majority of teachers in primary education thus holds a bachelor's degree. TALIS 2018 supports this claim and reports that 95.5% of ISCED 1 teachers in the Flemish Community of Belgium have a bachelor's degree.

In secondary education most teachers also hold a bachelor's degree (83% of the teachers in lower secondary education according to TALIS 2018).

²⁵ https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14394

²⁶ The Talis research only concerns primary and 1st grade secondary teachers. The data obtained concern self-reporting.

In higher secondary education most teachers hold a master's degree. However, it is also possible to teach in secondary education without a bachelor's or master's degree. This sometimes occurs for practical subjects in vocational programs (e.g. plumbing). Table 4 represents the distribution of diplomas of the teachers and school leaders in secondary education (FTE - fulltime equivalents).

	Male	Female	Total
Professional Bachelor in Education	7,505	15,800	23,305
Other (including other bachelor degrees)	6,014	4,282	10,296
Master	7,416	13,016	20,432
Total (FTE)	20,935	33,098	54,033

Table 4: FTE of teachers and school leaders in secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3) by diploma on January 2019 Source: http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/documenten/bestand.ashx?nr=12197

1.2.5 Main trends and dynamics shaping the teacher workforce

1.2.5.1 Participation in teacher education

Figure 1 shows the number of students that started an ITP programme from the academic year 2006-2007 up to 2017-2018. The average number increased between 2006 and 2011. However, in the last five years, a general decline in the number of students in ITP programmes can be observed. The Bachelor's degree for Secondary Education in particular saw a sharp decline in the number of students. In 2019-2020, the ITP programmes were reformed. Adult education centres no longer offer 'specific teacher education programes', which could result in a further decline in the number of applicants.

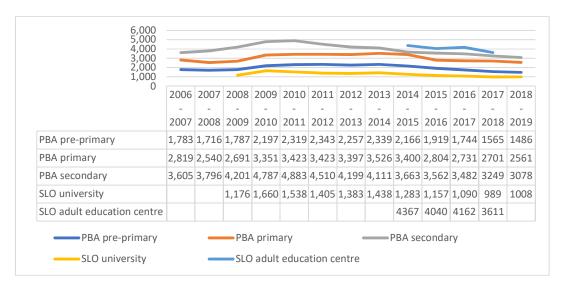


Figure 1: The number of students who started an ITP programme for the first time (2006-2018) Source: Department of Education and AHOVOKS; https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/download-file/30960

1.2.5.2 New teacher entrants

Table 5 shows the amount of new teachers per year for each educational level from 2011 to 2018. In school year 2012-2013, the number of new teachers was particularly high in pre-primary education (and to a lesser extent in primary education) due to a new funding scheme allowing schools to hire more teachers for the same number of pupils. Owing to demographic changes, the recruitment needs are expected to increase (particularly in secondary education) in the next few years.

FTE	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Total
2011-2012	935.7	1,481.8	2,985.1	5,402.6
2012-2013	2,060.6	2,120.7	2,889.3	7,070.6
2013-2014	1,084.6	1,764.1	3,007.3	5,856.1
2014-2015	961.2	1,970.5	3,188.2	6,119.8
2015-2016	1,004.3	2,111.8	3,415.7	6,531.9
2016-2017	893.6	2,251.5	3,188.2	6,333.3
2017-2018	788.9	2,071.7	3,188.2	6,048.9

Table 5: The yearly number of new teachers and school leaders in FTE by educational level Source: https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/download-file/30960

1.2.5.3 Teacher attrition

A considerable percentage of teachers leave the profession during their first years on the job. Table 6 shows the attrition rates of teachers younger than 30 within a time frame of 5 years. Out of all teachers younger than 30 in pre-primary education in 2013, around 12.5% left the profession by the year 2018. The overall attrition rate is relatively stable between 12.1% (2008-2013) and 14% (2013-2018).

Attrition (from the profession)	2009-2014	2010-2015	2011-2016	2012-2017	2013-2018	2014-2019
Pre-primary	9.2%	9.0%	8.7%	9.0%	12.5%	12.0%
Primary	8.7%	8.7%	8.5%	8.8%	11.2%	11.7%
Secondary education	17.9%	18.4%	17.7%	16.2%	17.9%	17.9%
Total	13.1%	13.3%	12.8%	12.3%	14.0%	14.2%

Table 6: Attrition rates for teachers younger than 30 years within a time frame of 5 years Source: http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/pfile?id=1482272

According to research by Struyven and Vanthournout (2014), attrition is influenced by a range of factors such as job satisfaction, relationships with students, support from the school management, workload, future career prospects, and relationships with parents. Job (in)security was mentioned as the most important factor: "The lack of future prospects" was found to be the most salient reason for leaving a teaching career. One factor may be that many of the respondents are in their twenties and are building independent adult lives.

An insecure or part-time position might be viewed as insufficient to comply with these expectations and aspirations." (Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014, p. 43).

It is estimated that in school year 2016-2017, 145 teachers retired in pre-primary education, 582 in primary education and 1573 in secondary education. This corresponds with 0.6%, 1.3% and 2.0% of the total number of teachers in these educational levels respectively.

1.2.5.4 Teacher shortage

In order to assess whether future teachers shortages are likely to emerge, the 'tension ratio' is used as a proxy indicator. This indicator is the number of teachers seeking employment available per job vacancy. If the number is high, it is easier to recruit teachers. If the number is low, it is likely that there are teacher shortages. As can be seen in Table7, the tension ratio has been declining over the past four years. This is also the case for the Flemish average tension ratio – although to a lesser extent.

Tension ratio	(pre-) Primary	Secondary	Flemish average (all occupations)
December 2016	6.7	9.3	7.1
December 2017	5.8	7.4	5.6
December 2018	3.5	3.7	4.1
December 2019	2.4	2.8	3.8

Table 7: Tension ratio for teachers and other occupations (2016-2019)

Source: https://www.vdab.be/trends/beroepen

Annex 2 shows tension ratios at the level of 'arrondissements' (i.e. between the provincial and municipal level). The tension ratio is particularly low in (urban) regions such as Antwerp, Aalst and Halle-Vilvoorde (surrounding Brussels). Other data sources suggest that it is particularly difficult to find sufficient numbers of teachers in large cities such as Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels (VDAB, 2020, p. 23). While the working conditions are generally more challenging in these areas (for example, because a higher number of pupils do not speak Dutch llanguage of instruction1 at home), salaries are the same throughout the Flemish Community of Belgium. This might (partly) explain why fewer teachers are willing to teach in cities²⁷.

Another proxy indicator identifies for which subjects it is hardest to find candidate teachers. This indicator is the number of substitute teachers appointed with 'other certificate of competence'. These teachers do not meet the qualifications 'deemed sufficient' or 'required' (see above). Table 8 shows the number of substitute teachers with the qualification 'other' by subject (top 10). These absolute figures show that many common subjects score high: Dutch, French, English, mathematics and Catholic religion. However, the percentages are not that high for these subjects (ranging from 5 to 8 per cent), meaning that it is likely that the 'high demand' is caused in part by the scale on which these subjects are taught. There are other subjects such as electricity, woodwork, mechanics and care that score relatively high in both absolute FTE's as well as in percentages, suggesting that it is particularly difficult to find good candidates for these subjects.

VDAB (2020) Bottleneck professions in the Flemish Community of Belgium (VDAB (2020) Knelpuntberoepen in Vlaanderen),

https://www.vdab.be/sites/web/files/doc/trends/Knelpuntberoepen%202020.pdf

²⁷ Flemish Parliament (Vlaams Parlement) (2019)http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/pfile?id=1466710

		FTE with 'other qualification'	% with 'other qualification'	% with 'sufficient qualification'	% with 'required qualification'
1	French	63,9	8%	23%	69%
2	Electricity	52,0	29%	25%	46%
3	Dutch	51,8	5%	28%	67%
4	Mathematics	50,4	7%	34%	60%
5	Woodworking	38,6	30%	37%	33%
6	Home economics	35,3	14%	31%	55%
7	Mechanics	34,0	22%	33%	44%
8	Catholic religion	31,6	6%	20%	74%
9	English	31,4	7%	18%	76%
10	Care	24,2	21%	35%	44%

Table 8: substitute teachers (in FTE and %) by subject and type of qualification in secondary education (average of situation in January 2018 and 2019)

Source: https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/download-file/30960

1.2.6 Recruitment and requirements for school leadership roles

1.2.6.1 Recruitment and selection

The school board decides autonomously who they select and recruit as school leader. Flemish legislation stipulates however that the member of staff appointed as school leader must meet a number of appointment requirements. The school leader should:

- be in possession of a 'required' or 'deemed sufficient' certificate of competence for the
 post of school leader. Depending on the level of education, this is a bachelor's or master's
 degree, combined with a certificate of pedagogical competence;
- have received a 'positive' evaluation, i.e.: the last evaluation of the staff member cannot have been an evaluation with final conclusion 'insufficient';
- comply with the general appointment conditions that apply to all staff members in education (see the part 'General conditions of admission²⁸);
- in community education (GO!) a candidate school leader must obtain a training certificate before he or she can be appointed.

In community education (GO!) a staff member who meets the appointment conditions must always go through a 12-month probation period before they can be permanently appointed as school leader. In subsidised education, a member of staff who meets the appointment conditions can be appointed permanently immediately.

In the 2019-2024 Education Policy Note the minister announced the development of a **competence framework for school leaders**, to be developed in collaboration with all stakeholders. On the basis of this framework, possible selection criteria and a professionalisation and assessment policy for school leaders can be developed. This competence framework constitutes the basis for the further development of a specific school leadership training course.

²⁸ Decree of 27 March 1991 on the legal status of some staff members of the subsided education and the subsidized centra for pupil guidance; Decree of 27 March 1991 on the legal status of some staff members of the community education

1.2.6.2 Pre- and in-service training

School leadership-training is not compulsory. In practice, most pedagogical guidance services have their own training courses for novice leaders²⁹. These training courses are often conceived as in-service training courses staff members can follow after they have been appointed as school leader. Increasingly, the pedagogical guidance services provide pre-service activities for school leaders as well.

Community education (GO!) regulation stipulates that prospective school leaders must obtain a training certificate before they can be appointed (see Article 46 of the decree on the legal status of certain staff members in community education). Community education offers its own training. Other organisations also offer professional development courses for school leaders.

Until 2015, there was a specific fund for the professional development of school leaders. This fund was managed by the PBDs. In 2015, the fund was abolished and the resources were added to the professionalisation budget of the schools Until 2018-2019, umbrella organisations could apply for funding to support the further professional development of their school boards.

1.2.6.3 Towards shared leadership

In Flemish schools, leadership is not exclusively a matter of school leaders exercising the formal office of school leader. Rather, everyone who has a leadership role at school takes on part of this shared responsibility. Increasingly, teachers are taking on leadership tasks in schools (teacher leadership) and school communities. These include, roles like pupil guidance coordinator, IT coordinator, head of department, etc.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

The corona crisis has reinforced the need for strong school leaders. Partly because of this, the Flemish government decided to focus on both a pre-service and an in-service training for school leaders.

-The pre-service training concerns a project on **job shadowing for future school leaders**, which started on 1 March 2021 and (provisionally) ends on 31 December 2022.

Through this project, the Flemish government makes it possible for a school board to offer a candidate for the position of principal – which can be an already selected candidate or a potential or interested candidate – the opportunity to participate in a job shadowing programme. This job shadowing allows the candidate to shadow one or more experienced principals for a certain period of time and allows them to watch, observe and ask questions about the job of principal. The staff member can see "in real life" what the job entails and can experience what the work demands and how the experienced principal deals with it.

Job shadowing is offered in primary and secondary education, adult education, part-time arts education, adult education and in pupil guidance centres.

Based on an evaluation of the project, the Flemish government will examine whether and how this job shadowing can be anchored in the selection and recruitment procedure for school leaders.

²⁹ Except the small umbrella organizations, grouped in OKO.

As of 1 September 2021, an evidence-informed and practice-oriented inspiration guide regarding job shadowing will support candidate principals, school boards and policymakers in shaping the practice of job-shadowing and in situating it within the broader professional continuum.

- The in-service training concerns the 10 subsidised professionalisation projects for school leaders, aiming at strengthening the instructional leadership of school leaders and at strengthening leadership practices in order to develop strategies to attune their school organisation (including the staff policy) to the needs of the pupils and the school team. These projects also focus on collective learning among school leaders.

School leaders can only participate in a partnership with other school leaders.

The projects focus on primary and secondary education, start on 1 September 2021 and end on 30 June 2023.

Scientific follow-up is provided to accompany these projects. After all, the projects must contribute to an evidence-based professional continuum for school leaders. Therefore, the processes and effects of the projects will be analysed systematically. The scientific follow-up will also lead to, among other things, an inspiration guide on collective learning and leadership.

1.2.7 Profile of the school leadership workforce

Table 9 and 10 present the number of school leaders (details on age structure can be found in annex 3). In (pre-) primary education the managerial staff consists of 3,311 people, 33.6% of them are male. In secondary education 54.8% of all 3,065 school leaders are male. 322 other people have taken on a leadership role other than that of school leader.

	Male	Female	Total
(Pre-)primary education (ISCED 0 + 1)	1.111	2.200	3.311
Secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3)	1.679	1.386	3.065

Table 9: Management staff (school heads + technical ladvisor) coordinator and deputy school heads (latter two only in secondary education))

	Male	Female	Total
(Pre-) primary education (ISCED 0 + 1)	119	96	215
Secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3)	70	37	107

Table 10: General and coordinating school leader, director coordination school cluster (Algemeen en coördinerend directeur, directeur coördinatie scholengemeenschap)

Source: https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/statistisch-jaarboek-van-het-vlaams-onderwijs-2018-2019

According to TALIS 2018, the average Flemish school leader in primary education is 48.7 years old. In the first stage of secondary education, Flemish school leaders have an average age of 48.5 years. They stand out among their international colleagues (especially in the first stage of secondary education) because of their relatively young age. The small number of school leaders older than 60 (6.4%) in the first stage of secondary education is remarkable as well.

The work experience of Flemish school leaders is diverse. Most school leaders have had a career as a teacher before taking up this role. A school leader in primary education has on average 17.6 years of experience as a teacher, a school leader in the first stage of secondary education 16.1 years. The average number of years of work experience as a school leader is 9.2 years (primary education) and 7.8 years (first stage secondary education).

TALIS 2018 shows that 96.2 % of the school leaders in primary education have a bachelor's degree (or equivalent). In the first stage of secondary education, this percentage is remarkably lower, only 49.4%, which can be explain by the higher number of teacher's with a master's degree working in secondary education.

1.2.8 Recent changes to teacher policies

The teaching profession faces several important challenges across the EU and in the Flemish Community of Belgium. For example, there are problems with finding sufficiently qualified teachers, attracting and retaining strong and motivated teachers, and achieving innovation when developing new pedagogical approaches.

Some 5,000 to 7,000 motivated, passionate and well-trained novice teachers will need to be recruited each year at all levels of education. The Flemish government is therefore committed to strengthening the teaching career, emphasising the importance of professional development for teacher (CPD, ITE, pedagogical support, etc.).

A number of measures have been taken in the Flemish Community of Belgium to overcome this challenge:

- Groups of Flemish Community schools (which often coincide with school communities) have received means to organise **teacher platforms**. These platforms aim to provide better career prospects for young teachers working in primary education. The members of the platform are guaranteed job security from September 1 to the end of the school year. The project started in 2018-2019, and in 2020-2021 a total of 2,291 FTE can be appointed through the platforms. This only counts for (pre-) primary education.
- In the most recent **collective bargaining agreement**, several measures were taken to increase the job security of novice teachers and to make their careers more stable. As of 1 January 2021, another linear wage increase and an additional wage scale after 36 years of seniority will be implemented.
- Since 1 September 2019, teachers can obtain a temporary appointment of indefinite
 duration more quickly: i.e. after 400 days instead of 600 days of actual employment,
 provided they receive a positive assessment. This makes the 'probationary period' for
 novice teachers shorter but more intense. During this period, the teacher is entitled to
 induction guidance (see below). In addition, more opportunities for permanent
 appointment have been created. Since 1 September 2019, schools receive more structural
 funds for policy support, induction guidance and professionalisation.
- The right to induction guidance for novice teachers in the initial phase of their careers is included in their legal status as of 1 September 2019. Temporary teachers are entitled to coaching during the initial phase of their career for the duration of their fixed term contract. This allows new employees to grow in their position and to further develop the competencies they have acquired during initial teacher training. Successful completion of initial guidance is a condition for moving on to the next career phase for the temporary teacher: the contract of indefinite duration.

The design, content and organisation of initial guidance are the responsibility of the school board or the school community (for schools officially cooperating in this way). In order to support the implementation of induction guidance, the Flemish authorities call on the support of the European Commission (EC) through an SRSP project (awarded by the EC in March 2020). Through the project 'Implementing an effective induction system for novice teachers in the Flemish Community of Belgium', the Flemish Community of Belgium wants to develop evidence-informed methodologies that help schools to embed induction guidance more structurally³⁰.

- Administrative burden remains an important topic. Reducing red tape is the shared responsibility of the authorities, umbrella organisations, community education (GO!) and school management. School management is encouraged to take measures, in consultation with the teaching team, to reduce these administrative obligations. The Flemish authorities are setting up a contact point where school staff can report these planning burden. The Education Inspectorate is instructed to also monitor the administrative burden during inspections and to advise schools on how to cut it down.
- With the introduction of dual teaching in September 1, 2020, employees in companies are
 encouraged to teach in a school and work in a company at the same time. This leads to
 a win-win-win situation for schools, pupils and companies as the number of specialised
 teachers increases, lessons become more practice-oriented, and interaction between
 education and the labour market grows.
- In order to tackle the teacher shortage, the government intends to attract **side entrants** to the education system. One measure that will take effect in September 2020 is to validate a maximum of eight years of useful experience from the private sector in teacher's salary calculation. In concrete terms, they will be able to earn up to 300 euros net per month extra. The measure applies only to those who opt for a job in primary education, or for teachers in (seven) bottleneck subjects in secondary education such as Dutch, French, electricity and mathematics.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

From 1 September 2021 onwards, teachers will be able to obtain a permanent temporary appointment of indefinite duration even faster. For this, they will have to perform 290 days, of which 200 days of actual employment and a positive evaluation from their first evaluator.

- to strengthen the implementation of teacher induction in primary and secondary schools and school clusters and embed it in their HRM and CPD policy;
- to engage PBD and ITE providers to contribute to the reorganisation and strengthening of teachers' support, as formulated in the 2019-2024 coalition agreement;
- to gather evidence on how to systemically improve government policy to be more efficiently and effectively implemented in an autonomous education field.

In order to avoid the pitfalls encountered during previous years, the following characteristics will be considered in this project on induction:

- The government sets out the regulatory framework (the so-called 'what'), but it is up to the schools how this is implemented (the so-called 'how')
- Schools are responsible and accountable for the implementation.
- Schools are autonomous in shaping the initial teacher guidance as part of their continuous professional development (CPD) and human resources (HRM) policy.
- Schools can rely on support from the PBD and ITE providers.

³⁰ Within the devolved Flemish educational field, the SRSP project is expected to systematically support the implementation of teacher induction. Three levels of development and implementation are envisaged:

Form 1 September 2021 onwards, teachers will also be eligible for a permanent appointment sooner, i.e. after 360 days of performance, whereas this currently requires 690 days of performance.

1.2.9 Specific measure on teacher induction

Context.

The relative low retention rates of highly-motived, well-qualified teachers remains a challenge in the Flemish Community of Belgium as well as all over Europe. Research shows the following reasons for this relatively high dropout rate:

- First-time teachers experience the transition from the initial teacher training to the classroom as too abrupt. Teachers realise that being a teacher entails more than just teaching – for example, the administrative burden is experienced as quite heavy in the Flemish Community of Belgium (Veenman,1984; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002: Ooghe et al., 2016).
- Novice teachers do not feel supported and report a lack of induction training or guidance.
- The precarious employment during the first years of employment encourages first-time teachers to explore other professional pathways (Struyven et al., 2014).

Additionally, there is an increasing **tension on the teacher labour market**. By 2024, the Flemish Community of Belgium will need up to 7,000 new teachers every year (pre-primary to secondary educational level). The Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) has formally added teachers to its list of bottleneck professions: primary teacher since 2020 and secondary teacher since 2018.

Even though organising induction was not mandatory prior to 2019, many schools already offered some form of initial guidance. This can be seen in the TALIS 2018 results showing that, according to school leaders, half of primary school teachers have access to formal initial guidance, which was organised for all new teachers in the school. Most Flemish primary school teachers (87.2%) have access to informal initial guidance activities in the school. Initial guidance is even more established in the first stage of secondary education.

Compared to other countries and based on the school leaders' answers, the Flemish Community of Belgium has a relatively high proportion of schools that provide access to (particularly informal) initial guidance. The responses of the teachers give a somewhat different picture, but this might be due to the number of older teachers who were recruited when induction was less common. Of the Flemish teachers, 15.7 % participated in formal initial guidance programmes at their current school and 14.2 % during their first employment. Compared to other countries, Flemish primary school teachers participate less, and Flemish first stage secondary school teachers more, in the initial requirements than teachers in the comparison countries (Van Droogenbroeck, 2019).

There is a wide variety of initial guidance activities. The most common initial guidance activities are planned formal meetings (PE: 76.1%; SE 1st st.: 86.4%) and supervisions with the school leader and/or (experienced) teachers (PE: 74.1%; SE 1st st.: 82.3%). For both educational levels, participation in courses or seminars is the third most common initial guidance activity (PE: 68.7%; SE 1st st.: 71.5%). This is followed by collaboration with other new teachers and the administrative introduction.

Recent policy measures

Before the collective negotiation agreement of 2018, education institutions were not obliged to organise induction. From school year 2019 – 2020, however, school boards receive additional annual funding and resources³¹ to help them organise the **initial guidance for entrants (induction)** in primary and secondary education (which is mandatory, see earlier).

