

Selecting high-performing teachers

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Education sinks or swims with good teachers. In this advisory report, the Education Council calls for stronger action on quality. It emphasises the importance of an integrated approach, as advocated by the Rinnooy Kan Committee. Furthermore, the Education Council recommends that increased use be made of opportunities to select (prospective) teachers, to raise professional standards, to encourage professional school leadership and to cooperate within the region.

The Education Council concludes that the policy in the past has been largely focused on the quantitative shortage of teachers. Only in recent years has a start been made on taking action on quality. The Education Council emphasises that now is the moment to take the desired action on quality and to make structural solutions for the future. There is currently a reprieve in the shortage of teachers on account of falling pupil numbers, the economic crisis and the success of the policy to retain older staff. A strong professional group contributes to the quality of teaching, and in the longer term this can be expected to draw other highly skilled people to the teaching profession; in the longer term, the shortages can therefore be expected to reduce.

Recommendation 1: introduce more recruitment and selection to teacher training programmes

The Education Council calls for improved recruitment and selection to teacher training programmes. This will not just be good for the quality of the teachers, but also for the status and appeal of training programmes. This kind of recruitment and selection could take the form of actively searching for good candidates for teacher training programmes in secondary education and higher education, selective intake, high-level programmes and special pathways for excellent students.

Recommendation 2: raise professional standards

The Education Council recommends that professional standards for current teachers be raised. To achieve this, the Education Council believes that higher demands on training are needed. Firstly, in-service training should be made compulsory and linked to a public register of teachers. Registration would be a condition for retaining the authority to teach. Secondly, the Education Council calls for all new senior general secondary education (HAVO) teachers and pre-university education (VWO) teachers and teachers of general subjects in preparatory secondary vocational education (VMBO) and senior secondary vocational education (MBO) to be educated to at least master's degree level. Furthermore, the Education Council recommends that investment is made in induction programmes (close supervision for newly qualified teachers) and that the functioning of teachers in practice is assessed more seriously.

Recommendation 3: encourage educational leadership in schools

Professional educational leadership in schools is essential for an appealing working environment for highly skilled teachers. The Education Council recommends that a register of school leaders also be established. The compulsory in-service training linked to registration must primarily be focused on competencies for educational leadership linked to a personnel policy.

Recommendation 4: work together within the region on quality and quantity

The educational labour market differs across the various regions of the country. There are regions with shortages and regions with oversupply. National measures to combat teacher shortages do not always work well everywhere. The Education Council calls for the development of a supra-institutional personnel policy that is in tune with regional circumstances. This call is directed in particular to school governing bodies.