4 Strengthening the quality of teaching, school leadership and learning environments

This chapter focuses on the teachers, teaching and school leadership in the German-speaking Community. It addresses the initial preparation and recruitment of teachers and school leaders, their continuing professional learning, working conditions and career development. It also looks at the school evaluation process, the capacity for school improvement and schools as learning organisations. The chapter identifies strengths and challenges related to these policy areas and concludes with policy options to address them.

Context and main features

Profile of the teaching workforce

As of 1 January 2021, 1 686 teachers worked in publicly funded schools of the German-speaking Community's three school networks (corresponding to 1 341 full-time-equivalent [FTE] positions). 12.9% of FTE teaching staff were employed at the pre-primary level, 31.4% at the primary level, 46.9% at the secondary level, and 8.7% in special education needs (SEN) schools. In 2021, the Free Subsidised Education System (*Freies subventioniertes Unterrichtswesen*, FSU) counted 505 teachers and leaders, the Community Education System (*Gemeinschaftsunterrichtswesen*, GUW) counted 673 teachers and the Official Subsidised Education System (*Offizielles subventioniertes Unterrichtswesen*, OSU) counted 657 teachers.[1]

Teachers are supported by 448 (255 FTE) support staff including administrative staff, teaching assistants, and para-medical staff working in special needs schools. Since 2017, there has been a slight increase in the total number of FTE positions in schools, in particular among administrative staff positions, which doubled during this period, and pedagogical support staff positions, which increased by 56%, compared to a 5.9% increase in the number of teacher positions. Given the relative stability in the number of students between 2017 and 2020 (-0.2%), the increase in staff numbers resulted in a modest decrease in the overall number of students per FTE teaching staff (-2.5% from 9.29 to 9.05) and a significant decrease in the number of students per FTE non-teaching staff (-27.7% from 62.5 to 45.2) over this period (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Trend in employment in schools, by type of staff, 2017-2021

Full-time equivalent staff in pre-primary, primary, secondary and special needs education.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pedagogical support staff	120	120	137	159	145
Para-medical staff	44	44	50	49	49
Socio-psychological staff	4	4	4	6	6
Administrative staff	27	27	44	55	55
Teaching staff	1 312	1 312	1 327	1 343	1 341
Ratio students / FTE teaching staff	9.29	9.27	9.14	9.05	-
Ratio students / FTE other staff	62.50	62.37	51.62	45.20	-

Source: Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

As in many OECD countries, the teaching profession in the German-speaking Community is highly feminised (see Table 4.2). In 2021, the proportion of female teachers and school leaders was 97.3% in pre-primary education, 89.5% in primary education and 77.3% in secondary education (MDG, 2022[1]). For comparison, the average proportion of female teaching staff across OECD countries was 96% at the pre-primary level, 82% in primary education, 67% in lower secondary education and 60% in upper secondary education in 2018 (OECD, 2020, p. Table D5.1[2]).

Table 4.2. Teachers and school leaders, by gender, age and type of education, 2021

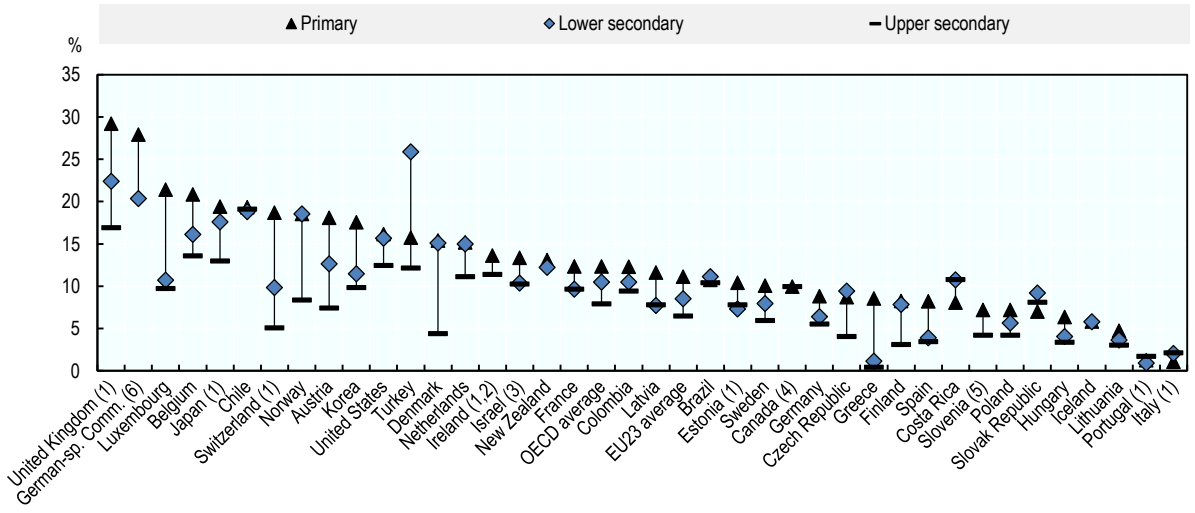
	Number of FTE teachers	Number of FTE support staff	Total number of all staff	% women	% aged below 30	% aged 50 and above
Pre-primary education	172.9	29.3	289	97.3	32.7	32.2
Primary education	421.3	30.0	662	89.5	27.9	26.5
Secondary education	629.3	92.7	875	77.3	20.3	32.2
Special education	117.2	103.4	180	82.4	24.0	28.1
Total	**629.3**	**255.4**	**2006**	**78.2**	**23.6**	**31.7**