A temporary member of staff appointed for a fixed term must receive and follow the necessary initial guidance. The duration and intensity of the initial guidance shall be determined by mutual agreement between the staff member and the initial evaluator and shall be stipulated in a written agreement or job description. If the initial assessor considers that the staff member is not yet eligible for a continuous temporary assignment, the evaluator may give the staff member an assessment, identifying the strengths and weaknesses they need to develop further. If the teacher is reinstated to the same office, an appropriate initial guidance pathway shall be established in accordance with the assessment's findings, to be taken up by the staff member during that additional period. Additionally, from school year 2019-2020 on, a school must include teacher induction to its professional development plan.

 $\underline{https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=15412\ for\ primary\ education.}$

 $[\]textbf{31 See} \ \underline{\text{https://data-onderwijs.vla} \\ \textbf{and} \\$

1.3 PART 3: KEY FEATURES OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, continuous professional learning (CPL) is conceived of as an active learning and development process for education professionals to strengthen their professional expertise and commitment with the aim of improving the teaching quality. CPL can take various forms: more traditional forms like courses or seminars or collaborative forms like lesson study. Other classifications include individual vs collaborative, external vs internal, face-to-face vs digital (or in between like blended learning) types of learning. Professional development goes hand in hand with school development and the (development of) the school's HRM policy.

1.3.1 System-wide data collection on teachers' involvement in continuing professional learning

TALIS and other targeted studies constitute the source of information on professionalisation. The following studies are considered:

- The Teaching And Learning International Survey (TALIS): the Flemish Community of Belgium takes part in this survey, which is organised every 5 years and focuses on the working conditions and the environment in which teachers teach.
- National assessments of pupils: every year, surveys assess whether Flemish students
 achieve the final Flemish attainment targets. The teacher questionnaire that is conducted
 as a part of this survey provides the researchers with information on the professional
 background of teachers (e.g. experience and specific diploma), instruction and evaluation
 practices and to other aspects of their teaching practice.
- The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international comparative study initiated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and is takes place every three years. The school questionnaire is completed by the school leader and assesses the proportion of teachers at school who have participated in a 'professionalisation program' in the last three months.
- In the 2017 Time Usage Survey of teachers in primary and secondary mainstream education and special needs education, teachers reported their use of time. This report provides data on professional consultation³² (internal / external).
- Additionally, many policy and practice oriented studies focus on the professionalisation needs but also on the effects of staff. This is either research that is outsourced by the Department of Education and Training or carried out by research institutes. These studies often contain more content-specific data related to professionalisation³³.

³² Consultation or information exchange on pupils, lessons, dual learning traineeships, workplace learning, intra/extramuros activities or school functioning with work contacts; staff meeting, class council, multidisciplinary consultation, specific subject consultation meetings, school council, pedagogical council, pupil council, parent council, management board, parent committee); participation in official participation bodies and union functioning; preparation, processing, follow-up of meetings and consultation, e-mailing and informal consultation.

³³ E.g. in the context of inclusive education (Struyf et al., 2020), evaluation in schools (Ysenbaert, et al., 2018), equal educational opportunities (Franck et al., 2017).

1.3.2 Main stakeholders in CPL

There are various actors who play an important role in the professional development of teachers. These are listed below.

Teacher

Professional development is an integral part of a teacher's assignment:

For primary education, the form this should take is not specified;

For secondary education, the principle of permanent professional development is explicitly included in regulations (i.e. the decrees regarding legal status: "the main task of the teacheris teaching, in the broad sense of the word. This is an integrated teacher's task, which covers everything that belongs as a matter to the teaching profession, starting from the broad professionalism of the teacher. This integrated teaching assignment includes tasks such as:

- "the planning and preparation of lessons;
- teaching;
- the classroom-specific pupil guidance;
- the evaluation of pupils;
- in-service training;
- consultation and cooperation with management, colleagues, CLB and parents."

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

Form 1 September 2021 onward, professional development will be a formal part of the teachers core tasks (see earlier).

The <u>job description</u> sets out the rights and obligations with regarding induction, continuing professional development and training. If training is imposed on the staff member, the organising authority will cover the costs.

The specific form, content and frequency of the professionalisation activities and what is expected of teachers is a matter between the teacher (employee) and the school/school group (employer). There are no formal requirements nor implications for accreditation or career development. The professional profile and basic competences (see earlier) can be a guideline for further professionalisation.

Consequently, teachers (individually or collectively) can undertake multiple CPL activities (ranging from consulting research literature to collectively implementing new methods), depending on personal (e.g. motivation), organisational (opportunities in the school, time, ...) and contextual factors (opportunities for CPL, offer, ...).

School

The school is responsible for providing quality education. Professionalisation is an important lever to realise the mission and vision of the school's pedagogical project and to further develop educational quality.

As stipulated in the Quality Decree of 8 May 2009, the school must draft a **coherent annual professionalisation plan** based on a needs analysis. The professionalisation plan is to be approved by either the local committee³⁴ or, in their absence, the general staff meeting.

In order to professionalise a teacher team, a school may organise **pedagogical seminars** throughout the school year. For this purpose, the teaching activity is suspended for all pupils or for a group of pupils. In elementary primary education, a school has up to 3 half days per school year to spend on these activities, in secondary education this is one day per school year.³⁵

Each year, the Flemish Community makes in-service training resources (professionalisation resources) available to the schools in order to implement their professionalisation plan (see decree on Quality of Education, 8 May 2009). The amount of the resources that each institution is entitled to, is calculated pro rata based on the number of teaching positions in the school on 1 February of the previous financial year, taking into account the education level for which the resources are intended. In addition to these funds, schools may use their own operating resources to participate in professionalisation activities.

The government has no system-wide view on the CPL activities followed by the school staff, as schools can opt to invest their own resources in professionalisation. There is no reporting obligation on this type of spending. These costs strongly depend on a school's strategic management choices (see below).

School communities and school groups can invest in the professionalisation of their staff, in line with their strategic policy. This encourages the facilitation of learning communities between member schools. Research shows that professionalisation within a school community can be strengthened through the exchange of knowledge between experienced and new school leaders. Cooperation within school communities can also be strengthened by jointly organised professionalisation activities and short exchanges.

³⁴ The local committee is the local consultative or negotiating body responsible for working conditions and staff matters.

 $^{{\}tt 35} \ \underline{\tt https://onderwijs.vla} {\tt anderen.be/nl/pedagogische-studiedagen}$

Pedagogical guidance services (PBDs)

As outlined above, PBDs provide external support. Their task is formulated in 7 decretal duties³⁶ (see decree on Quality of Education, 8 May 2009), and includes (the organisation of) in-service training. PBDs are subsidised by the Flemish government in the form of specific posts for pedagogical counsellor and contract holders, working resources and resources for in-service training.³⁷

PBSs report annually to the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training and must draw up a three-year guidance plan, including information about their vision and priorities.

PBDs provide different types of support, going from off-site in-service training to schools to onsite and long-term guidance. An integrated approach, consisting of a combination of multiple activities is increasing. There is an evolution towards more demand driven and tailor-made support.

The permanent support cells ('permanente ondersteuningscellen', POCs) are responsible for competence development of professionals who work in a pupil guidance centre (CLB). There are three POCs, grouped based on the educational networks they work with. As CLB are not the focus of this CBR, we will not elaborate on this topic.

The 2019-2024 Policy Note announces a reform of the PBDs in order to focus on their core tasks to support and assist in the everyday classroom practice. Presence in classrooms and the extent to which teachers indicate the counselling meets their needs, are announced to become criteria and conditions of eligibility. Schools that underperform must be supported. Additionally, collaboration among PBDs is required to ensure an efficient use of resources and to promote knowledge transfer between the organisations. A permanent evaluation of the functioning of the PBDs is announced to be set up.

36 The tasks of the pedagogical support services comprise:

- Supporting the educational institutions concerned to help them realise their pedagogical or agogic project and supporting the CLBs concerned to help them realise their own mission and guidance project;
- Supporting the educational institutions and CLBs in their efforts to promote the quality of education, the quality of pupil guidance respectively and helping them to develop into a professional learning organisation by:
 - o promoting the establishment of networks and providing support to these networks;
 - o supporting and training managerial staff;
 - o supporting the professional competence of members of staff at institutional and cross-institutional level by focusing on beginning staff and staff charged with specific tasks;
 - o reinforcing the policy powers of institutions;
 - o supporting quality assurance within institutions.
- Supporting and guiding institutions in their development of points of action highlighted during a full inspection, at the request of the boards;
- Offering, stimulating and supporting educational innovations;
- Providing and directing offer-oriented in-service training activities, including in-service training for the boards of the institutions;
- Discussing the quality of education and the quality of pupil guidance with the various education actors at the different levels;
- Participating in the steering or follow-up of support initiatives organized or subsidised by the Flemish government aimed at supporting
 institutions, teachers or counsellors.

37 Except the small umbrella organisations (FOPEM, IPCO; VONAC; and Steiner schools) which are united in OKO (Overleg Kleine Onderwijsverstrekkers).

Instead of offices they receive a fixed amount calculated on the organisational teachers offices on February 1 of the previous school year.

School evaluations by the Educational Inspectorate

In terms of professionalisation, the "Reference Framework for Quality in Education" (see above) stresses the expectations of a school's professionalisation policy. It highlights the importance of using both external and internal expertise, encouraging implementation and monitoring effects. The Inspectorate regularly visits schools and examines whether they monitor their own quality in certain areas. In their annual reports 'Onderwijsspiegel', the Education Inspectorate compiles the various examinations into a number of general conclusions.

Flemish Minister of Education

As outlined above, the Flemish Community makes in-service training resources available to the institutions in order to implement their professionalisation plans (see decree on Quality of Education, 8 May 2009) and subsidises the PBDs. Apart from that, the Ministry takes several other initiatives:

(a) a <u>Priority in-service training</u> (INSET) initiated by the Minister

The Flemish government subsidises professionalisation projects related to specific policy priorities that the minister sets out. Professionalisation organisations³⁸ can apply for a grant to organise in-service trainings. These projects are set up across networks and are free of charge for schools. Since 2015, each chosen topic will remain a priority during two school years in order to facilitate a sustainable transfer to the school and class practice.

For school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, in-service training projects are set up to further develop staff's professional competences regarding support for pupils with specific educational needs in mainstream primary and secondary education and in part-time vocational secondary education centres. For school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, in-service training projects on 'Reading comprehension' will be set up for school teams in mainstream and special needs primary education.

(b) provision of <u>leaving/replacements</u>

- Leave of absence due to a (special) assignment: certain teachers may temporarily take on an assignment in a project or organisation (e.g. projects set up by the Flemish minister of education, an assignment with the PBDs or an assignment in a European school) whilst remaining employees of the school. The leave of absence is a favor; the school can refuse it.
- Primary schools receive (limited) resources (replacement units and teaching platform hours) to replace teachers absent for a short period of time.
- Continuous training is an example of such a short-term absence. For replacement units
 to be used, they must be pooled at the level of a cooperation platform (e.g. school
 community).
- To allow teachers to participate in an in-company training, alternative replacement activities are provided. Schools signal however that the available resources for (teachers to) participate in this are not sufficient.

³⁸ Any organisation or person who considers itself capable of carrying out a professionalisation project for the defined target group may apply for a grant. A partnership consisting of several organisations may also submit a proposal. In this case, the grant will be awarded to the organisation submitting the project sheet as the main applicant.

(c) provision of subsidies, one-off or recurrent

This kind of provision involves all kinds of resources awarded to organisations through a grant or agreement.

The objective is professionalisation on a particular topic and/or to encourage innovation and innovative practices. Examples include the development of dyslexia software, the launch and production of educational games, resources for STEM, the implementation of the new decree on part time arts education (DKO), civic education, language courses (e.g. FORMACOM; FORMAPRIM).

Beneficiaries of these grants include, but are not limited to the following organisations:

- The Higher Institute of Education ('Hoger instituut voor opvoedkunde', HIVO)
 - In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 8 Higher Institutes of Education are operational. Their task is to enable teachers and school leaders to acquire a broad pedagogical and agogical vision and to deepen and broaden the competencies of all teachers. This is a 3-year program.
 - Participants obtain a certificate (GHOS after 2 years) or diploma of higher educational studies (DHOS after 3 years), issued by a higher institute of pedagogy recognised by the Flemish Community. The certificate as well as the diploma entitle the graduate to an unacquired salary scale³⁹. Despite the name, these institutes are not part of tertiary higher education. The government grants the HIVOs an annual subsidy since 2008.
- Regional Technology Centres ('Regionale technologische centra', RTC)
 5 regional technology centres receive an annual subsidy. Among other things, they contribute to the professionalisation of teachers by encouraging collaborations with the industry in terms of technological infrastructure and equipment. RTCs target primarily 3rd stage vocational and technical secondary education teachers (both non-dual and dual pathways). Along with the PBDs, the RTC examines how they can support subject-related technical content, networking and cross-sectoral sharing of expertise across schools.
- The King Baudouin Foundation ('Koning Boudewijn Stichting', KBS)
 The Foundation is an actor of change and innovation in Belgium at the service of the general interest and social cohesion. Every year the foundations funds specific projects. One example is the project 'Small Children, Great Opportunities' which was organised by the KBS in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training. This project strengthens the professional competences of novice teachers and students in (pre-) primary education training regarding child poverty and underprivileged children.

(d) Pilot projects

The Ministry increasingly organises and often subsidises pilot projects, allowing schools to implement new policies, for example on dual learning or part time arts education.

An example of such a (non-funded) initiative are the *pilot projects on differentiation* in the last stage of primary education and the 1st stage of secondary education which started in 2018 and ended in June 2020. Within their regular operation and resources, PBDs supported different schools on the topic of 'differentiation'. The aim of the pilot projects was to allow as many pupils as possible to reach the final attainment targets through different models of differentiation. Schools have the time and space to develop, implement and evaluate new practices.

³⁹ cf. circular PERS/2005/19 of 21 September 2005 in connection with unacquired salary scales for staff members in education.

As mentioned before, the projects ended in June 2020 but their effects will be assessed in a research project in the coming months. Subsequently, an evidence-informed inspiration guide will be developed, aimed at the professional development of the entire field of education.

Another example are the *pilot projects regarding dual teaching*, which will start on September 1, 2020 an will run until August 31, 2022. In these pilots, employees from companies are encouraged to teach in a secondary school and work in a company at the same time. The goal of the project is to increase the number of specialised teachers, make lessons more practice-oriented and facilitate the interaction between education and the labour market.

(e) by initiatives by Units of the Ministry of Education and Training
The Ministry of Education and Training plays a role in the communication and awareness raising
of professional development initiatives. The Ministry has several tools at their disposal and is
developing a conceptual framework on CPL.

The Ministry of Education and Training frequently organises seminars on different topics such as school leadership or team teaching and strengthening evidence-informed practice. The seminars often start with plenary lectures, presenting research results are presented, followed by in-depth workshops with examples of good practices. The target groups are educational practitioners in schools, PBDs, ITE institutes and policymakers. A list of these initiatives can be found here.

Information can also be disseminated through different communication channels. A brief overview will be presented below but more detailed information can be found in annex 4.

- Klasse is a multimedia communication platform that aims to increase the commitment of teachers, school leaders, parents and pupils in education through positive journalism.
 Klasse often shares information regarding seminars and possible professional development activities.
- <u>KlasCement</u> is a platform for educational professionals allowing professionals to share materials, practical experiences and questions. Information regarding seminars and professionalisation activities is communicated through this platform as well. It also provides an overview of all organisations offering professional development activities for schools. Last year this overview was consulted 12,664 times.
- <u>Canon Cultuurcel</u> coordinates several communication and awareness-raising initiatives to further and professionalise teachers (in training) on cultural education.

Local authorities

Some local authorities take initiatives to support schools and teachers to tackle local challenges. Cities like <u>Brussels</u>, <u>Antwerp</u> and <u>Ghent</u> provide services to support schools in an urban context. Antwerp, for example, initiated the 'start-wise' network where different actors (school nets and teacher educators) can share their expertise on coaching and induction.

At local level, various actors initiate collaborative projects and activities regarding the professionalisation of teachers (teams). These can range from school communities working together to cities setting up a networks with schools around various topics in order to exchange expertise and good practices.

Support networks ('Ondersteuningsnetwerken')

During school year 2017-2018, a new support model for pupils with specific educational needs was implemented in all mainstream schools (see earlier). This support model replaced previous systems (GON, ION, guarantee scheme).

Schools for mainstream education that require an extension of care or that have pupils following curricula tailored to their needs can call on the expertise of special education (support) staff. The needs of the pupil as well as those of the teacher are taken into account, and team-oriented support (see earlier) can also be provided.

Teacher training departments

The teacher training courses at universities, university colleges, and Schools of Arts⁴⁰ train candidate teachers to become fully-fledged teachers. The guiding principles here are the basic competencies (see earlier). Additionally, the teacher training institutes have a role in the initial guidance of beginning teachers and as professionalisation institutes thereby creating a professional continuum.

The teacher training programmes offer access to the Bachelor-after-Bachelor 'Special education' and the Bachelor-after-Bachelor 'Care Broadening and Remedial Learning' programmes.

Teacher associations

Teacher associations (for example the Association for Geography Teachers, Association of Teachers of Ancient Languages, Belgian Association of Teachers of French), unite teachers in their field and offer professional added value to their teaching practice. These associations are not set up by the government but are private initiatives that provide general support to their members.

Another form of teacher association are the unions (COV, COC, ACOD, VSOA). They also have a role in professional development of teachers, e.g. through publications and the organisation of conferences and seminars.

Other organisations, such as private CPL providers, publishers, non-profit organisations

While the government sets up initiatives for professionalisation, these activities are often very specific or limited in terms of scale. Schools can also use their in-service training resources to collaborate with a private provider on the market. Teachers and school leaders can do so to tailor their professionalisation to their own needs and/or school context. Each person or organisation can support a teacher (team) in their professional development process, no admission or restriction conditions are imposed. Publishers also organise CPL activities.

Additionally, other levels of government or other policy areas (such as welfare, environment, etc.) fund professional development initiatives.

(Educational) researchers

(Educational) researchers contribute to the development of evidence-informed practices and thus to permanent professionalisation and innovation.

 $\underline{40\ https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/waar-kan-je-studeren-voor-leraar}$

This practices can be done by linking research to the needs of educational practice, producing practice-oriented or relevant knowledge, cooperation with schools, PBDs and by disseminating the knowledge to educational practice. Examples include the recent studies on <u>powerful learning</u> environments and team teaching.

The Ministry of Education increasingly stresses the importance of exploitation and communication of the policy oriented research funded by the Ministry of Education (e.g. 'Onderwijskundig beleids- en praktijkgericht onderzoek, OBPWO)) in order to professionalise the broad educational field. This is done in various ways, e.g. through practice-oriented brochures or seminars where research results are presented.

The VLOR (Flemish education council or 'Vlaamse Onderwijsraad', see earlier) supports practice-oriented reviews. The series on practice-oriented literature studies in educational research provides an overview of the available knowledge about specific issues in education practice. The studies are a useful tool as they group the results of educational research and make them accessible to the educational field and intermediary actors. The last review concerned keys for effective reading comprehension. VLOR often refers to the need of professionalisation in their different topic-based recommendations.

The Decree on funding for higher education (dated 14 March 2008) stipulates that universities of applied sciences are granted resources for **practice-based academic research** ('Praktijkgericht wetenschappelijk onderzoek', PWO) within the framework of professional higher education. In this way, applied research at universities of applied sciences is encouraged. There is currently no general overview of the projects and outputs of PWO research and more specifically educationally relevant PWO research available.

Within the Fund for Scientific Research ('Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek', FWO) is the **Strategic Basic Research** ('Strategisch Basisonderzoek', SBO) programme. This programme subsidises innovative research that, in the event of scientific success, offers opportunities for economic or social applications. The emphasis is on dissemination. Annually, one or two projects with a significant educational value are subsidised. The emphasis of the last major project was on teachers' competence development and the subsequent creation of inclusive learning environments. As a outcome durable and sustainable tools have been developed.

Apart from the initiatives mentioned above universities and university colleges also conduct research in the field of educational science, pedagogical sciences, school organisation, school psychology,...There are **self-initiated research projects**, which, depending on their research question, set up professionalisation projects with a limited group of respondents or offer professional development courses afterwards.

International programmes, such as Erasmus+ programme

Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport in Europe in 2021-2027. The programme consists of 3 key actions: Learning mobility of individuals (KA1), Cooperation among organisations and institutions (KA2), and Support to policy development and cooperation (KA3).

The programme has a strong focus on inclusion and diversity, the environment, the digitalisation and participation.

KA1 supports mobility of learners and staff to learn and/or gain professional experience in another country. Through KA1, specific actions are supported:

- Mobility of staff in the 3 'domains': school education, vocational education and training
 and adult education (KA121). Professional development is central, via a teaching
 assignment, internship or job-shadowing, or participation in a structured course abroad.
- Mobility of pupils, trainees, low-skilled adult learners in SE, VET and AE is possible as well.

Per domain, the learning mobility can be applied for by an individual organisation or by a consortium (a group of min 2 sending organisations). It can also be done via a short-term project or via an accreditation, which offers long-term participation in KA1.

Projects can also get money to host experts and educators in training from abroad.

The Erasmus+ online platforms (eTwinning, School Education Gateway and EPALE) are tools that stimulate the virtual and blended opportunities for the projects and create a vibrant community for SE. VET and AE.

Epos vzw is the National Agency for Erasmus+ in the Flemish Community of Belgium; it informs and supports applicants. It is also responsible for the selection, financing, monitoring and follow up of the beneficiaries.

1.3.3 The system's (and different stakeholders') overall vision for CPL and its expected goals?

Aside from the Quality Decree of 8 May 2009, there are currently no official documents available regarding the vision of continuous professionalisation.

The expectations of the Flemish government concerning professionalisation policy in schools are clarified in the <u>Reference framework for Quality in Education</u> (Ministry of Education and Training, 2017) in which both internal and external sharing of expertise is emphasised. Professionalisation policy is a crucial element to guarantee the quality of education and in a school's internal quality assurance.

One of the quality expectations set by the framework is formulated as "the school develops and pursues an effective professionalisation policy and focuses particularly on novice team members" (p.17). The expectation is: "the school develops a systematic professionalisation policy. In this regard, the professionalisation needs of the team members and the priority objectives of the school are of central importance. The school promotes professional dialogue and reflection on learning and teaching and offers the necessary support. Internal and external sharing of expertise is encouraged. The school further encourages the implementation of professionalisation initiatives and monitors their effects. Novice team members are given appropriate guidance."

Each PBD drafts a three-year guidance plan, in which their vision on professional development and teacher guidance as well as their specific priorities concerning professionalisation are defined. This vision is related to the objectives of their umbrella organisations and the developments that are taking place at that level. The commission Monard (2018) observed that the PBDs vision of guidance often consists of general principles. The PBDs usually rely on insights based on research, but they still need to be translated into concrete guidance practices. A commonly used source on transfer effects of professionalisation is the research of Merchie and colleagues (2015).

1.3.4 Key objectives and initiatives related to teachers' CPL

As previously shown, a number of social and economic developments are challenging the teaching profession. Measures are being taken to guarantee and strengthen the quality of the profession while also keeping it sufficiently attractive in a competitive labour market.

This is translated in the following objectives in the Education and Training Policy Note for 2019-2024:

- To give all school leaders and teachers the opportunity to professionalise through targeted in-service training and professionalisation and to bring them closer to the teaching practices. Resources are granted predominantly to schools in order to be allocated to the guidance and in-service training they consider necessary.
- In primary education, to strengthen the focus on science and technology by giving teachers the opportunity to specialise in a particular field of study.
- To strengthen the attention for professional knowledge and didactics, knowledge of Dutch, dealing with children with behavioural and learning problems, giftedness and diversity as well as drawing up valid tests.
- To empower teachers to follow the evolution of their pupils through validated and standardised tests.
- To strengthen the attention for language acquisition and advanced Dutch language skills in teacher education.
- To facilitate more exchanges between teachers and employees of companies and between teachers in the French community in Brussels or other (language) communities.
- To require teachers of religious subjects and philosophy of life, who do not have the required certificate of competence to attend further training courses (in conjunction with their representative bodies).
- To develop a competence framework for school leaders. Based on this framework, selection criteria and a professionalisation and evaluation policy for school leaders can be drafted. This competence framework lays the foundation for the further development of a school leadership training course.
- To appoint a Flemish 'educational ambassador'. This ambassador will be the face of the
 education sector and will take on the many challenges (attractiveness of the teaching
 profession, reduction of attrition,...) and help find solutions.
- The reinstalment of the Flemish Reaffectation Commission ('Vlaamse reaffectatiecommissie'), which will ensure the teacher shortage will be reduced and that teachers can spend as much times as possible and needed in the classroom.
- The recruitment of 'lateral or late entrants' (zij-instromers) is brought about by a phased approach and includes the recognition of seniority for bottleneck subjects (knelpuntvakken). To attract specific profiles, cooperation with companies is made possible.
- The quality of teacher training courses will be monitored and adjusted if necessary. Therefore, the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO) will assess all educational programs during this administration. After this assessment, the decree that amended the quality assurance system in higher education will be evaluated as well.

1.3.5 Recent and planned policy reforms and innovations affecting the overall CPL system

Several initiatives are taken or are being developed to change and reinforce teachers' CPL. Additionally, the implementation of different policy measures such as the modernisation of secondary education also requires CPL activities. In this section, we list the initiatives concerning CPL.

Replacing the term 'in-service training' ('nascholing') with 'professionalisation' or 'professional development' ('professionalisering')⁴¹ ensures:

- Regulatory uniformity in regulations regarding terms already included in coalition agreements, policy notes, vision texts, etc. so this specific vocabulary is legally anchored.
- A vision of what 'professionalisation' means: the term 'in-service training' implies a
 traditional view in which professional development is primarily regarded as the transfer
 of knowledge and skills, offered by an external expert. The term 'professionalisation'
 refers to a broad understanding of CPL incorporating school internal and external
 initiatives (see above).

Adapting the concept of 'priority in-service training by the Minister'

Priority INSET, initiated by the Minister was planned to run for one year. However, during working visits, final reports and consultations with the organisations, it became apparent that a one-year duration is insufficient. Consequently, from 2018-2019, onward, the priority projects run for two school years. This extension allows organisations more flexibility with regards to the specific learning needs of schools. Another innovation includes putting more effort into disseminating results to the broad field of work.

Teacher induction (see above)

Teacher induction has been introduced as a right (for novice teachers) and obligation (for schools to offer). From 2019 onwards, resources will be provided for teacher induction. It is therefore key to first consolidate and evaluate the current policy, as well as to focus on knowledge sharing and cooperation.

Reform of the PBD (see above)

The 2019-2024 Policy Note announces a reform of the PBD in order for them to focus on their core tasks, as indicated above.

Reform of the program for policy and practice oriented educational research, initiated by the Flemish government

The renewal of the program for policy and practice-oriented educational research (OBPWO), initiated by the Flemish government, can help ensure all education stakeholders make better use of the available scientific research. This will be achieved by involving stakeholders when scoping topics, by encouraging them to participate in steering committees and by paying attention to dissemination and exploitation of knowledge earlier on in the research process. The in 2020 updated programme will also subsidise practice-oriented research.

Support to teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has brought about challenges for the Flemish education system. Teachers and learners needed to adapt quickly to a new way of teaching, learning and evaluating.

⁴¹ This initiative is part of education decree XXXI.

Distance learning posed organisational challenges and called for new measures to ensure disadvantaged pupils and pupils with specific needs would not fall behind', and their learning could be guaranteed. Surely, teachers need sufficient support to handle this unprecedented situation.

Several measures were launched:

- Additional budget (478,000 euro for 2020 and 956.000euro for 2021) for the PBDs to
 ensure they can support schools in shaping the learning process of their pupils after the
 restart of classes at school.
- Additional budget (35 million euro) will be invested in IT. This budget can be used for extra hours to employ an IT coordinator or to equip teachers and pupils with necessary material and software, among other things
- The i-Learn project will provide an online portal where digital applications for personalised learning will be made available to all Flemish schools and teachers. Crucial for this project to succeed is to provide the necessary training and tailored guidance for teachers in order to use these applications as efficiently as possible. i-Learn aims to be successfully implemented in at least 10% of Flemish primary and secondary schools by the end of September 2022.

The Ministry of Education and Training also provided maximum support to teachers by developing and implementing the following measures:

- Continuous communication regarding the different phases and the accompanying roadmaps on onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/coronavirus and the CoronaSchoolDirect mailinglist were drafted in close cooperation with various stakeholders.
- The Klasse-channels further supported teachers by giving them tools to better adjust their teaching practice with practical examples, tips from colleagues, experts and from research.
- Through KlasCement, teachers (and even parents) massively shared teaching materials and teaching aids. A separate page with supporting materials, useful information and tips for teachers was launched. Membership has increased in recent months. KlasCement's expertise was also used to set up webinars for teachers to help them adjust to distance teaching.

2 CHAPTER 2: TEACHERS' MOTIVATION TO ENGAGE IN CPL

This chapter focuses on the factors that shape teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to engage in CPL. It examines the requirements for teachers to engage in CPL and who sets and monitors them alongside systems of incentives for teachers and the stakeholders that support these.

2.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT IN CPL

As already set out in Chapter 1, there are no formal requirements for **individual teachers** regarding the content, form or frequency of the CPL activities. Even though professionalisation is one of the tasks of an integrated teaching assignment, CPL-requirements can be concretised in the job description. The requirements and monitoring of CPL are the responsibilities of the teacher and the school.

The requirements for teachers' CPL and the modalities for participation are mostly determined at the level of the **schools**. Schools are obliged to draft a yearly professionalisation plan which consists of the expectations and requirements regarding professionalisation for their staff (in terms of e.g. participation and dissemination) and overall organisation. The professionalisation plan also elaborates on the approach of initial guidance for staff members appointed for a fixed term.

While the expectations regarding the implementation of a qualitative professionalisation policy are made explicit in the **Reference Framework for Quality of Education** (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2017), the Flemish legislator does not determine **how** schools should implement their professionalisation policy (e.g. in terms of form, content, duration, theme, etc.). This means schools enjoy a great deal of autonomy to shape their CPL policy.

There is one exception: from 1 September 2019, induction is an obligation (for the schools to organise) and a right (for temporary staff to participate in). Induction must be included in the schools' yearly professionalisation plan but, the form and content of this induction belongs to the autonomy of the schools. The strategic capacities of schools are therefore decisive. The Flemish government granted additional resources for induction as of school year 2019-2020.

Often the **providers of CPL** formulate several expectations for participation, in terms of motivation, engagement, commitment, previous knowledge, matching different goals, ... Some organisations (e.g. PBDs) use a (formal) agreement document stipulating the engagements, goals and activities regarding CPL, in case of long-term guidance. In general, providers themselves are responsible for determining their target group. They define the target group based on different criteria, such as the level of education (e.g. only for pre-primary education), the office (e.g. only for school leaders) or the field of study (e.g. only mathematics).

The Ministry has **no general and system-wide overview** of the above and does not intervene with school practice. There are a few exceptions: professionalisation projects directly subsidised by the Flemish government e.g. the call for in-service training on the initiative of the Minister Often, subsidised projects of the Flemish government also define a clear target group, with the specific aim to provide this group (teachers, school leaders, pedagogical counsellors, ...) to develop the necessary competences to respond to social and technological changes.

2.2 INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT IN CPL

As CPL is a responsibility of teachers, they are mostly in charge of the choices they make regarding their participation: apart from the obligation to participate in school-wide CPL activities, teachers enjoy a great deal of autonomy to participate in CPL. **Few incentives or rewards exist for participating in professional development activities**. This was confirmed in the OECD review on school resources in the Flemish Community (2015) pointing out the lack of a link between the outcome of the assessment and career development. Formal assessment is not used to identify or reward good performance through career development.

A limited number of certificates and diplomas leads to a salary supplement (unacquired salary scale)⁴². This is often only applicable to specific positions (often in special needs education) and the diploma or certificate do not lead to a higher salary when one applies for another position.

Apart from the training courses mentioned above, participation in professionalisation activities does not lead to remuneration in the sense of pay increases, promotion, etc. Moreover, certificates of competence in the Flemish Community of Belgium do not always lead to the recognition of professionalisation of teachers. For example, primary school teachers are paid as a Bachelor, even if they hold a master's degree.

The possibility to appoint and reward teachers with a master's degree in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium has been explored in the study. This study shows that enabling teachers to acquire additional diplomas and higher salaries can be an extra incentive for them to participate to professional development activities or follow a master's programme in primary education (Struyve et al., 2019). Other research does however show that some teachers use their participation in additional courses as a strategy for career advancement (Mombaers et al., 2020).

In some schools, professionalisation is organised in order to get the school team familiar with innovations and the specific educational vision of the school. The latter is the case in schools that have a distinct pedagogical method or project (Steiner, FOPEM) and do not have their own teacher training programmes. It is conceived of as training on the job. Professionalisation makes it possible to get to know the specific educational method and translate it to didactic practice.

In conclusion the extrinsic incentives for teachers to engage in CPL are low. However, research shows that teachers are more likely to participate, if this can help teachers in **their daily practice**. Additionally, Merchie et al. (2015) indicate that the mandatory nature of professionalisation initiatives can influence the success of CPL. Teachers who feel obliged to participate, tend to be less motivated.

42 Examples are

- A bachelor after bachelor special education diploma (60 credits, minimum duration = 1 year);
- A diploma of the bachelor after bachelor care broadening and remedial learning (60 credits, minimum duration = 1 year);
- A diploma in pedagogical sciences;
- A diploma in psychology;
- A certificate or diploma of education from a higher institute of education. The training corresponds roughly with 40 credits (for the 2-year course) or 60 credits (for the 3-year course):
- A certificate of thorough knowledge of the compulsory second language French (only valid in primary education in the Brussels-Capital Region or in one of the border and language

municipalities and is extinguishing).

As there is little recognition and reward of teachers' engagement in CPL, there is – apart from the exceptions mentioned earlier – no formal recognition of teachers' voluntary engagement. While it is possible that recognition occurs at school level, it remains invisible at a central level.

2.3 INITIATIVES TO RAISE TEACHERS' INTEREST IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

While extrinsic incentives are rather low, it seems that the intrinsic motivation to participate in CPL activities is not particularly high either. TALIS 2018 shows that Flemish teachers report a lower need for professional development for almost all domains compared to 14 comparable EU countries (EU-14) and PISA top 6 countries. In the PISA top 6 countries, a remarkably greater need for professional development is noted for the domains of subject knowledge, pedagogical-didactical skills in teaching, IT skills, teaching cross-curricular skills, and pupil behaviour and classroom management. In primary education, the differences between the Flemish Community of Belgium and 5 comparable EU countries (EU-5) are less pronounced. Only for professional development concerning pupil behavioural management and classroom management a higher need in primary education is recorded in the Flemish Community of Belgium compared to the EU-5 countries (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019). Although no research is available to support this claim, there are signals that the professionalisation initiatives reach the most motivated and strongest teachers.

The government and all stakeholders recognise to the **importance** of professionalisation throughout the professional continuum, in order to realise quality education and various educational innovations. This was evident from the various memorandi the recommendations of VLOR for the new Flemish government in 2019. Stakeholders also continually emphasise the importance of professionalisation. Examples are the newsletters of stakeholder organisations (highlighting potential programs, examples and impact), and articles on the Klasse-website (e.g. sharing good practices).

More emphasis on CPL to tackle specific educational issues and to improve the quality of education is a **recurrent recommendation** in the conclusion and discussion section of many studies such as national assessments and policy oriented studies. For example, research into the implementation of the M-Decree (Struyf et al., 2018), research into school drop-outs (Keppens & Spruyt, 2019), as well as international surveys (e.g. PISA or PIRLS). The lessons learned from these studies are shared in various ways, for example through an action plan and inspiring conferences following a national assessment and articles in Klasse. An example is the action plan on reading comprehension (based on the results of PIRLS and the results on national assessments). The INSET by the Minister for 2020-2022 also focuses on reading comprehension.

2.4 MOTIVATION AND (DIS)SATISFACTION WITH THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

In general, 84.0% of primary school teachers (more than their international colleagues) and 76.6% of teachers of first level secondary education (less than their international colleagues) report a positive impact of professional development activities on their teaching practice.

Although TALIS 2018 shows that almost all Flemish teachers participated in at least one professional development activity (PE: 97.8%; SE1st st.: 97.1%) 12 months prior to the survey and participated in three to four different professional development activities, teachers experience many **obstacles** to participate. These include the high cost of professional development (PE: 37.7%, SE 1st st.: 26.6%) and the lack of a relevant professional development offer (PE: 19.1%, SE 1st st.: 29.5%). Other – more practical obstacles – will be explored in chapter 3 (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019).

After participation in a CPL activity, most providers ask their participants to evaluate the activity (see also chapter 5). This evaluation is usually used by the providers to improve the quality of their activities. There is no system-wide overview that compiles the results of these evaluations. Therefore – apart from TALIS – we lack general insight into the motivation and satisfaction with the availability of CPL-activities (organised by either public or private organisations)⁴³.

In 2013 and 2018 the PBDs were evaluated by the Monard Commission. The commission formulated several findings and challenges regarding CPL:

- In order to collect information on teachers' CPL-needs and motivation, a more direct dialogue with teachers (teams) needs to be maintained. Sometimes, school leaders and middle management still appear to be an go-between.
- CPL activities need to pay more attention to the needs of the teachers and the reality in the classroom.
- More coordination is needed between the needs and objectives of individuals and the needs and objectives of the school.
- Satisfaction with a professional development activity depends to a large extent on the familiarity of the individual provider with the (substantive and pedagogical-didactical) topic and on their skills and knowledge.

The same concerns emerge from informal discussions with participants of INSET by the Minister. The limited willingness of teachers to participate in some initiatives can be explained by the following observations:

- The topic does not always match the needs of teachers and their classroom practice.
- The content of these initiatives can be interesting in theory, but sometimes difficult to link to the teachers' work in their own context and classroom.
- Teachers often want ready-made material or clear guidelines that they can immediately apply and use in their practice.
- CPL activities were often (in the past) short-lived. There is not always enough time for (support of) transfer of the learning experiences.

Teachers as well as CPL providers stress the importance of **transfer of the learning experiences to the own daily (classroom) practice**. This is the case for 'external CPL' as well as for self-initiated CPL.

Recent research shows the lack of satisfaction of both school leaders and teachers about a number of external in-service trainings. Teachers claim that external training not always contributes to the **improvement of their practice**. In most cases, they identify external and one-shot training courses as too academic, and too hard to transfer to their practice (Tuytens & Devos, 2017; Ysenbaert et al., 2018). Nevertheless, as TALIS 2018 shows, the participation rate for these activities is high.

 $^{43\} This\ is\ also\ the\ case\ for\ private\ and\ commercial\ providers\ who\ operate\ under\ the\ 'free-market'\ principle.$

Teachers also value the support of **external experts to support their practice** positively, e.g. regarding supporting pupils with special needs. Support can take the shape of consultations, sharing research findings and theoretical frameworks, encouraging reflection, supporting the development of vision- and school-based policies, ... (Struyf et al., 2018).

CPL can also emerge from forms of school internal cooperation, e.g. team teaching. For example, Meirsschaut and colleagues (2018) describe a school that organised a literature study on team teaching after which they decided to introduce team teaching in order to improve pupil guidance. CPL through cooperation with external partners can enhance professional growth of teachers and school development (De Smet et al., 2020).

A school's human resources management (HRM) is a powerful instrument to influence teachers' engagement and to reward their learning activities. Again, this strongly depends on school leadership. Recent Flemish research shows that the degree of orientation towards learning processes within the school team (motivation) has an effect on the extent to which schools pursue strategic HRM⁴⁴. In schools with a strong strategic HRM, it is observed that more teachers are willing to engage in professional learning. The same researchers underline the importance of providing positive feedback, assigning challenging projects or creating development opportunities as ways to unlock teachers' intrinsic motivation (Tuytens et al., 2020). Another study demonstrates that school leader's feedback can stimulate teachers' interest to participate in CPL (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). The perceived usefulness of feedback significantly influences professional learning activities, yet the correlation relationship is weak (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). However, the Education Inspectorate states that in a limited number of schools all team members receive regular formal and informal feedback on their work. Often the coaching and evaluation is focused on starters or dysfunctional team members (Education Inspectorate, 2020).

⁴⁴ Difference is made in the extent to which HR practices are aligned with school's strategic planning and individual needs of teachers. Moderate strategic HRM schools are schools characterised by the alignment of 2 or less HR practices with schools strategic planning and individual needs of teachers. Excellent strategic schools are characterised by the alignment of 3 or more HR practices with school's strategic planning and individuals needs of teachers.

3 CHAPTER 3: ACCESS: HOW ACCESSIBLE IS CPL FOR TEACHERS

This chapter focuses on teachers' entitlements and the funding of CPL activities as well as barriers and constraints that prevent teachers and schools from accessing diverse and high-quality professional learning opportunities. It also considers the policies and support aimed at addressing these barriers and widening participation in CPL.

3.1 FUNDING OF THE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All schools receive annual funding to implement their professionalisation plan. This way, they can call upon the support of their choice.

The share of **resources** to which each school is entitled, is calculated pro rata on the basis of the number of staff employed on 1 February of the previous year, taking into account the educational level for which the resources are intended. The resources are part of the general resources all schools receive and are earmarked for professional development. In addition, schools may use their own operational resources to participate in CPL activities. It can also be used for informal forms of professionalisation. The Flemish government does not have any overview of the specific use of this operational budget.

In most cases, schools provide teachers with financial support for participation in external CPL activities, including transport costs. The school's professionalisation plan describes for which CPL activities teachers can apply to for financial or other support. This plan also describes the procedures for teachers to apply for participation in external and formal CPL activities.

The Flemish government funds some professionalisation initiatives:

- **INSET by the Minister**: Every 2 years, the Minister determines one or more topics for which organisations can set up a professionalisation trajectory. These topics are linked to a reform or policy priority.
- According to the Quality decree of 2009, the PBDs receive funding to guide schools and for CPL activities. They receive the salary costs of advisors and secondments as well as operating resources. However, some subsidies have been made subject to a cut of 6% from 2020 onwards. Considerable cuts will also be made to resources (staffing and operating resources) allocated to the PBDs as announced in the Policy Note 2019-2024.
- The Ministry of Education and Training finances different projects targeting CPL of teaching staff (see chapter 1). These funds can be one-off or recurrent and are granted by means of a subsidy or an agreement. Examples are the continuing education programmes French for primary (Formaprim) and secondary education (Francoform), exchange projects between schools from other language communities in Belgium, training of teacher trainers, training at institutes of higher education, and the support for learning communities on the topic of STEM.

The following tables present the different budgets.

	(Pre-) primary	Secondary
Amount (Euro)	65.95	97.34

Table 11: Annual funding from the government: Average amount in euro per full-time job in 2018-2019 Source: Flemish Department of Education and Training: Yearbook Education Statistics https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/statistisch-jaarboek-van-het-vlaams-onderwijs-2018-2019

Resources in 2020 in k euro				
Counsellors	19,585			
Secondments	8,881			
Operating resources	9,685			
Total	38,151			

Number of full-time positions PBDs							
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
counsellor/counsell or coordinator	185	187.5	191.5	193.5	194.5	196.5	199.5
Secondments	150.5	150.5	150.5	150.5	150.5	150.5	150.5
Total	335.5	338	342	344	345	347	350

Table 12: Resources and FTE for PBDs

Source: Flemish Department of Education and Training: Yearbook Education Statistics https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/statistisch-jaarboek-van-het-vlaams-onderwijs-2018-2019

	2015 ⁴⁵	2016	2017	2018	201946
At the initiative of the school					
(Pre-) primary education	4,007	4,007	4,007	4,007	4,007
Secondary education	6,335	6,335	6,335	6,335	6,335
Part-time arts education	255	255	255	255	255
Adult education	422	418	418	418	418
Basic education	25	28	28	28	28
Pupil Guidance Centre	178	178	178	178	178
At the initiative of PBDs	1,221	1,221	1,221	1,221	1,221
INSET by the Minister	577	546	546	577	577
TOTAL	13,020	12,998	12,998	13,019	13,019

Table 13: Evolution of the in-service training budget for the schools, the pedagogical guidance services and the INSET by the Minister (as provided for by the quality decree of 8 May 2009) in thousand euro Source: Flemish Department of Education and Training: Yearbook Education Statistics https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/statistisch-jaarboek-van-het-vlaams-onderwijs-2018-2019

⁴⁵ As a result of the savings made in 2015, in-service training was reduced by about 10%.