Note: Gender and age refer to all staff. Support personnel includes administrative staff, teaching assistants, and para-medical staff. Total staff also includes maintenance staff and Kaleido employees.
Source: Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

Teachers in the German-speaking Community are relatively young, compared to the OECD average. In 2021, the proportion of teachers and school leaders aged below 30 was 27.9% in primary education and 20.3% in secondary education. This is one of the highest shares across the OECD (see Figure 4.1), compared to an OECD average (incl. only teachers) of just 12% in primary, 10% in lower secondary, and 8% in upper secondary education. In 2021, 26.5% of teachers and school leaders were aged 50 years or above at the primary level and 32.2% at the secondary level, well below the OECD averages (among teachers) of 32%, 36% and 39% at the primary, lower and upper secondary levels respectively (OECD, 2020, p. Table D5.3[2]). The relatively young age of the teacher population could be explained by the overall growth of the teaching workforce and large cohorts of young teachers joining the profession, or by attrition among older teachers over the course of their careers.

Figure 4.1. Share of teachers below the age of 30, 2018

Share of teachers under 30 in public and private institutions, by level of education, based on head counts



1. Upper secondary includes programmes outside upper secondary level.
2. Public institutions only.
3. Public institutions only for upper secondary level.
4. Primary includes pre-primary education.
5. Primary includes lower secondary education.
6. Year of reference 2021. Includes school leaders. Lower secondary includes upper secondary.

Note: Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of teachers below the age of 30 in primary education.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2020[2]), *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en, Figure D5.2.; Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

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Based on the ministry's data, the annual number of teachers leaving the profession (for any reason, including retirement) has fluctuated between 89 and 104 (or about 5%-6.5% of the teaching staff) between 2017 and 2021. These attrition rates are comparable to those found in other OECD countries with available data, where on average 6.9% of pre-primary teachers, 5.3% of primary teachers and 7.4% of secondary teachers left the profession in 2016 (OECD, 2021, pp. 437, Table D7.2[3]). Attrition rates were slightly higher among younger teachers (30 years and below) and older teachers (50 years and older) – a pattern that can be found in most OECD countries with comparable data. Additional analyses would be needed to determine the factors that are driving attrition at different points of teachers' careers in the German-speaking Community (including the extent to which attrition among younger cohorts is explained by the inability to obtain permanent contracts and necessary qualifications, or teachers reorienting their careers after realising that the profession does not meet their expectations).

About a third of teachers (34.6%) at the secondary level (in schools attended by 15-year-olds) were employed on part-time contracts in 2018, based on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) principal questionnaire in the German-speaking Community. This is a high proportion compared to the OECD average (13.4%) and the share of part-time teachers in the Flemish Community (23%), the French Community (21%), as well as countries like Germany (22%) or France (7%), but below the share in the Netherlands, where nearly half (48%) of teachers work part time (OECD, 2020, p. Table V.B2.4.4[4]).