⁴⁶ For the last financial year, the appropriations are not final yet. This is the case for previous financial years.

In 2015, a generic saving was made on the subsidies listed in the table above. The budgets were reduced by 10% with the application of a zero index. From then on, no index has been applied to these subsidies (including the INSET by the Minster).

In addition to the Flemish government, other organisations or policymakers provide subsidies to schools for innovative projects and projects focused on CPL. An example of this is the King Baudouin Foundation, which annually launches calls on various topics (not limited to education). There is no data registered of the number and type of schools benefitting from such additional funds.

In the past, subsidies were awarded for professionalisation of school leaders. These resources were eventually added to the general in-service training resources for schools. Funds were also provided for the professionalisation of school boards for many years. However, the subsidy was abolished in school year 2019-2020.

As already mentioned, schools can use additional resources of their operational budget in order to organise CPL in school or to support teachers to participate in external courses. Increasingly, networks or school boards of schools jointly organise CPL activities for their schools. This not only reduces the cost but also offers opportunities to learn within and between schools of these networks. E.g. some school communities organise collective CPL activities as well as collegial consultations and observations.

In general, the schools' budget for professionalisation is relatively modest. The possibilities with a budget of 67 Euro in (pre-) primary education and 97 Euro in secondary education per full time equivalent per year are rather limited.

3.2 BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO ACCESSING CPL OPPORTUNITIES

3.2.1 Barriers for (individual) teachers

TALIS 2018 indicates that the **main barrier** to participate in CPL activities is the challenge to balance them with teachers' work schedules (PE: 43.8%, SE 1st st.: 45.6%). Additionally, a high cost price (PE: 37.7%, SE 1st st.: 26.6%), family commitments (PE: 30.2%, SE 1st st.: 33.1%) and the lack of incentives to participate (PE: 20.1%, SE 1st st.: 25.7%) as well as to engage in relevant professional development activities (not tailored to the needs or the (urban) context in which teachers work) (PE: 19.1%, SE 1st st.: 29.5%) are factors that contribute to low participation.

Compared to their colleagues in other comparable countries, Flemish teachers experience **fewer obstacles** to participate in professional development activities. Flemish teachers in both educational levels experience fewer financial, family and work-related obstacles compared to teachers in other countries. They also experience significantly more support from their employer compared to the other countries (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019). Other research shows that another barrier is related to whether or not the **format and content** of the offer match with the beliefs of the teachers. It indicates that participants find it difficult to participate and to learn from a collaboration that clashes with their own views (De Smet et al., 2020).

School culture and leadership can be experienced, both as a barrier or a facilitator for the professional development of teachers. Recent case study research on strategic HRM (Tuytens et al., 2020) shows a correlation between learning opportunities and the degree of implementing a strategic HRM policy. In schools with excellent HRM strategies different learning opportunities are perceived, while teachers in the majority of moderately strategic schools experience rather limited learning opportunities. Schools with limited learning opportunities mainly focus on external professionalisation initiatives and internal learning opportunities are rather limited too, for example, a pedagogical conference. In schools where an excellent HRM policy has been implemented, different learning opportunities are initiated, e.g. working groups, team teaching, peer consultation (Tuytens et al., 2020).

3.2.2 Barriers for specific groups of teachers

TALIS 2018 shows that the extent to which barriers are experienced does not vary according to the gender and teaching experience of teachers. Nor do the barriers experienced by teachers appear to be related to the school population of the school in which they teach.

According to TALIS 2018, teachers in the first stage of secondary education indicate more often than their primary school colleagues the absence of relevant CPL activities (respectively 29.5% compared to 19.1%) and of incentives to participate (25.7% compared to 20.1%). Significantly fewer teachers in first stage secondary education than in primary education indicate that professional development is too expensive (26.6% compared to 37.7%).

Barriers are mostly experienced equally over schools regardless of their degree of diversity of their pupils (in terms of socio-economic, migration status and special needs profile of pupils). Only in the 1st stage of secondary education, teachers in schools with more pupils from a migrant background experience more barriers for CPL compared to teachers with less pupils from a migrant background. There are also differences when it comes to the participation in types of CPL: Self-observation and observation by colleagues or following courses leading to a diploma or certificate are less applied in schools with pupils with parents with a lower--educated background (Spruyt et al., 2020).

3.2.3 Barriers regarding specific forms of CPL

The TALIS 2013 report has shown that Flemish teachers rarely share their teaching practice openly and, likewise, rarely observe or provide feedback to each other (OECO, 2014). Based on TALIS 2018, we can see an increase in the observation rate, but a comparison between the two surveys is difficult to make due to a different operationalisation of the concepts.

3.2.4 Overcoming barriers for schools

Recent studies on Flemish schools stress the following important conditions to enable the participation in CPL to overcome barriers for CPL (see e.g. De Smet, et al., 2020; Vekeman et al., 2020):

- structural provision of time, both for participation in the activity itself and for transfer;
- availability of financial resources;

- availability of infrastructure;
- culture of learning, working and researching together in schools;
- leadership;
- alignment of staff and professionalisation policy with strategic school policy;
- the existence of professional learning communities at school;
- finding substitute teachers for teachers that participate in CPL activities. In the context of workplace learning of teachers in companies, class replacement activities are provided in the absence of teachers. However, this opportunity is not always used.

3.3 SUPPORT TO FULFIL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

Legislation does not formulate any requirements regarding the support of CPL opportunities. Schools and teachers are free to shape these, depending, among other things, on the strategic and organisational choices of the school. Most teachers indicate that they did not have to pay anything. Also, transport costs can be paid for the teachers, this is the autonomy of the schools. With the exception of two countries, Flemish teachers pay the lowest costs associated with their own professional development, according to TALIS 2018.

Research emphasises the importance of strong leadership for supporting teachers (Backers et al., 2020; De Smet et al., 2020; Vekeman et al., 2020). Feedback can initiate processes of professional learning (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020). However, according to the Education Inspectorate (2020), this is not yet the case in every school.

Schools deal with this in different ways: on the one hand, in some schools individual teachers are often given opportunities to participate in CPL activities according to their interests and needs and are free to choose. On the other hand, the school board, the school leader or the school communities/group (with part of the team) initiate certain professionalisation initiatives such as pedagogical workshops/ study days and oblige teachers to participate. The school leader thus has an important role in creating opportunities for the team's professional learning. The way school leaders approach this, appears to be an indication of the school's development as a learning organisation (Devos, 2019).

The challenge is to provide sufficient support to school leaders with less policy making capacities (Staelens, 2015; Vanhoof et al., 2015; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019). This creates the need for additional support for schools with weak management that do not always find their way to the right support. To counteract this, the Policy Note 2019-2024 stipulates that underperforming schools must be supported.

Government support usually takes the shape of financial resources or replacement opportunities. TALIS 2013⁴⁷ indicates that an important form of support includes the free scheduling of teachers during working hours. There is a significant difference between primary (69%) and secondary education (61%). The proportion is significantly higher than the respective TALIS averages. In no other country, the proportion of teachers who receive a salary supplement or a non-financial form of support for off-hours activities in primary education, is as low as in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

In addition, the government stipulates that schools can organise a pedagogical seminar for their staff, giving pupils a day free of class.

⁴⁷ Due a lack of data in Flemish report TALIS 2018 on this topic, we refer to data of the Flemish report 2013.

Support is also provided through **guidelines and tools**. Schools can consult the Reference Framework for Quality in Education in which the expectations regarding quality professionalisation policy are explicitly stated. In addition, the providers, PBDs and educational researchers also offer various manuals and tips on professionalisation and specific contents. Content can also be shared on KlasCement (see chapter 1).

PBDs support school leaders and schools in initiating and implementing educational innovations, as well as in the field of school development and professional development. Pedagogical counsellors work across schools and provide in-service training, on site guidance and support of school leaders and school teams. They also support and stimulate the (further) development of quality assurance mechanisms in schools and school development. There has been a shift from supporting individual teachers towards support at school level. Both foci ask for different approaches, going from CPL courses to long term guidance trajectories. One of the tasks of the PBDs is providing support to teachers in the implementation of innovations at school and classroom level (see also Chapter 5: 'Transfer of CPL content to classroom and school').

The 'workability monitor 2004-2019'⁴⁸ also assesses the professionalisation opportunities of teachers: formal or informal opportunities to develop competences. A positive trend can be observed: the percentage of teaching staff with insufficient learning opportunities decreased from 8.4% in 2004 to 6.1% in 2019. Flemish teachers have significantly more learning opportunities compared to the average Flemish worker (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2020).

3.4 DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION ABOUT CPL OPPORTUNITIES

Information about CPL activities is disseminated through various channels:

- School leaders in schools disseminate the information (via mails/boards/teachers' room, ...). The school leaders' offer can be non-compulsory or mandatory;
- The communication channels of the providers (including PBDs and trade unions);
- Government channels such as Klasse, KlasCement or the newsletter for teachers and school leaders.

Teachers and other professionals can individually subscribe to mailing lists, targeting specific schools. Local support systems by local communities can also target specific schools. These mailing lists are developed and hosted by the organisations themselves. In general, schools and teachers need to subscribe to these lists themselves.

In the 'in-service training register', nascholingsrepertorium, available on KlasCement, all organisations offering in-service training can register and share their offer. No quality labels are awarded to the organisations. A viewing guide supports schools and teachers to find the organisation or course that best fits their needs. However, the overview is not exhaustive and teachers are not always familiar with this instrument. This register is not used intensively.

While there is a lot of communication, the report of the Monard Commission shows that teachers are not always aware of the CPL opportunities. As already outlined, some teachers could not contact the PBD directly, but had to go through their school leaders (Monard Commission, 2019).

⁴⁸ Measures the quality of the jobs of different professions every three years. it calculates how jobs score in terms of work stress, motivation, learning opportunities and work-life balance. Workable work or the degree of workability is the percentage that does not score problematically for both work stress and motivation and learning opportunities and work-life balance. There are separate analyses of the education sector.

4 CHAPTER 4: PROVISION: HOW AND BY WHOM IS CPL PROVIDED

This chapter concerns the different formats in which professional learning opportunities are provided by a diverse range of actors them. In addition to being recipients, teachers can be providers of CPL, both individually (e.g. as coaches, mentors and team teachers) and collectively (e.g. via networks).

4.1 TIME FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To find out how much **time** is spent on CPL, we refer to TALIS 2018 and the recent research on teachers' time use in the Flemish Community of Belgium (Minnen et al., 2018). The time use research shows that teachers working full-time spend on average 1h13m per week⁴⁹ (2.23% of weekly working time) on training in primary education and 1h21m per week⁵⁰ (2.54% of weekly working time) in secondary education. This mainly concerns in-service training activities and to a lesser extent reading professional literature (Minnen et al. 2018), findings which are in line with the TALIS 2018 results. TALIS 2018 shows that full-time employed Flemish teachers spend on average 0.9 hours⁵¹ (PE) and 0.8 hours (SE) per week (2.01% for both levels) on professional development. This amount of time is significantly less than international colleagues who participate on average 1.3 hours (EU-5 countries) and 1.5 hours (PISA-6 countries) on professional development. Flemish teachers also spend less time on cooperation and consultation with colleagues within their schools compared to their international colleagues (both PE and SE = 2.3 hours: EU-5 = 3.2 hours: PISA-6 = 2.7 hours).

4.2 FORMATS OF CPL ACTIVITIES

4.2.1 Overview of formats

TALIS 2018 shows that CPL activities with the highest participation in both primary and the first stage of secondary education are **courses and seminars** (PE: 92.7%; SE 1st st.: 88%), followed by reading professional literature (PE: 79.2%; SE 1st st.: 81.2%).

In primary education, half of the teachers participate in educational conferences, compared to 37.6% in the first stage of secondary education. In addition, one third of teachers took part in self-evaluation processes or peer observation (PE: 35.6%; SE 1st st.: 34.4%) and more than a quarter participated in a network of teachers in primary education and almost one third in first stage secondary education (PE: 27.3%; SE 1st st.: 32.7%).

Less common professional development activities are observations in other schools (PE: 22.5%; SE 1st st.: 18.5%), online courses (PE: 7.4%; SE 1st st.: 14.5%), training leading to a diploma or certificate (PE: 15.0%; SO 1st st.: 12.8%) and learning visits to companies or public services (PE: 7.6%; SO1st st.: 11.4%).

⁴⁹ Weekly working time of full-time employees in primary education: 50h56m

⁵⁰ Weekly working time of full-time employees in secondary education (all stages): 47h59m

⁵¹ Working time (hours) of full-time employees during the most complete calendar week: 44.6 (PE) 39.7 (SE)

There are striking differences between education levels in the Flemish Community of Belgium. For example, primary school teachers are more likely to take part in 'courses or seminars', 'educational conferences' and 'learning visits to other schools' than teachers in the first stage of secondary education. This last group participates more often in online courses or study days, learning visits to companies and public services, and a network of teachers regarding professional development (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019).

TALIS 2018 shows that Flemish teachers at both levels of education participate more often in offline courses and seminars and read professional literature more frequently than teachers in other countries. On the other hand, teachers in the EU-5 countries (+29.2 percentage points), the EU-14 countries (+14.4 percentage points), and PISA top 6 countries (+23.1 percentage points) participate more often in online courses and seminars (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019) than Flemish teachers.

According to TALIS 2018, teachers tend to participate in **rather traditional forms of professionalisation such as courses** (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019). However, research shows the importance of CPL activities, **tailored** to teachers' or schools' specific needs and context (Merchie et al., 2015). School based in-service training offers added value if team members have a shared vision and a clear shared sense of purpose (De Smet et al., 2020).

In general, a trend towards tailor-made CPL activities in which **training and guidance go hand in hand** can be observed in the Flemish Community of Belgium. Increasingly, schools make use of long term and school-based guidance. PBDs and other providers increasingly make use of integrated guidance activities to support the implementation of new content. Examples are:

- Several professional development projects integrate different levels; i.e. objectives at the level of school leaders and objectives at the level of the teams and even individual teachers. These projects are developed by different schools, school communities and external providers, e.g. PBD, priority INSET projects by the Minister.
- Other professionalisation activities work both at the level of individual schools as well as at the level of the school network (to which the participating schools belong).

4.2.2 Teachers as providers of CPL

Schools are free to draft teachers' duties and timetables, based on the regulation, needs and context of the school. Based on school priorities, teachers can be encouraged to develop further as mentors, coaches, ... Some schools make use of coaches working on specific topics and themes (e.g. reading coaches). Increasingly, Flemish schools appoint **expert teachers** that can act as sources for CPL. Recent research in primary education shows that through practices such as team teaching or subject anchor working,⁵² formal and informal cooperation is developed, as several teachers share responsibility over several class groups. Through collaborations, knowledge sharing between teachers becomes possible, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactical approaches (e.g. collaboration between less and more experienced teachers) as well as in the field of socio-emotional knowledge about pupils (e.g. Subject anchors) (Struyf et al., 2016).

As of September 2019, school-based coaches (or mentors) can offer initial guidance. **Mentoring** is a form of support in which more experienced teachers assist less experienced or novice teachers. Mentors can act as a point of contact for novice teachers as well as for the entire teacher team (see a.o. Thomas et al., 2020; März & Kelchtermans, 2020).

Although research highlights the potential benefits of these mentoring projects for the whole school, TALIS 2018 shows that primary school leaders indicate that only four out of ten schools have such a programme in place and in only 10.1% of primary schools all teachers have access to mentoring. This contrasts sharply with secondary education, where mentoring is organised in 75% of all Flemish schools. 14.8% of teachers in secondary education have access to mentoring. Compared to the EU-5 countries, school leaders report that it is more difficult for Flemish primary school teachers to access mentoring programmes (-24.1). In the first stage of secondary education, the pattern is reversed: Flemish teachers have access to a mentoring programme more often than average (compared to the EU-14 and PISA top 6 countries).

Only a limited number of teachers reports being formally appointed as mentor (PE: 6.7%; SE 1st st.: 7.7%). Compared to the EU-5 countries there are significantly fewer teachers appointed as mentors in Flemish primary education.

4.2.3 Collaborative CPL formats

The Reference Framework for Quality in Education underlines the importance of internal expertise sharing in schools. In general, there is a trend toward increasing collaborative learning.

Different types of school-related learning networks offer opportunities to learn together, and teachers can play an active role in their own and their colleagues' professional development using existing structures, such as subject departments or working groups. Additionally, new (temporary or structural) collaborations are increasingly being set up in Flemish schools.

The Education Inspectorate notes that cooperation between colleagues within the school is not yet common practice in every school. In secondary schools, and even within schools, major differences between the teachers' approaches, types of education and subject departments (Education Inspectorate, 2020) can be observed. Some schools are characterised by an 'island culture': team members work independently and opportunities for exchange are insufficiently explored and exploited. In other schools, there is an intense cooperation between classes, stages and degrees. TALIS 2018 gives insight into the frequency of Flemish teachers' participation in simple and complex forms of collaborative learning. Flemish teachers in the first grade of secondary education indicate that all forms of cooperative activities (except for the exchange of teaching materials) are used more frequently in 2018 compared to 2008. Although Flemish teachers are catching up, the absolute frequency of cooperative activities remains lower than in the EU-5, EU-14 and PISA top 6 countries. Among the simple forms of cooperative activities, attendance at team meetings has seen the strongest increase. Between 2008 and 2018 the proportion of teachers indicating that they attended a team meeting at least once a month rose by 8.9 percentage points. Among the more complex forms of cooperation, teaching together is the strongest. Over a period of ten years, the proportion of teachers who admitted to having taught with a colleague at least once a month rose with 10.2 percentage points (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020).

Schools can provide opportunities for informal and formal forms of collaborative CPL. Teachers share materials and literature, they can discuss and give feedback on each other's lessons and make lesson preparations together. A teacher can also act as a coach or mentor to other teachers, e.g. in the context of initial guidance or when transferring knowledge acquired during professionalisation activities. Most (informal and formal) collaborative learning takes place inside the school, but cross-school professionalisation also occurs.

These activities enable knowledge transfer, support sustainability and encourage the development of a collective learning culture (Struyf et al., 2016; Struyf et al., 2020; Van Droogenbroeck, 2019))-.

Increasingly, school teams organise internal and external **collective learning activities** (e.g. class observations, participation in learning networks, collaborations with externals). In the Flemish Community of Belgium, there is a growing tendency towards team teaching as well as different forms of cooperation through project work within teacher-teams. Processes of joint learning, such as self-study and professional learning communities are cautiously finding their way into Flemish schools.

If needed, schools can rely on external partners, for example PBDs and other providers, to support collaborative learning. This support is provided in various ways, for example by taking on the role of process counsellor and offering guidance or by developing materials and guidelines to support school leaders and teachers.

TALIS 2018 shows that more straightforward forms of cooperation (e.g. exchanging teaching materials with colleagues and attending team meetings) are more common than more complex activities (e.g. teaching together in the same classroom or observing lessons from other teachers and providing feedback). The latter requires more in-depth collaboration between teachers and however considered more professional, it is a time-consuming form of collaboration. It is striking that almost all cooperation activities in the Flemish Community of Belgium are more frequently applied in primary education than in the first stage of secondary education. Almost all complex forms of cooperation activities are applied more frequently in the Flemish Community of Belgium' comparison countries. The only activity that is more common in primary schools in the Flemish Community of Belgium compared to the EU-5 countries, is co-teaching.

Not all forms of cooperation lead to in-depth learning: storytelling and exchanging ideas turn out to be non-committal in most cases. Jointly developing materials and sharing views are a better form of collaboration to realise deep learning, rather than merely exchanging materials (Van Keulen et al., 2015; Vanblaere et al., 2015). It is therefore a great challenge to encourage a culture of collaborative learning and to facilitate these processes (see also Vanhoof et al., 2015). In practice, Flemish primary school teachers report in TALIS 2018 a stronger collaborative school culture than first stage secondary school teachers. It is striking that school leaders, more often than teachers, have the opinion that there is a collaborative school culture, but at the same time experience a great need for professional development to provide effective feedback and promote cooperation between teachers (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020).

A Flemish study that focuses on the three basic characteristics of professional learning communities (PLC) shows that experienced Flemish primary school teachers indicate to have occasional reflective conversations with each other. They also experience a joint responsibility at school. However, the same study shows that teachers barely open their class doors to each other and rarely engage in practice-deprivatisation. Furthermore, teachers generally rate their principal's transformational leadership as good, while their instructional leadership is rated as 'neutral'. And it is precisely this instructional leadership that leads to reflective dialogue and practice-deprivatisation (Vanblaere et al., 2014). Additionally, deep discussions through reflective dialogue and practice -) deprivatisation are crucial for changing classroom practices (De Neve et al., 2015; Vanblaere et al., 2015).

Processes of collective learning can be initiated by different bodies; e.g. schools and teachers, PBDs, a group of school leaders, a coordinating director of a group of schools, an umbrella education provider, teacher training or academics. These professional learning communities mostly took place offline before the COVID19-crisis.

Collective learning can take **various forms** in a school (e.g. with externals) or across schools such as learning networks, PLCs (often within a school), and subject-based learning communities. In these PLCs, teachers collaborate on a specific (curriculum-related) topic: they exchange knowledge, materials, ... and learn together. Often, meetings and collegial visits take place or experts are invited to discussions. Different PBDs are setting up, in collaboration with experts from universities or university colleges, learning communities around a pedagogical theme in different schools. Different participants in these activities reported that they were given the opportunity to share for information, jointly develop materials and ideas; they were able to discuss relevant topics with experts. Other forms of collective learning, such as lesson study are increasingly being used. Teachers prepare, give, observe and evaluate a lesson together⁵³. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the project 'Onderzoekende school⁵⁴ (Willegems, 2020) is an example of collaborative practical research: during their internship teachers in training collaborate with a school on specific questions they face in their daily practice and translate them into research questions. In this way, theory and practice are brought together.

These recurring learning events are usually **facilitated by an (external) process coach**. His role is twofold and they need to (a) coach the processes of collective learning and (b) offer relevant input for the learning process. In its evaluation of the PBDs, the Monard Commission (2019) notes that the learning networks organised by PBDs are generally appreciated by those involved. The roles of coach and content-related expert appear to be essential, yet not easy to combine. In some cases, these roles are taken by different actors: a process coach is expected to steer the process and an external expert can give content input (Schelfhout et al., 2015).

Increasingly, the professional learning activities are conceived of as a **train-the-trainer concept**. PBDs and other organisations focus on this approach. E.g in the priority INSET by the Minister, teachers participate in small teams ('core team') and work on different levels of objectives: school, team and classroom level. Working in teams is an added value for all participants, especially in terms of interaction, cooperation and reflecting together. The members of the core team not only develop content-related competences but also learn to support their colleagues' learning processes and to improve the school as a learning organisation. This way, processes of collective learning are introduced and the internal professionalisation capacity is strengthened. The external support can be a focus in this role and internal capacity building (also see Monard et al., 2019).

Finally, some teachers also participate in creating and sharing learning materials, e.g. lesson preparations by lesson study, sharing good practices.

In CPL activities over a longer participation time, good practices, developed materials can be collected to inspire other teachers and schools. Those materials can be shared on KlasCement.

⁵³ E.g. two teachers of a secondary school study area Agriculture and Horticulture, who teach in different grades, participate a 'lesson study' cycle supported by a PBD (POV). The teachers started from a specific learning question, e.g. how to motivate pupils for lessons French? The teachers developed interactive exercises on a tablet and matched their lessons with their interests.

While one teacher teaches the lesson, the other teacher observed a few pupils and subsequently interviewed them. After a reflection on the lesson by the two teachers, they adapted the lesson (Klasse, 2018).

⁵⁴ This model for student teachers, beginning and experienced teachers offers joint responsibility of all those involved in the investigating learning community to improve pupil learning. It is an opportunity to bring theory and practice together and strengthen educational practice. See link for some exemples.

4.2.4 Digital learning and online resources⁵⁵

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, every school can decide based on its own needs and requirements which digital platform they would prefer to use to support their pupils and teachers⁵⁶.

As a result of the Covid-19-crisis, digital professionalisation has increased. The pandemic and health measures have accelerated the provision of online support. Various organisations such as the government (Toll-net, Klasse), PBDs, private organisations (such as Microsoft, Google (Fourcast), DTEeach, publishers) have now shifted their focus to digital professional development. Providers have made use of digital and interactive tools (webinars, MOOCs, interviews, Facebook live, blended learning), and presentations and seminars are being recorded so they can be consulted afterwards. There are no differences in terms of formal conditions (actors, organisation) between digital and face-to-face forms of professionalisation.

However, before the Covid19-crisis, different organisations were already using digital or blended forms of CPL. Teachers already made use of the OER digital platform that KlasCement created (see chapter 1 and above). Users and providers of learning resources can share materials online on the KlasCement-platform. Additionally, Toll-net, a KlasCement subsite, offers both supply and demand driven training programmes based on the Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu). International research (Deloitte and IPSOS, 2019; Howard et al. (2020) indicated that teachers do not feel competent to create digital content.

During the Covid-19-crisis, the PBDs noticed an **evolution in the demand for support** and CPL. At the beginning of the crisis, there were multiple questions regarding CPL related to the availability and technical use of concrete tools and platforms for distance learning. PBDs, KlasCement, and other organisations collected and offered targeted information.

As the health crisis and distance learning continued, more questions popped up about how to organise live online sessions. School were looking to implement distance learning in a more structured way. In most schools, a lot of informal collective CPL took place: e.g. schools made screencasts to show teachers how to deal with digital distance learning or created websites to support teachers in their teaching practice and communication with pupils.

The current concern relates to structurally embedding this new way of working in schools: how to (jointly) develop digital teaching material, how to collaborate digitally, how to teach and evaluate digitally? How to organize blended learning?

⁵⁵ See annex 6 Digital CPL

⁵⁶ During the Covid-19 crisis educational digital platforms such as Smartschool were under considerable pressure. Before the crisis, these platforms were evaluated mostly in terms of functionality and value for money, but during the crisis it became clear that performance and scalability were important criteria too. Smaller and local learning platforms found the situation especially difficult, compared to bigger companies and organisation providing general solutions such as Microsoft Teams or Google G Suite. Microsoft office offers other possibilities such as Sway, Onenote, Classnotebook, Sharepoint, ... In addition, some PBDs are taking a closer look at the effectiveness of other learning management systems (Canvas, Odoo).

4.3 PROVIDERS OF CPL

4.3.1 Providers: motivation and incentives

The **PBDs** receive funding based on their compulsory assignments, as described in the <u>Quality</u> <u>Decree</u> (see chapter 1). As mentioned in chapter 1, the 2019-2024 education Policy Note announces that the tasks of the PBDs will be revised.

Furthermore, the **free market** principle applies to CPL: schools decide for themselves which external provider they engage for their professional development activities. A school can use resources which are earmarked for professional development according to its priorities. These providers can be local small non-profit organisations as well as teacher training courses offering continuous education. These organisations do not receive any subsidies unless they apply for specific calls for proposals. Organisations reach their target group(s) through e.g. newsletters, registration in the in-service training directory etc.

A number of organisations do receive funds for professionalisation activities on a structural basis. Some organisations receive (partial) subsidies for organisation of professionalisation activities targeting a specific group. For example, institutes for higher education receive subsidies for setting up STEM learning networks. This is usually not a recurrent subsidy but serves to implement certain educational innovations or policy priorities. The in-service training on the initiative of the Flemish Government also distributes subsidies for INSET projects.

4.3.2 Regulations concerning the market for and provision of CPL

The **government** does not issue quality labels, either at organisational or at activity level. There is no framework for accreditation the institutions providing professional development activities or for the activities themselves. However, the Ministry of Education and Training did develop a reflection guideline called 'de kijkwijzer' (based on the framework of Merchie et al. 2015) for teachers and school leaders to help them select CPL activities. Additionally, a guideline for providers is offered. Using this instrument is not mandatory and it is not well known among providers and teachers.

In their professional development plan, **schools** determine the criteria for participation in external professionalisation activities based on management team decisions. Examples of criteria are a.o. added value for the school, previous experiences with the provider, price, opportunities for participation with multiple team members and transfer to the team.

Every three years, the PBD draw up a guidance plan and annually they draft reports to the Flemish Government on the activities of the previous school year. They have an internal quality assurance system. At least every six years a commission evaluates them.

In the case of **INSET by the Minister**, a regulatory framework sets out the conditions that projects must meet in order to be selected or subsidised. After the selection, the subsidy conditions are further specified in a ministerial decree.

For all resources granted by the Flemish Government, a grant decision or agreement is drawn up. These further specify the funding conditions (e.g. submission of an interim/final report and its deadline, evaluation of the project on the basis of the Merchie et al. framework, 2015).

4.3.3 Profile of trainers providing CPL

There is no formal job description for trainers (or counsellors in PBDs) who provide professional development activities. This is part of the internal quality assurance of the providers. It is expected that the trainer has adequate knowledge of the subject on which the priority in-service training is focused. In the framework of Merchie et al. (2015) the quality of the trainer is one of the conditions for effective knowledge transfer.

Counsellors in PBDs differ in terms of qualifications (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD), the subjects in which they specialise, teaching experience and professional background.

An appointment in a PBD can be directly either as a permanent (with a maximum of 85%) or a temporary appointment.

In addition, the PBD also employs staff members who are seconded from the education sector.

The Monard Commission (2019) states that the counsellors' quality and competence are crucial for effective CPL; participant satisfaction depends largely on the familiarity of the provider with the topic as well as on their skills and knowledge.

The Commission recommends to pay more attention to recruitment and selection as well as on the evaluation of the counsellors. Feedback from the schools is indispensable.

Each PBD drafts a job description for their employees. They also provide the training and further professionalisation for the counsellors. In its evaluation, the Monard Commission (2019) also recommends PBDs to pay more attention to the professionalisation of their staff.

Professionalisation initiatives by the Ministry (e.g. conferences, seminars) often address pedagogical counsellors and teacher educators as target groups, with the aim of encouraging professional dialogue among the actors in the professional continuum.

The recruitment of **teacher educators** is part of the autonomy of teacher education institutions. The profile of teacher educators in the Flemish Community of Belgium is therefore quite diverse⁵⁷. Also teacher educators differ in terms of qualifications (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD), the subjects in which they specialise, teaching experience and professional background. In order to be appointed as a teaching member of staff at a university college or university, candidates must meet the conditions set out in the Higher Education Codex, Part 5, Staff Regulations. The Flemish government allocates funds for initiatives that improve the quality of teacher education and/or promote cooperation between teacher education institutes (Codex Hoger Onderwijs, Article II.110).

For example, from 2017 until 2020, the Flemish government has provided a subsidy for the professional development of teacher educators.

Finally, VELOV, the professional association for teacher educators in the Flemish Community of Belgium, aims to support primarily teacher educators at universities, university colleges, as well as anyone else involved in the training, supervision and in-service training of teachers. VELOV has different functions: it is a platform and communication channel that focuses on innovation and development and provides a study service.

 $[\]underline{57\ https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2012-12-07-EVALO.pdf}$

4.3.4 Collaboration among providers

In the past different kinds of structures to enhance cooperation between different providers existed alongside each other:

- 'SNPB', the cross-network partnership made up of four pedagogical guidance services (PBD GO!, PBD Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen, PBD OVSG and PBD POV) aimed to support the formal cooperation between these services between 2006 to 2015. The topics of the long-term subsidied cross-network projects were: special needs education, enhancing the quality of pre-primary education, digital learning, lifelong learning, language skills and policy. On 1 January 2015, subsidies to the SNPB were discontinued. Nevertheless cross-network cooperation remained an explicit point of attention for the Monard Commission (2019).
- 'Networks of expertise' (expertisenetwerken) were established by decree in 2007. They are
 based on the idea that high-quality teacher training courses are an important foundation
 for good education. The aim of these networks of expertise was to bring together and
 develop the expertise of the different teacher education programmes in order to improve
 the quality of teacher education and strengthen the provision of services in the field of
 the continuous professional development for teachers.

Although SNPB and the networks of expertise were abolished in 2015, close **cooperation** between different providers still exists and needs to be strengthened and supported. ITE institutes and researchers collaborate on some topics such as teacher induction and strengthening the quality of pre-primary education. However, this cooperation is not systemically embedded. The Monard Commission (2019) asked for more structural cooperation between the PBDs and research institutes and knowledge centres. This could contribute to the professionalisation of the services and enhance the evidence-informed character of their guidance practices. In addition, the commission recommends exploring forms of cooperation that can create a win-win situation for all parties and develop an evidence-informed approach.

The professionalisation of counsellors should go hand in hand with that of other teacher educators. A greater effort should therefore be made to achieve collective professional development, in which the interaction between all teacher educators and counsellors can lead to interesting discussions based on research results, but at the same time provide new possible topic for practice-based research. It is also important to consult teachers during those interactions.

There is an additional need for interaction with CPL providers in blended domains affecting education such as with public centres for social welfare and the welfare sector, but also regarding climate education. These interactions can create collective learning opportunities regarding CPL (De Smet et al., 2020). At the moment organisation of such interactions are fragmented.

Box: updated information since OECD visit in January 2021

Professionalisation project appealing to partnership between different actors in the professional continuum.

In September 2021, several two-year projects aiming to strengthen the initial teacher education programmes and their collaboration with the wider educational field will start.

The projects focus on (1) effective teaching methods for the subjects French, Dutch, STEM and "project algemene vakken"⁵⁸, and effective teaching methods for the stimulation of reading skills, (2) flexible study pathways and (3) strengthening teacher competences in dealing with different educational needs.

The projects will take the shape of a partnership, consisting of one or more teacher education programme, several school teams, one or more CPL providers and a research partner. The projects challenge partnerships to develop new working methods, to strengthen the competences of (aspiring) teachers and teacher educators, and to strengthen the collaboration between different partners within the professional continuum. The partnerships are expected to disseminate their practice, research and acquired expertise at the end of the projects to the wider educational field.

⁵⁸ Project Algemene Vakken: refers to a combination of different general subjects.

5 CHAPTER 5: CONTENT OF CPL

This chapter focuses on the process by which the contents of CPL are selected and developed and how various stakeholders are involved in this process. In particular, it considers how CPL contents are aligned to respond to needs identified or forecast at different levels of the system.

5.1 NEEDS FOR CPL

5.1.1 General overview

TALIS 2018 shows that Flemish teachers, compared to the EU-14 and PISA top 6 countries, report a lower need for professional development. The need for professional development also decreased compared to the previous surveys (2008 and 2013). Flemish teachers indicate they would benefit most from professional development aimed at teaching pupils with specific educational needs, ICT skills, methods for individualised learning, pupil behaviour and classroom management, as well as teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings. Only for professional development concerning pupil behaviour and classroom management, primary education teachers report a higher need in the Flemish Community of Belgium compared to the EU-5 countries⁵⁹ (Van Droogenbroeck, et al. 2019).

This is in line with the OECD's analysis of school resources in the Flemish Community of Belgium (2015), i.e. that not all teacher education and CPL adequately prepare teachers for subject teaching, teaching in a multicultural environment, differentiation of instruction, supporting language learning in all subjects and teaching students with specific educational needs. However, given the changing student demographic and the shift towards greater inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream schools, the need to be able to respond to these challenges is growing.

Additional analyses of TALIS 2018 show that Flemish teachers indicate that they do not feel well prepared for teaching in heterogeneous environments. They report this topic was lacking during their teacher training. Nevertheless, they do report to believe their own skills and competences to be sufficient to teach well for diverse class groups and they do not feel the need for more professionalisation activities regarding this specific issue (Spruyt et al., 2020).

Finally, according to the TALIS 2018 survey, teachers report **content-related** barriers to participate in CPL: Flemish teachers in first stage of secondary education (29.5%) report a higher absence of relevant CPL activities than their primary school colleagues (19.1%). However, compared to their international colleagues, Flemish teachers experience fewer content-related obstacles to participate in CPL. 37% primary teachers in EU-5 countries report no relevant CPL activities, for first stage secondary education in EU 14 that is 37.2%, and for PISA-6 countries 32.7%.

⁵⁹ For primary education, we make a comparison with the five countries available from our above-described selection of 14 EU countries. These are Denmark, England, France, Spain and Sweden, which we further call the EU-5 countries.

In their daily practice, teachers experience multiple challenges. They translate some of these challenges into learning questions. However, for teachers, this translation process is easy to undertake individually. Conversations with colleagues, school leaders and external professionals can be helpful to identify the learning needs.

All providers have the responsibility to match content to the needs of their target groups and to determine the content and forms of the CPL offer. In view of the autonomy of the providers, the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training has no general insight into the mechanisms involved.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, aside from TALIS, no surveys on CPL are conducted at system level, nor are demands and needs assessed centrally. However, several studies outsourced by government reveal professionalisation needs (e.g. national assessments and policy-oriented research as well as research initiated by institutions such as PISA and TIMSS). E.g. the evaluation of the new support model for children with special educational needs (Struyf Commission, 2019) zooms in on the professional development needs of supporters, such as the need for more professionalisation regarding specific educational needs (including dealing with pupils with behavioural disorders [type 3] and the need for coaching skills). In addition, the Commission indicates that mainstream schools should receive additional support to provide guidance to pupils with specific educational needs.

There are various other ways of taking stock of needs, ranging from more ad hoc practices, such as through networks and conferences, to more structural ways such as the annual report 'Onderwijsspiegel' published by the Education Inspectorate. Sometimes the professional development needs are identified through research questions. For some domains, the Flemish government intends to get insights in the CPL needs of teachers. Examples include:

- InnoVET 2018, a study on professionalisation and innovation in labour market-oriented
- of study, uncovering three different types of needs: Pedagogical-didactical support, technical
- training and IT-related training and support (IDEA consult, 2018).
- MICTIVO, a recurring study on the importance and integration of IT in education, investigates
- the extent to which actors keep abreast of new technological developments and which needs
- for CPL are popping up.

The PBDs take stock of the needs of school leaders, teachers and other educational professionals in terms of professional development in order to shape their CPL activities. Various sources are used to this purpose: analyses of social challenges and research, policy priorities, as well as data collected at school level. The following actions are being undertaken:

- Schools and PBDs define topics and methods through an intake for demand-oriented guidance.
- To determine the CPL offer for schools, some PBDs analyse the information provided by test- and research results.
- Systematic contacts with schools provide input for proactive detection of the needs.
- Questioning participants after professionalisation activities can provide insights into additional needs
- To conduct systematic surveys on the schools' needs on CPL.

The Monard Commission (2019) advises the PBDs to intensify these processes and to organise these consultations systemically. The Commission recommends schools to collaborate and encourage direct contact with and between teachers, next to school leaders. The PBDs are currently developing methods and platforms to collect and share the needs of the demand-based guidance. The Monard Commission (2019) also encourages the PBDs to develop a clear policy to reach schools that do not ask for support. The Policy Note on Education (2019-2024) also underlines the importance of involving all schools and teachers.

5.1.3 Tools for identification and alignment of CPL needs

Each teacher can decide which instruments they use to identify their professionalisation needs. Various **self-reflection tools** are available, depending on the topic of the professionalisation activities. Organisations, institutions, teachers, school leaders have the autonomy to decide whether or not to make use of such instruments⁶⁰. Given the multitude of tools available, it is not always easy for teachers and schools to find the right instrument.

Schools and teachers are autonomous in choosing professionalisation activities tailored to their needs and context. Therefore, it is important to have a good insight into these needs. Schools are expected to map teachers' professionalisation needs as part of their professionalisation policy, including initial guidance. Mapping these needs can be done in various ways, such as during a staff or department meeting, via a questionnaire, as part of performance interviews or appraisal processes. Here, too, differences can be identified in terms of approach (see a.o. Tuytens & Devos, 2017).

Often the school's policy priorities, the available budget, the cost of participation in (external) professionalisation and the available time affect who participates in CPL activities: teachers (teams), department or school heads, other stakeholders involved with the school community or group, ...

Schools and teachers can rely on **data** to identify their CPL needs, e.g. pupil results, dialogues with pupils, feedback from pupils and parents, colleagues, feedback from the school leader,) (see a.o. Merchie et al., 2015). However, other research indicates that in the Flemish Community of Belgium the opportunities of data-use for CPL can be improved (Vanhoof et al., 2014; Van Gasse, 2018). Various initiatives to improve school staff's and school leaders' data literacy are being set up. The Ministry also takes initiatives to this end, for example through pilot projects on differentiation as well as through Dataloep. This government tool gives school leaders access to data about their own school(s) such as pupil characteristics, attendance and school progress. These data can be a starting point for schools and school networks to develop adequate and context-related policies. Additional data (e.g. on standardised tests, see below) might provide opportunities to work even more data-driven in the future.

60 We list some examples:

- Guidelines drawn up by the pedagogical guidance services in supporting schools in drawing up a professionalisation plan:
- GO!: professionalisation at school: learning to excel together (Valcke, 2019).
- Catholic Education The Flemish Community of Belgium: customised professionalisation within a range of opportunities (Van Looveren, 2015)
- Reflection instrument for the starting teacher: starting power!
- A support instrument for a powerful start in your job as a teacher at the Artevelde University College
- Reflection instrument for STEM
- Personal development plans

The Education Inspectorate states that only a limited number of departments in schools draft and implement an in-service training policy based on a needs analysis and priorities for the department (Onderwijsspiegel, 2017). Schools with a targeted professionalisation policy succeed in matching the professionalisation initiatives with the needs of the staff. However, some schools have a rather limited understanding of staff professionalisation needs. Subsequently, professionalisation initiatives are not always focused on these needs (Onderwijsspiegel, 2020). The Education Inspectorate recommends to use **existing collaboration structures in schools** to assess the professional development needs in schools.

This is in line with the findings of the OECD review on school resources in the Flemish Community (2015), which indicates that in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the **link between the assessment of teachers and their professional development is often unclear.** At school level, the individual choice regarding professional development needs to be influenced by, on the one hand, the results of the assessment and the domains where there is room for improvement and, on the other hand, the priorities in the school development plan.

Effective assessment should lead to a choice of professional development activities that meet individual needs and the priorities defined in the school development plan. However, research indicates that the professionalisation plan is too often limited to an enumeration of different individual professionalisation activities (Merchie et al. 2015).

Multiple organisations start the CPL activities by **identifying the participants' starting situation** via an interview, portfolio ... at individual or school level, in order to align the offer with the participants' needs. This is a frequent practice in case of long-term trajectories, e.g. of PBDs and the priority INSET by the Minister.

5.1.4 Key actors in selection and development of CPL activities

Teachers can select CPL activities according to their own interests, professionalisation needs and the context they work in. The level of autonomy to choose between CPL activities strongly depends on the schools' CPL policy. The extent to which this fits in with the teachers' job description depends on the agreements in the **school's professionalisation plan**. The OECD review on school resources in the Flemish Community (OECD, 2015) indicates that the existing standards for teachers ('the professional profile', see chapter 1) can guide teachers' professional development. However, this framework on professional profile is still insufficiently used for the purpose of CPL.

Schools can determine the content of professionalisation activities autonomously and include them in their professionalisation plan. It often involves topics related to collective professional development, such as 'pedagogical seminars'. The plan also determines to what extent and under which conditions teachers can participate in CPL activities, for topics other than those included in the plan.

School leaders and school boards can approve or disapprove teachers' self-selected learning contents and mandate teachers' engagement in specific activities. The level of teachers' autonomy in the selection of CPL activities depends on the school's strategic policy plan and more generally, on school leadership.

PBDs communicate their offer for professionalisation and increasingly adjust it to response to specific needs reported by schools and/or teachers.