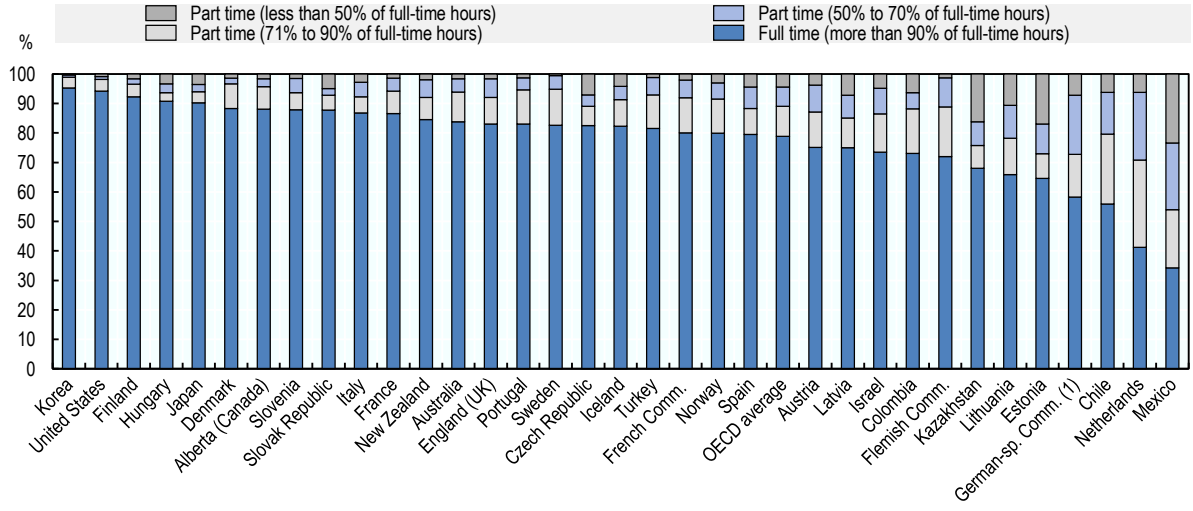
According to the German-speaking Community's administrative data, the proportion of teachers and school leaders in part-time employment was even higher, amounting to 51.8% in special needs schools, 50.5%

at the pre-primary level, 54.5% at the primary level and 58.2% at the secondary level in 2018.[2] As can be seen in Figure 4.2, this is significantly above the OECD average of 21% reported by lower secondary teachers in the OECD's latest TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) and comparable to the Netherlands (58.8%), which reported the largest share of teachers in part-time work among European jurisdictions (OECD, 2019, p. 222[5]). The demographic profile of the German-speaking Community's teaching profession, with its high proportion of younger teachers and women, may contribute to the elevated share of part-time teachers. In most OECD countries, part-time work is more common among female teachers and, in many cases, more frequently observed among early career teachers and senior teachers, although these patterns vary across countries and are shaped by different systems' policies and regulations (Boeskens and Nusche, 2021, p. 22 f.[6]).

Between 2017 and 2021, the share of teachers and leaders working part-time in the German-speaking Community has risen slightly across levels of education and the average staff contract was reduced from 82% to 79% of a full-time position over this period. This development may be driven by teachers choosing to reduce their hours or by teachers' inability to obtain full-time positions (particularly at the start of their careers). Further analyses would be needed to disentangle these factors.

Figure 4.2. Part-time and full-time work among lower secondary teachers, 2018

Percentage of lower secondary teachers employed full-time and part-time (taking into account all their current teaching jobs, based on teacher reports)



1. Includes school leaders and upper secondary level. Based on administrative data, rather than teachers' self reports.
Note: Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of teachers working full-time.
Sources: Ministry of the German-speaking Community of Belgium and OECD (2020[7]), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals*, https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en, Tables II.3.7 and II.3.10; Figure adapted from OECD (2019[5]), *Working and Learning Together: Rethinking Human Resource Policies for Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/b7aaf050-en.