Other providers (teacher education institutes and other organisations teachers' associations and private organisations) have a proactive (regular offer) as well as a demand-driven approach.

Research results can be useful when compiling the offer of CPL activities. Communication about research results can contribute to 'evidence-informed practice' and thus to permanent professionalisation and innovation. This can be achieved by linking research to the needs of educational practice, producing practice-based and relevant knowledge from educational research (e.g. by increasing practice-based educational research) and disseminating and implementing the knowledge acquired. However, the Monard Commission (2019) emphasised the need for more evidence-informed practice and CPL. Despite the overall recognition of the added value of evidence-informed practice and CPL, needs to be further encouraged and developed.

The **Ministry** of **Education** and **Training** sets the topic of some projects for which it specifically provides resources, such as for the priority INSET training at the initiative of the Flemish government. This is done to support the implementation of policy priorities and related measures. For example, the strategic objectives of the priority INSET projects are set by the government, but the implementation will depend on the learning questions of the participants and the context of the participating schools. Any organisation or person who considers themself capable of carrying out a professionalisation project for the defined target group may apply for an INSET-grant (for more information, see chapter 1).

Additionally, in case of the (system-wide) implementation of new policy measures, specific CPL projects are subsidised, e.g. the implementation of the new decree on part-time arts education, or the student orientation tool 'Columbus'. The implementation of central, standardised tests will also be accompanied by specific CPL projects.

5.2 LEARNING CONTENTS

5.2.1 General overview

TALIS 2018 indicates Flemish teachers need professional development for teaching pupils with specific educational needs (higher in PE than in 1st stage SE), IT skills, methods for individualised learning, pupil behaviour and classroom management as well as teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting (see above).

TALIS 2018 also maps to what extent these topics are covered during professional development activities and what percentage of teachers participate in these activities. Flemish teachers, both PE (82.2%) and SE 1st st. (76.1%) participate in trainings concerning pedagogical-didactical skills in teaching, subject-specific knowledge and insight (PE: 76.9%; SE 1st st.: 78.4%) and the knowledge of the subject content (PE: 57.3%; SE 1st st.: 61.4%). CPL activities often concern specific teaching practices. More than half of all Flemish teachers participate in professional development concerning pupil evaluation and assessment (PE: 53.2%; SE 1st st.: 60.3%) and pupil behaviour and class management (PE: 55.1%; SE 1st st.: 45.6%).

In primary education, professionalisation activities regarding teaching pupils with specific educational needs are far more popular than in secondary education (PE: 50.6%; SE 1st st.: 37.5%).

In the first stage of secondary education, 13 out of 14 content domains are significantly less frequent the subject of professionalisation activities in the Flemish Community of Belgium than in the PISA top 6 countries.

The greatest difference with the EU countries (EU-14) and PISA top 6 countries is found in methods of individualised learning. In primary education there is no clear pattern in the degree of presence of a domain as subject of professionalisation. The greatest difference is found in professionalisation activities on IT skills.

A deeper analysis of the TALIS 2018 results shows that teachers choose to follow those CPL activities of which the content relates to the context in which they teach. In schools with a low proportion of pupils with socioeconomic disadvantage, teachers participate more in courses that focus on their own subject and courses on developing ICT-skills. In more diverse school teachers participate more in activities regarding pupil behaviour and classroom management, teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings and intercultural communication (Spruyt et al., 2020).

The learning content is often not only subject-specific, but also includes elements about **school development**, for example on supporting innovations, school change and leadership.

Generally, there is **limited system-wide steering of the CPL contents**. The professionalisation projects that are directly subsidised by the Ministry of Education and Training are conceived of as support for the implementation of policy measures or in response to recent research results. The current INSET by the Minister is on reading comprehension in school year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, based on the Flemish results for PIRLS and national assessments on reading.

There is an evolution towards **evidence-informed practice**. This implies that – in line with the research of Merchie et al. (2015) and the Monard Commission (2019) – the content of the professionalisation activities is rooted in evidence. After all, teachers and school leaders need well-founded knowledge about classroom practice. However, despite its potential and some inspiring practices, collaboration with researchers to shape further professionalisation development is not yet systematically implemented.

5.2.2 Matching learning contents to teachers', schools' and system-wide needs

5.2.2.1 Alignment of CPL needs

In general, teachers mainly participate in CPL based on and guided by their own needs and interests. They determine which themes and topics are of interest to them, taking into account the school's participation criteria.

At the same time, the school boards and school leaders of school communities and school groups often take the initiative to formulate joint professionalisation priorities and topics and look for activities that may help them develop professionally in these areas.

Recent research shows that teachers' motivation to participate in school-wide and collective professionalisation initiatives is strongly determined by the degree of alignment between their own needs/objectives and the goals set at school level (De Smet et al., 2020). A strategic HRM-and professionalisation policy is crucial in this respect (see also Vekeman et al., 2020).

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, there is **variation in alignment** between school's priorities and teachers' needs. In some schools the professionalisation plan only consists of a list of various individual professionalisation activities (Merchie et al., 2015). Some schools succeed to align the teachers' and the school's needs. Other research shows that the majority of the surveyed schools seem to align 'professional development' with both strategic planning and the individual needs of teachers, e.g. during performance appraisals (Vekeman et al., 2020; see also Backers et al., 2020).

In other schools, the professionalisation policy is focused – to a limited extent – on the needs of the team members and the school's medium- and long-term planning (Onderwijsspiegel, 2020).

Increasingly, PBDs address multiple learning needs by **school-based support system**. This way, individual questions and needs are translated into schoolwide guidance. This enhances the sustainability of the implemented changes and fosters the collective learning processes in schools. Nevertheless, this can lead to unanswered questions individual teachers might (also) still have. In order to answer the different needs the Monard Commission (2019) recommends the PBDs to re-define their role, e.g. by taking up a broker's role or by focusing on the concept of 'train the trainer' (see earlier).

5.2.2.2 Policy on professionalisation as part of HRM policy

A school's professionalisation policy needs to be coordinated and aligned with other policy areas in order to ensure coherence with the overall school's policy. Such an integrated, strategic HRM policy that connects different interlinked practices (e.g. recruitment policy, professional development, teacher evaluation) often lacks in Flemish schools. Most schools do invest in the professionalisation and evaluation of their staff, but these actions and activities often turn out to be isolated initiatives without direct links and/or impact to other school policy decisions (Tuytens et al., 2020). In almost three quarters of the surveyed schools, professional development is attuned to the strategic policy of the schools and the individual needs of teachers, but the different staff practices are not yet attuned to each other nor to the strategic goals of the schools (Tuytens et al., 2019).

In their evaluation of primary and secondary schools' HRM- and professionalisation policies in primary and secondary schools, the Education Inspectorate evaluated these topics in both educational levels as 'fairly positive' (Onderwijsspiegel, 2020). The selection and recruitment processes and the initial guidance are generally of high quality. Coaching, assessment and professionalisation face more challenges. In primary education, the Education Inspectorate has identified opportunities for learning from and with each other and recommends setting up formal structures to facilitate this. The Education Inspectorate identified a number of professionalisation initiatives, but sometimes there is a lack of coaching and management of teachers in the classroom. Often professional development plans do not contain a guide- and timeline, nor are they attuned to a well-thought-out policy. Because of this lack of direction, cooperation within and between schools does not fulfil its potential with regards to strengthening educational practice and school functioning according to the Education Inspectorate.

5.3 TRANSFER

5.3.1 Upscaling of CPL contents and practices

There is a growing amount of inspiring school practices based and team-oriented CPL practices. However, these often only relate to the specific context of one school. A system wide overview of these practices does not exist. However, more attempts to share good practices are being undertaken: PBDs and the government disseminate examples of good and inspiring practices via Klasse, KlasCement, and during seminars, workshops and conferences. In the projects of the priority INSET, participants are asked to share their materials via KlasCement⁶¹.

 $^{61 \} See \ link \ for \ an \ example: \ \underline{https://www.klascement.net/lesmateriaal/organisatie/24411/2}$

The Monard Commission (2019) recommended PBDs to identify good practices, investigate them and share them with other schools. The Commission considers this as 'brokerage' by the PBDs. In order to be able to take up the 'brokerage role' properly, it is crucial— in addition to understanding the demand and analysing possible strategies— to have a good overview of the available support and collaboration between the PBDs.

Researchers also have a role in teachers' professional development, e.g. by translation their research results into **practice-oriented tools**.

Examples of such initiatives are

- The 'Pilot projects on differentiation in the last stage of primary education and the 1st grade of SE', which started in 2018 (see earlier). These projects ended in 2020. From September 2020 onwards, an analysis of the processes and the effects of these pilot projects, as well as the guidance by the PBDs, took place (Kelchtermans et al., 2020). This research describes and analyses the specific actions, projects and results that came out of the projects. Based on these first results, an evidence-informed inspiration guide will be developed, with the aim to professionalise the entire field of education.
- The two-year project on 'cognitively strong pupils (i.e. gifted pupils)' started in 2020-2022. This project invites 9 primary and 4 secondary schools to develop their policy and practice on supporting these pupils. These schools are expected to disseminate their expertise in policy and practice to the wider educational field, in particular other schools. The schools work together and are supported by academic experts to strengthen their evidence-informed practice.
- The InnoVET-projects: to match the challenges and opportunities concerning initial VET in the Flemish Community of Belgium, technical secondary schools, together with partners from industry and education, are offered the possibility to bring innovation into the classroom. Teachers are the central actors in these projects: they are the bridge between the pupils and the labour market, and need to learn something in the process. The result of these projects is the realization of innovative materials and methodologies that stimulate young people to choose for VET. In 2019-2020 there were 13 projects, in 2020-2021 9 and a new call for 2021-2022 has been launched 25 March 2021.

5.3.2 Transfer of CPL content to classroom and school

Evidence (Merchie et al., 2015) shows that initiatives to increase knowledge transfer to practice should be included in the development of professionalisation activities. The priority INSET by the Minister projects have implemented measures to ensure a more efficient transfer, e.g. by inviting the PBDs to participate in the projects and by extending the duration of the projects to two years. The requirement to involve more teachers from one school (a core team) also has the aim to facilitate and strengthen the transfer of knowledge to specific school practices (see earlier). One of the tasks of the PBDs is to provide support to teachers in the implementation of innovations at school and classroom level. All PBDs outline ways to support the translation or transfer into concrete practices, e.g. by paying explicit attention to the importance and possibilities of transfer during in-service training sessions, involving the school's middle management or by providing school-based guidance. Additionally, long-term guidance is increasingly used to support the transfer. Nevertheless, realising these transfers remains a difficult process that does not yet have a clear place in all counselling interventions.

Moreover, this support is quite intense and time-consuming. Not all requests for guidance can be fulfilled due to limited capacity of the PBDs. The Monard Commission (2019) however, sees many opportunities for guidance, for example at the level of the school community or school groups. The Monard Commission believes this will strengthen collective learning between schools and other educational levels.

The Education Inspectorate often reports on cooperation within schools, but due to a lack of direction, this does not always strengthen educational practice and/or school development (Education Inspectorate, 2020).

6 CHAPTER 6: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CPL

This chapter describes how different actors involved in CPL define, measure and seek to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers' professional learning practices.

6.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS AND IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES FOR CPL.

As mentioned in chapter 1, **schools** are responsible for providing quality education. Quality education, in this context, means that the education legislation is respected and implemented and the education provided meets the quality expectations set out by the Reference Framework for Quality Education. Professionalisation is included in this framework and established the requirements for a professionalisation policy. The Education Inspectorate investigates the schools' quality on this topic.

Every **PBD** draws up a guidance plan every three years for the next three years and annually reports to the Flemish government on the activities of the previous school year. The PBDs have an internal quality assurance system. At least every six years they are evaluated by a commission. The policy document for Education 2019-2024 announces a permanent evaluation of the PBDs.

Teacher education is submitted to the quality control carried out by the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO), which monitors the quality of higher education in the Flemish Community of Belgium. The basic principle of the Flemish quality assurance system is that institutions are held accountable for the quality of training they provide. New programmes and courses of study however, need to meet minimum quality and education level requirements to be able to obtain the accreditation needed to be considered a validated programme. The 2019 - 2024 Education Policy Note states that the quality of teacher training courses will be monitored and adjustments will be made where necessary. NVAO will assess all educational programs during this legislature. After this cycle, the decree that amended the quality assurance system in higher education will be evaluated.

In order to facilitate providers and schools enhancing their own CPL quality, the Ministry of Education and Training outsourced a research which mapped the impact of CPL for teachers (see Merchie et al., 2015). The research resulted in an evidence informed framework on CPL (see annex 5). The framework is used by many organisations to design and evaluate their CPL programme.

The Flemish government is developing a quality system for the projects she subsidises. E.g. for the priority INSET by the Minister, the assessment, follow up and evaluation of the projects is based on the Merchie et al. (2015) framework.

The in-service training register of KlasCement ('nascholingsrepertorium') provides an overview of organisations that offer CPL activities. The Flemish government does not provide a quality label, neither at the level of the provider nor at the activity level.

Other CPL providers are not bound by a quality system, except for the courses they offer leading to a diploma or certificate (extended bachelor programmes) which are organised by university colleges. These courses are accredited. An accreditation is a quality mark that indicates that a study programme meets certain predetermined quality standards. Different providers have their own quality assurance system.

Different instruments are used to identify progress and effects, e.g. surveys and portfolios. However, for some participants these are experienced as an administrative burden. We do not have system-wide information regarding the instruments, guidelines or systems they use to monitor their quality.

6.2 DEFINITION AND EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS' CPL.

In TALIS 2018, 84% of primary school teachers and 76.6% of secondary school teachers report that professional development has a positive **effect** on their teaching practices. Teachers from both levels of education indicate that CPL activities building on pre-existing knowledge and providing opportunities to apply newfound knowledge at classroom level, have the highest positive impact on their teaching practices. Training courses that are appropriate to personal development needs are the third most-likely type of activities, followed by professional development activities that provide opportunities for active learning and activities to enhance innovate teaching.

The Reference Framework for Quality in Education obliges **schools** to support the implementation of professionalisation initiatives and monitor their effects. The monitoring of the effects of professionalisation activities is part of the schools' internal quality assurance and highly depends on school leadership.

The Education Inspectorate stated that existing professionalisation initiatives in many schools have a limited impact on education practice as the professionalisation policy is not focused on the needs of the team members (Onderwijsspiegel, 2020).

In the priority **INSET by the Minister** projects, a quality assurance system is being developed. All participants will be invited to complete a survey that maps the perceived transfer effects. This questionnaire is based on the framework developed by Merchie et al. (2015) and is co-constructed with the subsidised organisations. This survey aims at informing the INSET projects about their effects and to learning as a government how to improve the INSET concept. Finally, this survey and focus groups can offer insights in additional learning questions.

In addition, the government piloted in 2019 focus groups with participants of the priority INSET projects regarding the M-decree. However, it is difficult to engage teachers to participate in these focus group interviews as they are overwhelmed with multiple questions. Participation in the focus groups was not yet integrated in the INSET project designs. This process is currently in its start-up phase and will be rolled out after the evaluation of this pilot.

The government has a quality assurance system for most of her subsidised projects. It consists of onsite visits (i.c. observation of training sessions) and project meetings. These project meetings consist of an exchange of state of affair of each project. It provides projects managers with the opportunity to give feedback on each other's project and learn from each other.

All **PBDs** use their own tools to assess the effects of their guidance practices. In 2017, they developed a joint vision on this topic.

The Monard Commission (2019) indicates that the PBDs often limit the monitoring of the effectiveness of their guidance practices to surveys questioning participants' satisfaction. Some research reports also mention the teachers' appreciation and (perception of) effectiveness of professionalisation activities (see a.o. Meirsschaut & Ruys, 2018).

The Minister of Education commissioned in 2021 a research for developing an academic and evidence informed instrument to measure the effectiveness of supporting teachers' CPL. This instrument can support CPL providers to assess their own work. It can also provide opportunities for the government to gain more insight in the effectiveness of PBDs and other providers.

6.3 COMMON STANDARDS OR GUIDELINES FOR (EVALUATION OF) HIGH-OUALITY CPL

Mapping effects should be part of any professionalisation initiative, as part of the quality assurance of the initiative. However, this is not formally expected, resulting in a great diversity of practices (and their quality). There are various models to map the effectiveness of CPL activities: e.g. the framework developed by Merchie et al. (2015) or Guskey (2014). Each PBD and provider has its own framework. It is often based on or linked to the framework developed by Merchie et al (2015). No general, common standards for CPL have been defined at system level.

According to the framework of Merchie et al. (2015), there are 3 areas in which transfer effects can occur as a result of participation in a professionalisation activity. These are:

- changes in the competencies;
- · changes in teaching behavior;
- and the improvement of student results.

According to this framework, there is no one-to-one relationship between the professionalisation activity and the (perceived) effect. On the contrary, it is a complex and dynamic interaction between the professionalisation activity, the teacher and the context (including the pupils) that generates (positive) results. The researchers therefore use the term 'effects of transfer' in order to avoid a 'narrow' view on effectiveness, and to illustrate the complex relationship between the professionalisation activity, teachers, pupils and schools.

6.4 SYSTEMS TO MONITOR THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT IN CPL

As already outlined in chapter 1, The Flemish Community of Belgium does not monitor the quality and quantity of teachers' engagement in professionalisation activities. **No records nor portfolios are used at system level**.

However, there are studies that provide information on the engagement of teachers in CPL. E.g. the TALIS studies offer information regarding CPL participation, especially the participation in multiple cycles allows researchers to identify trends. Other research and national assessments regarding a particular topic can also offer indications of the extent to which teachers are committed to their own professional development.

7 CHAPTER 7: LEADERSHIP

Quality education not only requires excellent teachers, but also a strong professional school policy with a strategic long-term vision and HRM policy. To achieve this, the competence of the school leader is crucial. They must develop and implement an integrated and coherent school policy that supports and strengthens the school vision and it's a pedagogic plan. School leaders also play an important role in the well-being, competence and professional development of the school team and they have a major impact on the development of educational innovations and thus indirectly influence pupils' learning.

The importance of (shared) leadership is a common thread in the previous chapters of this report. In this chapter, we present recent evidence on the role of leadership in Flemish's CPL policy.

7.1 MULTIFACETED LEADERSHIP IN THE FLEMISH COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM

Leadership is multifaceted: apart from administrative and system leadership, instructional leadership⁶², transformational leadership and shared leadership are required to successfully lead a school⁶³. The TALIS 2018 study shows that a school leader take on **different roles** on a daily basis - such as managing human resources, the school budget and communication with parents (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020).

There is a growing call for **shared instructional leadership** (Verbiest, 2014), this is when a school leader works to transform teaching practices, encouraging teachers to develop themselves professionally and work together. Different Flemish studies show the importance of the leadership role for innovation, see for example the implementation of inclusive education (Meirsschaut & Ruys, 2018; Struyf et al., 2018).

In a recent study on stress and wellbeing of school leaders, a lack time to implement instructional leadership is reported (Devos et al., 2018). According to TALIS 2018, in primary education three-quarters (78.5%) of Flemish school leaders received a training or course on **instructional leadership**. However, one-quarter of the school leaders in that education level experiences a shortage of time for instructional leadership. This differs strongly from school leaders in the first stage of secondary education and in the EU-5 (respectively 8.8% and 8.5%).

The most frequently reported form of instructional leadership in the Flemish Community of Belgium concerns the establishment of a school-based professional development plan (PE: 63.1%; SE 1st st.: 52.8%). On average, Flemish primary school leaders draw up a professionalisation plan more frequently than school leaders in other countries.

⁶² In literature, also the term 'educational leadership' is used.

⁶³ Instructional leadership focuses on improving the curriculum and the instructional process in the school. With transformational leadership, the school leader is seen as an entrepreneurial leader who, based on a vision, sets out the course of the school, binds employees to it and, through activities and processes in all kinds of areas (structure, culture, supervision and professionalisation), develops the school and tries to realise the chosen course (Verbiest, 2014). Shared leadership is more than leadership exercised by others than the formal leader and refers to the realisation and distribution of leadership activities in an interactive web of leaders, followers and situational aspects, such as tools, procedures and routines (Spillane, 2006). Administrative leadership entails following up and carrying out more administrative tasks and procedures. System leadership refers to initiatives aimed at strengthening relations between the school and its surroundings (e.g. parents, school leaders from other schools) (see a.o. TALIS, 2018).

In primary education, school leaders in the EU-5 countries more often observe classroom activities (+13.9 percentage points) and provide feedback based on observations (+9.8 percentage points) than in the Flemish Community of Belgium. In the first stage of secondary education, there are hardly any differences when it comes to direct forms of instructional leadership compared to other countries. An exception is the observation of classroom activities (the Flemish Community of Belgium: 27.8%, PISA-6: 37%) (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020).

Different school leaders offer different (or a different number of) learning opportunities to their staff. In some schools both external and internal professional development initiatives are available to teachers, such as working groups, team teaching, and peer consultation (Tuytens et al., 2020).

Recent Flemish research indicates the importance of instructional leadership for facilitating professional learning communities: it has a significant positive relationship with deprivatised practice from experienced teachers (Vanblaere et al., 2014). Leaders who explicitly pay attention to the instructional process, encourage teachers to do the same. As for reflective dialogue, both transformational and instructional leadership are needed. School leaders have an important role in encouraging teachers to participate in learning communities, to engage in dialogue with each other, and to cooperate, formally and informally (Valckx et al., 2018). To encourage teachers to do so, Devos (2019) points out the importance of a school leader who truly embodies the school vision in their actions and communication.

School leaders play an important role in promoting a collaborative environment⁶⁴. Several Flemish studies emphasise the need for **transformational leadership** in order to encourage teachers' participation in CPL (see a.o. Vanblaere, 2017; Vekeman, et al., 2020). Half of the school leaders who participated in TALIS 2018 indicated to support collaboration between teachers to develop new teaching practices (PE: 52.9%; SE 1st st.: 51.4%), to ensure that teachers take responsibility for improving their skills (PE: 49.5%; SE 1st st.: 49.4%), or to ensure that teachers feel responsible for student performance (PE: 51.4%; SE 1st st.: 57.4%) through their leadership.