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Teachers' initial preparation and qualifications

Teaching in schools of the German-speaking Community requires a teaching qualification (*Lehrbefähigung*), which can be obtained either through the completion of initial teacher education or (at the secondary level) through alternative pathways aimed at second-career teachers. The recognised qualifications for teaching staff vary across levels and types of education as well as the three school

networks. Schools of all three networks recognise the qualifications laid out by the decree governing teachers' status in the GUW network[3] (*erforderliche Befähigungsnachweise*). However, teachers in the OSU network[4] and the FSU network[5] are governed by separate service codes (*Dienstrecht*) that recognise additional qualifications (*als ausreichend erarchtete Befähigungsnachweise*) as sufficient and equivalent to the GUW's minimum qualifications, allowing them to draw on a larger pool of applicants (see below):

- **Pre-primary and primary education teachers** are generally required to have completed a bachelor's degree in teacher education for the relevant level. The 3-year full-time programmes (BA *Lehramt Kindergarten* and BA *Lehramt Primarschule*) comprise 180 ECTS points and are offered by the *Autonome Hochschule Ostbelgien* (AHS), the Community's higher education institution. Both courses include multiple weeks of teaching practicums in each of the three years. Schools of the OSU and FSU networks also recognise the certificate for approved lower-secondary school teachers (*Agrégé de l'enseignement secondaire inférieur*, AESI) as an equivalent qualification for teaching in primary schools.
- **Lower secondary education teachers** need an AESI (*Agrégé de l'enseignement secondaire inférieur*) teaching certificate or an equivalent qualification. The AESI is a bachelor's level qualification obtained through a 3-year programme that combines a pedagogical and subject-specific content in one to three subjects. AESI are not offered in the German-speaking Community, but can be obtained at one of the *Hautes Écoles* of the French Community.
- **Upper secondary education teachers** in the GUW network need an AESS (*Agrégé de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur*) certificate of the subject they teach or an equivalent qualification. The AESS can be obtained as part of a two-year master's programme in teaching (*master à finalité didactique*) or through one year of pedagogical studies (two years, if part-time) corresponding to 30 ECTS, following the completion of another master's programme. Like the AESI, the AESS is not offered within the German-speaking Community and most teachers obtain it in the French Community.[6] Schools of the FSU network recognise any AESS certificate as a sufficient qualification, regardless of the subject taught.
- **Teachers of secondary technical and vocational subjects** for which there are no full-time qualification programmes can complete a short courses offered by the AHS to obtain a CAP (*Certificat d'aptitudes pédagogiques*) (15 ECTS). These courses are usually pursued part-time over the course of two years while teachers work at the school, also by teachers who do not yet fulfil the necessary requirements for their positions (see below).

There are plans to reform the initial education of primary and pre-primary teachers in the German-speaking Community and adapt it to the evolving demands of the teaching profession. The reform process is led by the AHS and included the development of a new competency profile (*Kompetenzprofil*), laying down what is expected of successful teachers (Autonome Hochschule Ostbelgien, 2020[8]; AHS, 2021[9]). The new competency profile is building on the seven competency pillars (*Kompetenzsäulen*)[7], which had been developed after the AHS' foundation in 2005/06, and entered into force with the 2021/22 academic year.[8] Although primarily geared to guide the design of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, the competency profile can also to guide teachers' induction and their continuing professional learning, akin to the standards for teacher education used in Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004[10]). Based on the revised competency profile, the AHS is planning to develop proposals for the reform of initial teacher education programmes over the course of the 2021/22 school year. One of the reforms under discussion is the extension of the duration of the BA primary education programmes (MDG, 2022[1]). While there is significant variation across OECD countries, ITE programmes in the German-speaking Community are short in comparison. In 2013, the median duration of ITE programmes in OECD and partner countries was 4 years at the pre-primary and primary level, 4.75 years at the lower secondary level and 5 years at the upper secondary level. ITE programmes were shorter than 4 years in 15 of 35 countries at the pre-primary level and in only 5 of 35 countries at the primary level (OECD, 2014, pp. 499, Chart D6.2[11]).

Access to initial teacher education programmes

Access to the pre-primary and primary teacher education programmes at the AHS is conditional on having obtained a certificate of upper secondary education and passing a three-stage admissions process. The first stage is a non-selective online self-exploration tool based on the Career Counselling for Teachers (CCT) platform. It serves to inform the applicant, clarify their motivation and ensure that the teacher education programme and the teaching profession are the right choice for them. The second stage consists of a 3-hour online written examination testing cognitive and verbal reasoning skills. Candidates who successfully passed the written exam proceed to the third stage, which consists of an interview to assess candidates' motivation, communication skills and their ability to analyse and respond to situations in a school environment.[9]