TALIS 2018 shows that school leaders think that teachers have more opportunities and possibilities to participate in the decision-making process than the teachers themselves think. For example, school leaders almost unanimously indicate (PE: 99.3%; SE 1st st.: 99.5%) that their staff has the possibility to actively participate in the decision-making process concerning school policy, while this is estimated to be considerably lower among teachers (PE: 89.5%; SE 1st st.: 76.2%). School leaders report systematically higher percentages than teachers for most statements regarding collaborative school culture (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020).

Leadership is not limited to the role of school head, but extents to every member of staff that exercises a leadership role in the school. There is an evolution towards **shared leadership**. This is also true for the Flemish Community of Belgium. A growing number of teachers is taking up leadership tasks in schools (teacher leadership), individually or in a team. These roles include, for example, those of pupil guidance coordinator, ICT coordinator, teachers who temporarily take on a leadership role, staff members who work in support of the school community and departmental leadership.

⁶⁴ This is also confirmed by other recent research on collaborative learning in Flemish schools. This research identified 6 relevant factors for strengthening collaborative learning processes (De Smet et al., 2020): (1) common goal, (2) acknowledging each other's input, (3) connection and identification with each other, (4) learning perspective, (5) learning skills and (6) return effect. The school leader has a clear impact on each factor.

According to TALIS 2018, in primary education, 58.8% of the school leaders indicate that their school has a **school policy team** (in a comparative international perspective, is this low); in the first stage of secondary education, this is 85.8% (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020).

In addition to the school leader, department leaders can play an important role in stimulating cooperation, cohesion and group identity within the department. In recent research, teachers believe that these departmental leaders frequently exercise group-oriented leadership and thus promote cooperation, cohesion and group identity. According to the teachers, department leaders occasionally focus on the development of pupils and teachers within the department. This is in line with the idea that department leaders may be cautious about interfering in teaching and learning in their department, because teachers often value their autonomy (Vanblaere et al., 2016).

However, other recent research shows that there is a substantial variation in how leadership is shared in Flemish schools. Responsibilities in the field of strategic planning (e.g. vision development, priority setting) are shared more with the leadership team and teachers than responsibilities in the field of HR-policy (e.g. 'recruitment and selection', 'teacher evaluation', 'appreciation and reward'). There are differences in the extent to which responsibilities are shared according to specific HR-practices. For example, in the majority of schools surveyed, responsibilities are shared with the management team and/or teachers in the area of 'professional development' than for other staff practices (Vekeman et al., 2020).

Shared responsibility can partially relieve or protect school leaders from an overload of administration and stress (also see Devos et al., 2018). It also ensures that the school organisation does not become too dependent on one person. Finally, a more shared co-creative form of leadership also contributes to social cohesion and a stronger sense of belonging among school staff (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2020). However, the Monard Commission (2019) states that there is still room for growth in CPL for expert teachers, for example using the concept of train the trainer.

Finally, school leaders are expected to translate expectations of society and school external partners into their own school, but they are also expected to filter and buffer these expectations. To put it metaphorically, the school leader has a crucial task to act as a **gatekeeper**. The school leader is at the crossroads of interests and agendas of various actors inside and outside the school. Therefore, the school leader is expected to make targeted choices related to the vision, the characteristics of the school and the challenges that arise; and to work these out together with the team of teachers (see among others Piot, 2012; Verbiest, 2014; Devos, 2019). This role is not easy, because in this balancing act a school leader often feels caught between different expectations and interests.

In 2018 the government subsidised 5 projects on the role of the school leader as a gatekeeper. These projects were set up by the PBDs. Collective reflection and discussion among the PBDs was supervised by an academic expert. The projects showed that the participating school leaders became more aware of the complexity of gatekeeping and recognised the importance of it (and of the underlying competencies).

7.2 PROFESSIONALISATION OF SCHOOL LEADERS

The 2019 – 2024 Education Policy Note confirms the importance of school leadership and aims to facilitate the development of a competence profile for school leaders. As already outlined in chapter 1, school leadership-training is not compulsory.

In practice, most PBDs have their own training courses for novice leaders⁶⁵. These training courses are often conceived as in-service training courses staff members can apply to after having been appointed school leader. Increasingly, the PBDs provide pre-service activities for school leaders as well.

In both levels of education, Flemish school leaders indicate to have the greatest **need for professional development** in the use of pupil data to improve the quality of the school (PE: 39.0%; SE 1st st.: 42.2%), followed by training to encourage cooperation between teachers (PE: 31.3%; SE 1st st.: 40.4%), providing effective feedback (PE: 28.7%; SE 1st st.: 26.8%), developing the school curriculum (PE: 32.5%; SE 1st st.: 23.4%) and developing professional training for or with teachers (PE: 33.8%; SE 1st st.: 25.4%). School leaders less often report a need for professional development with regard to knowledge and understanding of new developments in leadership (PE: 14.3%; SE 1st st.: 8.9%) and financial management (PE: 10.1%; SE 1st st.: 11.4%) (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019).

The Monard Commission (2013, 2019) advises the PBDs to pay more attention to instructional leadership in the initial and continuous training of school leaders to strengthen their coaching role. None of the current CPL activities give instructional leadership the central place it should be given. The Monard Commission (2019) also observes that the offer of leadership development activities often only focuses on general leadership capacities of school leaders, while in practice other education professionals are also given a role in the implementation of innovations (as part of leadership practices). This offers opportunities to shared instructional leadership.

The aforementioned need for enhancing school leaders' data literacy is acknowledged in other Flemish studies (e.g. Devos et al., 2018; the Monard Commission, 2019). The introduction of standardised tests in the Flemish education system (see earlier) strengthens this need. The research of Vanhoof et al. (2014) states that the use of data is at the heart of school development and this appears to influence various factors within the school. For example, information use is related to the extent to which schools develop as a professional learning community. An informed policy would also bring about a more professional and cooperative culture. There is also a stronger sense of purpose within schools that use information to improve their functioning. Collaboration between school leaders is an added value for CPL. School leaders, both within and outside the school community, are key actors to exchange experiences and to find inspiration for in-school learning and policy matters (De Smet et al., 2020).

In order to strengthen instructional leadership and collaborative learning among school leaders in primary and secondary education, 10 pilot projects will be subsidised during school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023⁶⁶. These projects aim to support school leaders to learn together how to shape instructional leadership in their schools. This learning process will be supported by an expert. In addition, the projects will be monitored and evaluated. This ensures that we can draw lessons from the projects in order to develop a professional continuum for school leaders.

⁶⁵ Except the small umbrella organizations, grouped in OKO.

⁶⁶ Any organisation that considers itself competent can submit a project application that will be assessed by a committee. Subsequently, a partnership of schools (at least 5) can subscribe to the project of a selected organisation.

8 CHAPTER 8: CHALLENGES TO STRENGTHEN CPL

The Flemish Community of Belgium intends to develop a policy on CPL tuned to the challenges, to the evidence on effective CPL but also to evidence on effective governance. The following questions need to be addressed: Which role do the different actors have in the Flemish devolved system? What are opportunities, limits and conditions? Which instruments do we have to create a sense of urgency? What is every actor's role in order to align 'local' needs (schools, teachers) and system-wide needs? How can the different actors balance their own initiatives and supporting local, team-oriented, collaborative CPL activities? And how can we scale up those inspiring practices?

The challenges listed below result from the analysis of the current Flemish CPL system. These challenges focus on the need, content, format and quality of CPL. They demand a holistic and coherent approach and cannot be read separately. Underlying these challenges, there is a need for defining the vision on 'being a teacher' and on teachers' CPL. Most challenges require actions from multiple actors: teachers, schools, CPL providers and policymakers. Finally, re-thinking teachers' CPL cannot occur in isolation but must be embedded in reflection about the teaching profession as a whole and about teachers' working conditions.

8.1 CHALLENGE 1: CREATING A SENSE OF URGENCY AND ACKNOWLEDGING TEACHERS AS PROFESSIONALS

Strong teachers are needed. Teachers are professionals and should be acknowledged as such. Professional development does not stop at the end of initial teacher education, but is part of a professional continuum that starts at the beginning of teacher training and stops only at the end of the career. As previously mentioned, the Flemish education system faces a lot of challenges such as declining pupils' tests results, the implementation of multiple innovations, the current COVID-19 crisis, etc. At the same time, TALIS 2018 shows that Flemish teachers report a lesser need for professional development in almost all areas and domains compared to their international colleagues. An appeal for teachers' professional development is necessary. The need for a learning attitude is necessary not only in education but also in the entire society.

Additionally, there are little formal requirements and incentives for CPL. We need to develop adequate measures to encourage teachers to participate in different types of CPL and to create a sense of urgency to address individual, school and societal challenges. CPL must be conceived of as a core task for teachers and thus as an inherent part of the job. In this, it is important that teachers experience ownership and commitment when participating in CPL and acknowledge the importance of CPL for their work and their pupils. This may contribute to a higher need for professional development.

However, this gives rise to fear that a formal obligation might result in an ill-considered pursuit of short training sessions in order to reach the compulsory number of training hours. This challenge reveals a need for a balance between acknowledging teachers' autonomy and ownership on the one hand and stressing the 'sense of urgency' for CPL. It demands a clarification of the different roles in fostering teachers' (formal and informal) CPL.

Finally, while it is commonly accepted that teachers' CPL need additional promotion and encouragement, some researchers warn that stressing the sense of urgency and 'crisis thinking' about the quality of education (e.g. because of PISA results) can lead to a negative appreciation of the teaching profession and have unintended effects such as the increase of early attrition of new teachers (Spruyt et al., 2020).

8.2 CHALLENGE 2: STRENGTHENING CPL WITH EFFECT ON TEACHERS' PRACTICE⁶⁷

There is a common need for direct support, resulting in changes in the classroom practice.

While teachers and CPL providers can point out numerous examples of classroom support provided by colleagues and experts, they still report this support is insufficient and needs to be provided more frequently and intensively. Not all CPL activities meet these teachers' needs: teachers often experience CPL as too academic, too short, too little opportunities to translate the insights into change in teachers' practices, ...

However, all stakeholders stress the importance of teacher-oriented support at classroom level. They also point to the development of crucial conditions (e.g. time, leadership, collaboration, ...) that need to be fulfilled in order to have a larger impact on teacher professionalism, and to offer targeted and practice-oriented support.

8.3 CHALLENGE 3: STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIVE AND SCHOOL BASED CPL.

Schools are not only places where pupils can learn, but are ideally environments where teachers can develop too. Research shows that on site professionalisation in schools, with peers, can have apparent and positive effects. This depends on the willingness of teachers to share their practice, a culture of learning together, and structural working conditions (e.g. time).

Collaborative participation in CPL activities creates room for reflective dialogue, feedback and helps to develop context-specific implementation strategies. Despite a positive evolution, CPL in The Flemish Community of Belgium still remains an activity that teachers perform individually. Practical barriers for collaborative participation need to be reduced in order to strengthen the collective learning processes. All providers and facilitators at all levels are challenged to overcome these barriers and to encourage team-oriented CPL.

In The Flemish Community of Belgium, there is a tendency towards collaborative teaching e.g. team teaching and different forms of cooperation through project-based work or cross-school learning networks. Collective learning processes and activities, such as professional learning communities, are also cautiously finding their way to Flemish schools. However, this is not the case in all schools and not always leads towards effective learning. Moreover, TALIS 2018 shows that straightforward forms of cooperation (e.g. exchanging teaching materials with colleagues and attending team meetings) are more common than complex activities (e.g. teaching alongside other teachers in the same classroom or observing lessons from other teachers and providing feedback). The latter requires more in-depth (and time-consuming) collaboration between teachers.

The conditions for collaborative and in-depth learning need further development. This requires time as well as other structural and cultural resources in order to work and learn collectively. Collaborative learning also requires a strong HRM- and CPL policy as well as carefully composed teacher-teams. Complementary teacher profiles (e.g. experience, interests, competencies, ...) can encourage collective learning. Teacher (teams) need to be motivated and supported to collaborate and schools' internal professionalisation capacity needs to be strengthened.

⁶⁷ Practice embedded support: all kinds of support so that professionalisation has maximal impact on the classroom.

To do so, strong (shared) instructional leadership needs to be enhanced, so schools can evolve towards being more professional and innovative communities (see challenge 5).

As it is believed to be an effective practice, projects of local and school based CPL are growing. However, it is a challenge to scale up these initiatives in order to create opportunities for other schools to learn from these experiences.

8.4 CHALLENGE 4: SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSFER

TALIS 2018 shows that attending courses and/or seminars and reading professional literature are the most popular forms of professional development. These (often) one-shot professionalisation activities often focus on knowledge-building, while little attention is given to integration and application of this newfound knowledge into teachers' daily practice. The effects of these CPL activities are rather low.

Attention for transfer to daily classroom practice is crucial for sustainable change, but is often neglected in 'one-shot' CPL activities. Teachers' work pressure and lack of time are other barriers for a sustainable transfer.

In order to support this transfer, school leadership needs to be strengthened as well as the integration of training and practical (practice oriented) guidance. Both Merchie et al. (2015) and the Monard Commission (2019) stress the need for (intensive) guidance of the teachers' learning processes. Training and guidance need to go hand in hand. This implies more long-time trajectories, that also focus on supporting teachers' practices. Additionally, in order to realise sustainable and school-wide change, the training and guidance also need to focus on school development and the entire professional continuum.

8.5 CHALLENGE 5: STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR TEACHER LEARNING

Strong school leadership is needed to motivate and inspire teachers (teams) to continuously professionalise. This will allow teachers to participate in the school policy and to give them the autonomy and responsibility to take initiatives at school level. Creating the necessary cultural (a culture of professional learning) and structural conditions is required. Existing instruments such as job descriptions and performance interviews can be used for this purpose. Therefore, strong leadership goes hand in hand with an integrated, strategic HRM- policy that connects different interlinked practices (e.g. recruitment policy, professional development, teacher evaluation).

A general observation is that strong school leaders know how to develop CPL activities, creating stronger teachers who feel supported. The challenge is to provide sufficient support to all school leaders. As a consequence, professional leadership development is also needed. The development of a competence framework for school leaders in collaboration with the stakeholders is announced in the 2019-2024 Policy Note. This competence framework will constitute the basis for the further development of a school leadership training course.

Not only school leaders can and should display leadership. It should be a matter for everyone who has a leading role in the school. Shared leadership and internal capacity to support teachers need to be strengthened. This evolution stimulates us to re-think the traditional organisation of schools.

8.6 CHALLENGE 6: TOWARDS TAILORED AND EVIDENCE INFORMED CPL ACTIVITIES

In general, teachers lack an overview of the CPL activities available to them.

Some of these activities are rather standardised (in service training, such as courses and seminars) while others are more tailormade at school or individual level. For the rather standardised in service training, teachers report an over- and under-representation of certain CPL themes. It is also pointed out that the (external) offer is not always adequately adapted to the specific needs and daily practice of teachers (teams), neither is it based on scientific research results on what works in practice.

8.6.1 Tailored to the teachers' needs and context

If we want CPL to be effective, the offer must address the teachers' professional development needs. It is therefore necessary to have a clear overview of those needs (of teachers, school leaders and providers). The articulation of those needs might require support and time. Teachers are the central actor in their CPL and need to be able to get more insights in their CPL needs and drivers. Teachers can make use of different sources such as self-reflection or feedback from the school leader, pupils and colleagues.

Teachers' needs vary according to their competences, interests, seniority but also according to the context in which they work. Schools in urban areas, for example, face very specific yet major challenges that have an impact on staffing and professionalisation policies. Research shows that teachers in schools with more disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be younger and less experienced. These schools often face a higher turnover (Poesen-Vandeputte & Nicaise, 2015; Backers, et al., 2020). This diversity in contexts also requires diversity in the offer of CPL, meaning that different providers as well as the subsidising government will need to adjust the nature of CPL activities. Bottom up initiatives need to be facilitated.

8.6.2 Timely supply and innovation oriented

There is a need for a strong alignment of teachers' self-reported needs, the school's needs and the CPL offer. Although the CPL offer needs to meet the teachers' needs, teachers are not operating in isolation, and need to take into account the challenges at school- and system-level. These challenges can be identified by using surveys, performance assessments, as well as the implementation of new measures and innovations. We currently lack a system wide overview of needs for CPL.

Teachers are confronted with societal changes, innovations and many reforms requiring them to adapt their practices to these challenges. However, when new measures are implemented, an accompanying budget for CPL is not always provided. Teachers often feel **unprepared and overwhelmed** when new policy measures are introduced. Teachers demand quick, well-founded support to help them adjust to new policies, which in turn will lead to a better implementation of these policies as teachers will be better prepared.

Providers are expected to anticipate to changes and innovations. This can be done through a monitoring of reforms as well as of research results in order to develop a timely evidence-informed and relevant CPL offer. However, it requires time to develop a CPL offer.

8.6.3 Evidence-informed approach on content and format

A number of initiatives has been taken to ensure that teachers and school leaders are properly informed on relevant topics regarding classroom practice. For example, different stakeholders disseminate research results, develop practice-oriented reviews, organise workshops and conferences, etc. However, these initiatives often take place on an ad-hoc basis and depend heavily on the researchers involved, policy implementation capacity, and proactivity on the education sector's part. Despite several inspiring practices, collaboration with researchers to shape professionalisation is still rather rare. They are not yet structurally embedded in educational policy and practice, even though an overwhelming majority of teachers emphasise the importance of making evidence-informed choices in their own practice (Vanhoof et al., 2014). Merely making research results available is not enough as academic knowledge has to be translated to concrete educational practice. After all, teachers (teams) and school leaders should be able to work with the outcomes and results of (practice-based) research. Or teachers can become actors in the practice-based research. In order to innovate knowledge development, it is expected that teachers and researchers reach a collaborative relationship, avoiding a one-way communication from research to practice.

Finally, teachers (teams) and school leaders must be able to **implement and use this evidence**. Research results on educational practice are a potential source of professionalisation, innovation and reflection for teachers. Professionalisation on this topic is necessary, for teachers and school leaders, as well as for teacher trainers in ITE and PBDs.

Not only the CPL content needs to be evidence informed, but also the CPL format needs to be evidence informed. Providers are expected to use this evidence to organise their offer and develop evidence informed CPL formats.

8.7 CHALLENGE 7: INTENSIFYING THE COLLABORATION AMONG PROVIDERS

CPL is a professional continuum: initial teacher training needs to be complemented by various and varied professionalisation initiatives that teachers can undertake both individually and collectively in order to strengthen their practice. Ideally, all providers of CPL activities throughout the professional continuum, are aligned. The reform of teacher education and the implementation of teacher induction (as a right for novice teachers and an obligation for the schools) are levers to enhance collaboration in this respect.

The 2019-2024 Education Policy Note calls for a more effective collaboration among PBDs. The funding criteria of the Flemish government increasingly imply collaboration among and transfer of the knowledge and insights to different stakeholders.

Several collaborative initiatives, initiated in different ways and organised at several levels, already exist. However, the organising parties and their stakeholders do not yet collaborate in a structural way and their activities are not always based on common frameworks. Collaborations based on common frameworks need to be encouraged so teachers have access to professionalisation opportunities regardless of the career stage they are in and so they can call on the existing expertise. Conditions for this collaboration and bottom up initiatives to realise this collaboration need to be created.

8.8 CHALLENGE 8: ENHANCING COHERENCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

8.8.1 Towards a general and updated overview of CPL activities

The wide range of CPL activities offered by various providers makes it difficult for schools to have a clear overview of the available options. Without this overview, teachers and schools are at risk of missing out on interesting learning opportunities. As a result of the pandemic, digital professionalisation activities have increased, as well as the number of digital tools and digital content (e.g. learning materials) offered by various online platforms and organisations that often do not coordinate or communicate with each other.

The online offer is as fragmented as the offline one, and there is a lack of overview and quality control. The Flemish government launched a <u>platform</u> KlasCement that gives teachers and schools a clearer overview, but this system is not yet efficient and it is not very well known among its target audience. In order to maximise the potential of this platform, CPL providers and users will need to be consulted to optimise it.

8.8.2 Towards a common framework for quality of CPL initiatives

Apart from the PBDs and the ITE, there is no external quality control system. Every organisation formulates its own principles on effective CPL and how to measure it. A shared and collectively developed framework could be useful to evaluate the quality of the CPL offer and communicate it to the educational field. The framework of Merchie et al. (2015) can be a starting point. The development of a collective framework can contribute to a common and evidence informed understanding of CPL, and simultaneously allow providers to adjust to their vision and context.

8.9 CHALLENGE 9: SUPPORTING THE DATA LITERACY OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

In order to create information-rich environments that strengthen the quality of education, it is necessary that teachers, school leaders and providers enhance their data literacy. School leaders should be able to make informed decisions as part of their internal quality assurance.

Various initiatives to improve school staff's and school leaders' data literacy are being set up, some by PBDs, some by other organisations, and even by priority INSET by the Minister. Despite these efforts, a need for support and professionalisation with regard to data literacy still exists. This becomes urgent. The development of standardised and validated cross-network tests (see chapter 1) as announced in the 2019 - 2024 Education Policy Note, implies that school teams should have the necessary data literacy skills as well as an inquisitive attitude to analyse and use these data in order to enhance pupil guidance and internal quality assurance. Although its importance is generally acknowledged, research shows that there is room for improvement. Systematic data use in Flemish schools is still rare (Vanhoof et al., 2015).

Finally, data literacy is also key in overcoming the previous challenges. This topic is important for all those involved in the professional continuum of educational professionals, including teacher educators.

8.10 CHALLENGE 10: PROVIDING SUFFICIENT CPL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE REFORMS AND FINANCIAL CUTS

All stakeholders report a lack of resources for the professionalisation – this is not surprising, given the challenges the education system experiences when implementing innovations and the budget cuts that some stakeholders have been confronted with.