Alternative pathways into the profession

There are several ways to enter the teaching career through alternative pathways in the German-speaking Community. Positions for roles for which there is a recognised staff shortage (i.e. if no qualified candidates could be found) can be filled by applicants who do not hold a teaching qualification. Teachers who do not fulfil the necessary requirements at the time of their recruitment can be employed under a "deviation system" (*Abweichungssystem*). At the secondary level, teachers who have served under the deviation system for at least 15 weeks each in three out of five consecutive schools years can be employed under a regular contract and start accumulating hours counting towards their permanent appointment, provided that they fulfil a number of additional criteria: This includes having obtained a teacher qualification (the CAP [15 ECTS] for vocational and technical courses / the CAP+ [30 ECTS] for general subjects) during this period, fulfilling the necessary language qualifications, and having obtained at least a "satisfactory" rating in their most recent evaluation.[10] This "deviation" pathway is taken by many of the secondary school teachers in the German-speaking Community.

By contrast, pre-primary and primary teachers employed through the deviation system need to complete a regular pre-primary or primary teaching diploma (rather than a CAP/CAP+), in order to obtain a regular contract and work towards a permanent appointment. Staff in the three networks are subject to different service codes (i.e. the regulations governing their working conditions, qualifications etc.) and schools in the OSU and FSU network are more generous in their recognition of qualifications, which allows them to draw on a larger pool of applicants and employ some teachers on a regular contracts who would have needed to join GUW schools under a *deviation* contract.

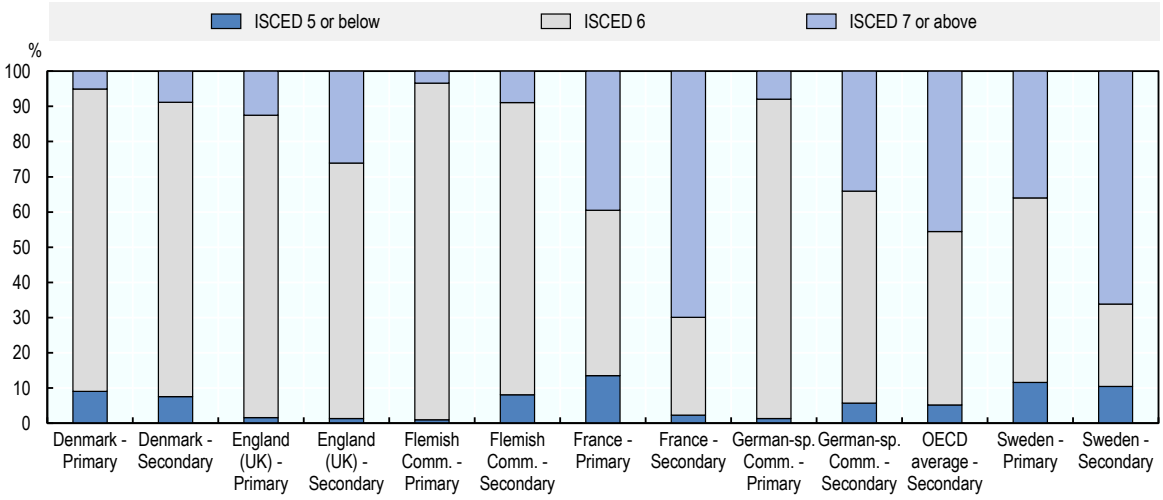
Teachers entering through alternative pathways are paid according to their highest qualification, independent of whether or not this qualification is a teaching qualification. In addition, in order to tackle teacher shortages, the German-speaking Community has provided financial incentives to attract second-career teachers and teachers from the neighbouring school systems. For example, teachers joining from another school system and those who worked in an EU public service or education-related non-profit can have their previous experience fully recognised and count towards their seniority. Those joining the vocational and technical teaching streams can do the same for up to 6 years of relevant professional experience (MDG, 2022[1]).

Although the share of staff entering the teaching profession through alternative pathways is not centrally monitored in the German-speaking Community, principals' responses to the PISA questionnaire suggest that they comprise a significant proportion of the staff. In 2018, secondary school leaders in the German-speaking Community reported that a remarkably low proportion of their teaching workforce is fully certified (just 52.9% - less than in any OECD jurisdiction outside of Latin America and considerably below the OECD average of 81.8%) (OECD, 2020, p. Table V.B2.4.6[4]). Many of the teachers that are not fully qualified are or were presumably employed under the "deviation" system but, as of yet, in 2021, there is no central oversight of the number of teachers employed without the required qualifications (monitoring is also complicated by the varying minimum qualifications across the three networks) (MDG, 2022[1]).