In sum, a sense of urgency for teachers CPL for quality education needs to be created at all levels: the level of: 'the individual teacher',' the school', 'the providers of professionalisation', 'the policymakers', ... This will contribute to a strong teaching force.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Data on number of schools

Annex 2: Tension ratio's for each arrondissement

Annex 3: Detailed data on school leaders

Annex 4: Different communication channels to promote professional learning

Annex 5: Effects of CPL: Merchie et al. (2015)

Annex 6: Digital CPL

Annex 7: List of abbreviations

ANNEX 1: Data on the number of schools

This section provides the most recent available data on the number of educational institutions from pre-primary to post-secondary non-tertiary educational level (ISCED levels 0-4). Statistics on numbers and characteristics of higher education institutions can be found in the European Tertiary Education Register.

	ISCED	Main	Number of educational institutions			
	levels provided	orientation of the programmes provided	Total	Public	Government- dependent private	Private independent
Child care	0	(-) ⁶⁸	7142	(:)	(:)	(:)
Autonomous Pre- primary education	0	(-)	162	31	131	(:)
Autonomous Primary education	1	(-)	161	37	124	(:)
Both pre-primary and primary education	0,1	(-)	2114	872	1242	(:)
Fulltime secondary education	2,3,4	G,V	940	279	661	(:)
Part-time vocational secondary education	3	V	6	(:)	(:)	(:)

Table 14: Statistics on educational institutions providing mainstream education
Source: Yearbook Education Statistics ('Statistisch jaarboek van het Vlaams onderwijs'),
https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/nl/onderwijsstatistieken/statistisch-jaarboek/statistisch-jaarboek-van-het-vlaams-onderwijs-2018-2019

- Forty-three of the 940 schools that provide full-time secondary education also organise part-time vocational secondary education.
- One educational institution corresponds to a legal, administrative or organisational entity or unit.
- The 940 schools providing full-time secondary education can choose the ISCED levels of education and the type of education programs (general or vocational) they offer. The Flemish government does not collect data on the schools' offer in terms of types and levels of education.
- Schools can offer both vocational and general education, or opt to only offer one type of education. The Flemish government does not collect data on the schools' offer.
- The Flemish government does not keep data on the number and offer of private independent institutions, and does not register whether childcare institutions and places are public of government dependent-private institutions.

More information (English) about the previous reference year 2017-2018 can be found here: https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/download-file/35626.

⁶⁸ G= General; V= Vocational; (:) Data not available; (-) Not applicable.

Type of educational	ISCED	Main	Number of ϵ	ducational	institutions	
institution	levels provided	orientation of the programmes provided	Total	Public	Government- dependent private	Private independent
Special needs primary education	1	(-)	75	21	54	(:)
Both pre-primary and primary education	0,1	(-)	123	49	74	(:)
Special needs secondary education	2,3,4	G,V	126	42	84	(:)

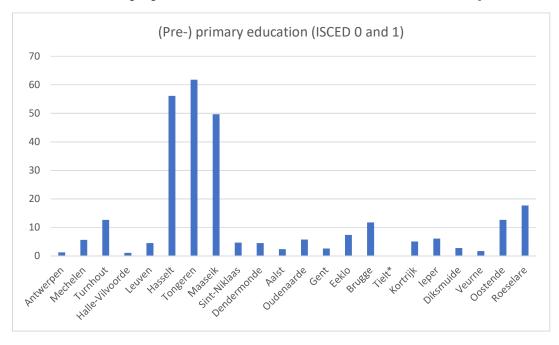
Table 15: Statistics on separate educational institutions providing special needs education
Source: Yearbook Education Statistics ('Statistisch jaarboek van het Vlaams onderwijs'),
https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/nl/onderwijsstatistieken/statistisch-jaarboek/statistisch-jaarboek-van-het-vlaams-onderwijs-2018-2019

- This data includes the so-called 'type 5-schools'. These schools organise special education of type 5 only (for pupils with long-term illness). In special needs primary education, 6 schools provide this kind of education. In special secondary education there are 6 schools organising type 5- education.
- One educational institution corresponds to a legal, administrative or organisational entity or unit.
- The Flemish government does not keep data on the number and offer of private independent institutions.
- The schools providing secondary education can choose the ISCED levels of education and the type of education programmes (general or vocational) they offer. The Flemish government does not collect data on the schools' offer in terms of types and levels of education.
- Schools can offer both vocational and general education, or opt to only offer one type of education. The Flemish government does not collect data on the schools' offer.

More information (English) about reference year 2017-2018 can be found here: https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/download-file/35626.

ANNEX 2: Tension ratios for each arrondissement

In this annex, we highlight the tension ratios for each arrondissement (see Chapter 1).



*No data available

Figure 2: Tension ratios by area (arrondissement) for teachers in (pre-) primary education (ISCED 0 and 1)

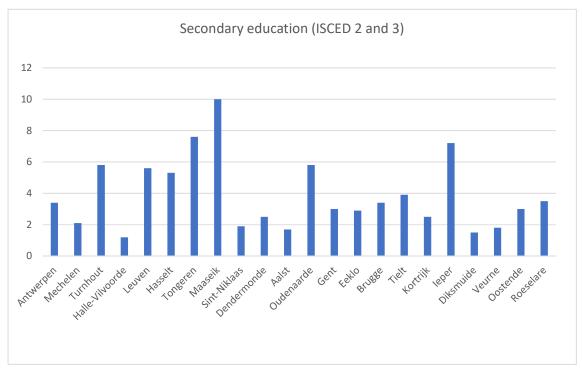


Figure 3: Tension ratios by area (arrondissement) for teachers in secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3) Source: https://www.vdab.be/trends/beroepen; November 2019

Annex 3: Detailed data on school leaders

This annex shows the number of school leaders in elementary and secondary education, divided by age and gender (situation of January 2019). Table 3 refers to management staff in schools and Table 4 refers to management staff coordinating multiple schools. More information is in Chapter 1.

Pre-primary and primary education (ISCED 0 and 1)	Male	Female	Total
20-29	11	55	66
30-39	147	368	515
40-49	299	737	1036
50-59	564	957	1521
60+	90	83	173
Total	1.111	2.200	3311

Secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3)	Male	Female	Total
20-29	17	23	40
30-39	206	234	440
40-49	513	490	1.003
50-59	746	555	1.301
60+	197	84	281
Total	1.679	1.386	3.065

Table 16: Management Staff⁶⁹ ('bestuurspersoneel')

Source: yearbook Education Statistics 2018-2019 ('Statistisch jaarboek van het Vlaams onderwijs 2018-2019', https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/documenten/bestand.ashx?nr=12195

These members of staff will be appointed and nominated by the school board.

⁶⁹ The management of an educational institution in nursery and primary education (BaO) and secondary education (SO) is made up of staff members of the management personnel. This category includes the posts of:

⁻ principal (pré-primary and primary education and secondary education);

⁻ assistant-principal (secondary education);

⁻ technical adviser-coordinator (technical secondary education);

⁻ technical adviser (technical secondary education);

⁻ coordinator in a centre for part-time education and the mandates for managing director (group of schools/school board);

coordinating director (combined school SO);

director-coordination of combined school in nursery and primary education (combined school BaO).

Pre-primary and primary education (ISCED 0 and 1)	Male	Female	Total
20-29	2	0	2
30-39	2	3	5
40-49	24	24	48
50-59	77	66	142
60+	14	3	17
Total	119	96	215

Secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3)	Male	Female	Total
20-29	0	0	0
30-39	1	3	4
40-49	14	11	25
50-59	35	18	53
60+	20	5	25
Total	70	37	107

Table 17: General and coordinating school leader, director coordination school community ('algemeen en coördinerend directeur', 'directeur coördinatie scholengemeenschap')

Source: Yearbook Education Statistics ('Statistisch jaarboek van het Vlaams onderwijs'), https://dataonderwijs.vlaanderen.be/documenten/bestand.ashx?nr=12195

ANNEX 4: Different communication channels to promote professional learning

Klasse is a multimedia communication platform that aims to increase the commitment of teachers, school leaders, parents and pupils in education through positive journalism. Klasse also shares information regarding seminars and possible professionalisation activities.

Through KlasCement, educational professionals and organisations inspire and support each other by sharing materials, practical experiences and questions. This creates an active professional network. Information regarding seminars and possible professionalisation activities is shared via this platform as well. In order to unite various actors and target groups, the government provides an instrument called 'the in-service training register', which can be consulted on KlasCement (see chapter 3). All organisations offering professional development activities tailored to schools can register and present their services. The government does not award a quality label to the organisations and their services. It has, however, developed a viewing guide that supports schools and teachers in their search for the appropriate organisation or specific training. Last year the overview page of the directory was consulted 12,664 times.

Canon Culturcel has several initiatives to communicate, raise awareness and professionalise teachers (in training) on cultural education. Examples are a network on reading at school, a network for cultural education for teacher education and 'culture days' for teacher in training. Additionally, they provide expert training in 'Cultuur in de spiegel' and organise a platform 'Cultuurkuur', where culture and school meet.

ANNEX 5: Effects of CPL: Merchie et al. (2015)

Based on Desimone's model (2009) an extended evaluative framework for CPL is developed by Merchie and colleagues (2015).

This model helps to reflect on effects of CPL, which is difficult to measure and on critical characteristics to realise this effect. In order to avoid the narrow view on 'effects' of CPL, the authors explicitly refer to these influences as 'effects of transfer'. An 'effect of transfer' or transfer effect can be influenced by an interplay between the professionalisation initiative, teachers, pupils and the specific context.

In Figure 3 the extended evaluative framework is presented.

(1) Key features of professional development

First, the effective features of CPL initiatives, are presented. For the nine characteristics listed in the model, the effectiveness has been repeatedly proven in research. The more a professionalisation initiative meets these effective characteristics, the greater the chance of a positive impact on various aspects in practice. These nine effective characteristics can be divided into content characteristics and structural characteristics. Where content characteristics refer to the main objective or content of the professionalisation initiative, structural characteristics rather refer to the structure or design of the activities. Also the trainer's quality is incorporated.

(2) Changes in teacher's quality

The second element within the refined framework focuses on changes in the quality of the teacher, namely changes in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of teachers.

(3) Changes in instruction

Regarding to teachers' instruction, two broad categories of transfer effects can be distinguished, namely 'changes in instructional strategies and practices' and 'changes in interaction patterns (between teachers and students, between teachers and between students)'.

(4) Changes in students' results

When looking at learning outcomes, there is a distinction between learning area or subject-specific and learning area or cross-curricular content.

(5) School context and personal characteristics

Teachers' CPL is strongly determined by the context in which the teacher works. As far as this context is concerned, the micro- and meso-context and the macro-context are distinguished. The meso- and micro-context involve the school culture, the atmosphere at school, and administrative and organisational structures.

The macro-context refers to the way education systems work, education policies and reforms, the working conditions of teachers and (historical) visions of appropriate professional development.

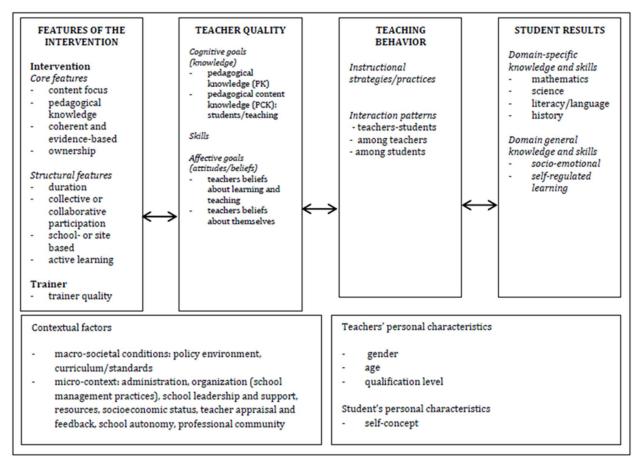


Figure 4: Refined conceptual framework for transfer effects of professionalisation initiatives.

ANNEX 6: Digital CPL

This section provides information on the monitoring and conditions for digital CPL.

The ICT Monitor (Mictivo) analyses four indicators in primary and secondary schools: ICT infrastructure, ICT integration, competences, and perceptions regarding ICT use at school. The **survey** is taken by school leaders, teachers and pupils and gives an overview of the situation regarding ICT and use of new media in Flemish education pre-Covid-19. The <u>Mictivo survey</u> was conducted several times and the results of 2012 and 2017 can be compared (see https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/monitor-voor-ict-integratie-in-het-vlaams-onderwijs-mictivo-2018).

In June 2020, the Departement of Education and training conducted a short survey of 10 educational and private organisations that have provided a total of 797 webinars (March-July 2020) and reached 27,139 teachers. The findings provide an indicative and partial overview of the impact of the pandemic on the Flemish education system but they observed a specific evolution in the request of support and TPL during the different phases of the COVID crisis. At the beginning of the crisis (March 2020), most questions for CPL focused on the availability and technical use of concrete tools and platforms for distance learning. In the second phase (April-May 2020) more questions were asked on how to organise online live sessions. At the end of the crisis CPL topics most requested where on online collaboration.

During the Covid-19 crisis KlasCement (see chapter 1) was one of the organisations capable of adapting to the new situation and scaling up very quickly. This resulted in high performance indicators, incl. 22,000 new subscribers. KlasCement developed and provided information, examples of good practice and thematic files to various target groups. The webportal offered effective digital teaching resources (e-learning opportunities) in an accessible and structured way. The portal also has its own webinar platform.



Also PBDs supported schools and individual teachers intensively. The PBDs report that as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, teachers experienced the benefits of online learning. Before the Covid-19 crisis, the emphasis was on ICT integration, however—there was rather limited application possibilities. As a result of the Covid19crisis, teachers experienced characteristics and conditions for online learning on the spot. PBDs provided exchange platforms for teachers to share and co-construct learning materials. This was also done before the Covid-19crisis and has been reinforced during the crisis. As a result, PBDs now reaches teachers via digital means and teachers increasingly are sharing their own source material.

It should be explored in what way and under what conditions these tools are effective and can be anchored if desired.

Overall, it can be concluded that there is a rich offer of digital CPL activities. However, there is a lack of overview and quality control and there is limited coordination between the different platforms. As a result, teachers are at risk of missing out on learning opportunities.

ANNEX 7: List of abbreviations

ACOD	Algemene Centrale der Openbare Diensten	Socialist Teachers' Union
AGIOn	Agentschap voor Infrastructuur in het Onderwijs	Agency for Educational Infrastructure
AGODI	Agentschap voor Onderwijsdiensten	Agency for Educational Services
AHOVOKS	Agentschap voor Hoger Onderwijs, Volwassenenonderwijs, Kwalificaties en Studietoelagen	Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances
ASO	Algemeen Secundair Onderwijs	General Secondary Education
BANABA	Bachelor na Bachelor	Bachelor after Bachelor
BAO	Basisonderwijs	Elementary Education
ВО	Buitengewoon Onderwijs	Extraordinary Education
BSO	Beroepssecundair Onderwijs	Vocational Secondary Education
BuSO	Buitengewoon Secundair Onderwijs	Special Secondary Education
BVLF	Belgische Vereniging voor Leraren Frans	Belgian Association of Teachers of French
CANON	CANON Culture Cell	CANON Cultuurcel
CAO	Collectieve Arbeidsovereenkomst	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CBR	Country Background Report	Landenrapport
CLB	Centrum voor Leerlingenbegeleiding	Pupil Guidance Centre
coc	Christelijke Onderwijs Centrale	Christelijke Onderwijscentrale
COV	Christelijke Onderwijsverbond	Christian Teachers' Union
CVO	Centrum Voor Volwassenenonderwijs	Centre for Adult Education
DBSO	Deeltijds Beroepssecundair Onderwijs	Part-time Vocational Secondary Education
DKO	Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs	Part-time Art Education
DHOS	Diploma Hogere Opvoedkundige Studiën	Diploma of Higher Education Studies
EPALE	Elektronisch Platform voor Volwasseneneducatie in Europa	Electronic Platform for people working in adult education
EVC	Eerder Verworven Competenties	Previously Acquired Competences
EVK	Eerder Verworven Kwalificaties	Previously Acquired Qualifications
ERK	Europees Referentiekader voor Moderne Vreemde Talen	European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
Federatie Onafhankelijke	Federatie Onafhankelijke	Federation of Independant
Pluralistische Emancipatorische	Pluralistische Emancipatorische	Pluralistic Emancipatory
Methodescholen	Methodescholen	Methodology schools

Federatie Steinerscholen	Federatie Steinerscholen	Federation of Steinerschools
FOPEM	Federatie van Onafhankelijke	Federation of Independent
	Pluralistische Emancipatorische	Pluralistic Emancipatory Methods
	Methodescholen	Schools
GHOS	Getuigschrift Hogere	Certificate of Higher Education
	Opvoedkundige Studiën	Studies
GO! Education	Gemeenschapsonderwijs	Community Education
GOK	Gelijke Onderwijs Kansen	Equal Educational Opportunities
GON	Geïntegreerd Onderwijs	Integrated education
НВО	Hoger Beroepsonderwijs	Higher vocational education
HIVO	Hoger Instituut voor	Higher Institute for Educational
	Opvoedkundige Studieën	Studies
HR policy	Human Resources beleid	Human Resources policy
HRM	Human Resources Management	Human Resource Management
ICT	Informatie en Communicatie	Information and Communication
	Technologie	Technologies
INNOVET	Professionalisering en innovatie in	Innovation in Vocational Education
	het arbeidsmarktgericht onderwijs	and Training (VET)
ISCED	Internationale	International Standard
	Standaardclassificatie van het	Classification of Education
	Onderwijs	
ITE	Lerarenopleiding	Initial Teacher Education
KBS	Koning Boudewijn	King Baudouin Foundation
	Stichting	
КО	Kleuteronderwijs	Pre-School Education
KKGK	Kleine Kinderen Grote Kansen	Small Children, Great Opportunities
		project
KOV	Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen	Catholic Education The Flemish
		Community of Belgium
LIO	Leraar In Opleiding	trainee teacher pathway
LO	Lager Onderwijs	Primary Education
KSO	Kunstsecundair Onderwijs	Secondary Art Education
MDO	Multidisciplinair Overleg	Multidisciplinary Consultation
MICTIVO	Monitor ICT-Integratie in het	ICT Integration Monitor in Flemish
	Vlaamse Onderwijs	Education
MOOCS	Massive open online course	Massive Open Online Course
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse	Dutch-Flemish Accreditation
	Accreditatieorganisatie	Organisation
OESO	Organisatie voor Economische	Organisation for European
	Samenwerking en Ontwikkeling	Cooperation and Development
OER	Open Educational Resources	Open Educational Resources

ОКО	Overleg Kleine	Collaboration platform of the
	Onderwijsverstrekkers	small education providers
OK-kader	Referentiekader	Reference Framework for Quality
	Onderwijskwaliteit	in Education
OGO	Officieel Gesubsidieerd Onderwijs	Grant-aided Public Education
OVSG	Onderwijssecretariaat van de	Education Secretariat of the Cities
	Steden en Gemeenten van de	and Municipalities of the Flemish
	Vlaamse Gemeenschap	Community
PBD	Pedagogische Begeleidingsdienst	Pedagogical guidance service
PISA	Internationale Test rond de	Programme for International
	algemene kennis en vaardigheden	Student Assessment
	in Wiskunde, Lezen en	
	Natuurwetenschappen	
PIRLS	Internationaal vergelijkend	Progress in International Reading
	onderzoek naar	Literacy Study
	leerlingenprestaties in begrijpend	
	lezen	
POC	Permanente Ondersteuningscellen	Permanent Support Cells
POV	Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen	Flemish Provincial Education
PLG	Professionele Leergemeenschappen	Professional Learning Communities
PBA	Professionele bachelor	Professional Bachelor
PWO	Praktijkgericht Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek	Practice-based Academic Research
Raad Inrichtende Machten	Raad Inrichtende Machten	Council Schoolboard Protestant-
Protestants-Christelijk Onderwijs	Protestants-Christelijk Onderwijs	Christian Education
RTC	Regionale Technologische Centra	Regional Technology Centres
Se-n-Se	Secundair-na-Secundair	Se-n-Se Secondary-na-Secondary
SES	Sociaal Economische status	Socio-economic Status
SNPB	Samenwerkingsverband	Collaborative Networked
	Netgebonden Pedagogische	Pedagogical Guidance Services
	Begeleidingsdiensten	i caagogicai daidanise bei videb
SO	Secundair onderwijs	Secondary education
STEM	Wetenschap, Technologie, Ontwerp	Science, Technology, Engineering
	en Toegepaste wiskunde	en Mathematics
TABD	Tijdelijke Aanstelling voor een	Temporary Appointment with a
	Bepaalde Duur	Fixed Term Contract
TADD	Tijdelijke Aanstelling van	Temporary Appointment of
	Doorlopende Duur	Idefinite Duration
TALIS	Internationaal vergelijkend	Teaching And Learning
	onderzoek over leraren en hun	International Survey
	schoolleiders.	

TIMSS	Internationale trends in Rekenen- Wiskunde en	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
	Natuurwetenschappen	,
TPL	Professioneel leren leraren	Teacher Professional learning
TSO	Technisch secundair onderwijs	Technical Secondary Education
VOOP	Vlaams Onderwijs Overleg Platform	Flemish Education Consultation Platform
VDAB	Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding	Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training
VELOV	Beroepsvereniging voor lerarenopleiders in Vlaanderen	Professional association for teacher educators in The Flemish Community of Belgium
VGO	Gesubsidieerd Vrij Onderwijs	Grant-aided Private Education
VLA	Vereniging Leraren Aarderijkskunde	Association for Geography Teachers
VLIR	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad	Flemish Interuniversity Council
VLOR	Vlaamse Onderwijs Raad	Flemish Education Council
VLOT	Vereniging Leraren Oude Talen	Association of Teachers of Ancient Languages
VOOP	Vlaams Onderwijs Overleg Platform	Flemish Education Consultation Platform
VTE	Voltijdsequivalent	Fulltime Equivalent
VLUHR	De Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad	The Flemish Universities and Colleges Council
VSKO	Vlaams Secretariaat van het Katholiek Onderwijs	Flemish Secretariat of Catholic Education
VSOA	Vrij Syndicaat voor het Openbaar Ambt	Liberal Teachers' Union
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Free University of Brussels