Overall, the educational attainment of teachers in the German-speaking Community is around the OECD average, although these is significant heterogeneity across countries in the minimum qualifications required to teach at a given level of education. According to national statistics, in 2018, 94.3% of the Community's lower secondary school teachers had at least a bachelor's degree and 34.1% had a master's degree, compared to 94.8% and 45.5% on average among lower secondary teachers across the OECD in TALIS 2018 (see Figure 4.3). In 2018, the share of lower secondary school teachers with a master's degree was significantly lower in, for example, the Flemish Community (9.0%), but higher in countries like Sweden (66.2%) and France (67.0%). Given the lower qualification requirements at the primary school level, just 8.0% of teachers in the German-speaking Community held a master's degree in 2018, which is comparable to the share in Denmark (5.0%), the Flemish Community (3.4%) and England (UK) (12.5%), but considerably below those in France (39.5%) and Sweden (36.0%). Between 2018 and 2021, the proportion of teachers in the German-speaking Community with a master's degree has remained stable at the primary level (8.0% vs. 8.3%) and increased slightly at the lower secondary level (from 34.1% to 36.9%). The proportion at the upper secondary level was significantly higher (61.7% in 2021), given that the AESS is a master's level qualification, while the AESI is a bachelor's level qualification.[11]

Figure 4.3. Teachers' educational attainment, primary and lower secondary education, 2018

Proportion of teachers by highest educational attainment, selected OECD jurisdictions



Note: Data for the German-speaking Community is based on teachers' pay grades rather than their own reports.
Sources: OECD (2019[12]), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en, Tables I.4.8/9; Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

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Supply, distribution and recruitment of teachers

Recruitment of teachers

As described above, each school in the German-speaking Community is granted a certain number of funded staff positions, based on a distribution formula. The school providers are responsible for recruiting and selecting pedagogical staff to fill the positions allocated through the distribution formula before the

start of the school year. Each of the three networks organises their recruitment process in the spring of each year (MDG, 2022[1]):

- **Community schools**: Teacher recruitment for schools of the GUW network is organised centrally by the ministry, acting as the networks' provider, in April of each year.
- **Private grant-aided schools**: Teacher recruitment for the FSU schools is organised centrally by the Secretariat of Catholic Education (*Sekretariat des Katholischen Unterrichtswesens*, SKU) on behalf of the Episcopal school provider.
- **Public grant-aided schools**: Teacher recruitment for schools of the OSU network is decentralised and organised by the school offices of the responsible municipality acting as their provider. The co-ordination service (*Koordinationsstelle*) of the OSU network provides information on the application process.

The public OSU and GUW networks fill open positions (and allocate teaching hours) using a points-based ranking system (*Klassierung*). Once teachers with permanent or open-ended fixed-term contracts at the school who wish to increase their teaching hours have had a chance to do so, the remaining positions and hours are offered to the highest-scoring applicants. First, the fully-qualified teachers are ranked (those holding the formal teaching qualifications [*Befähigungsnachweis]* and fulfilling additional requirements [*Bezeichnungsbedingungen*], notably the requisite language skills) and priority is given to those who have already completed their career entry period (*Berufseinstiegsphase*). The OSU and GUW use their own systems to allocate points, taking into account factors such as prior years of service with schools of the same provider, recent evaluation reports, additional qualifications, mastery of the language of instruction and completed professional development. Once the list is exhausted, candidates who do not fulfil all additional requirements (such as language certificates) are considered and teachers who do not hold the necessary teaching qualifications may be employed through the deviation system (MDG, 2022[1]). Teachers on temporary fixed-term contracts or employed through the deviation system need to reapply for their positions each year while those on temporary open-ended contracts reapply automatically. Should there be fewer positions than applicants, the lowest-ranked teachers at a school (starting with those in the lowest contract categories) may lose their position or teaching hours to higher-ranked applicants. The process does not take into account interviews, motivation letters or trial lessons and, as a consequence, give school leaders of OSU and GUW little scope to influence the selection of their teachers.

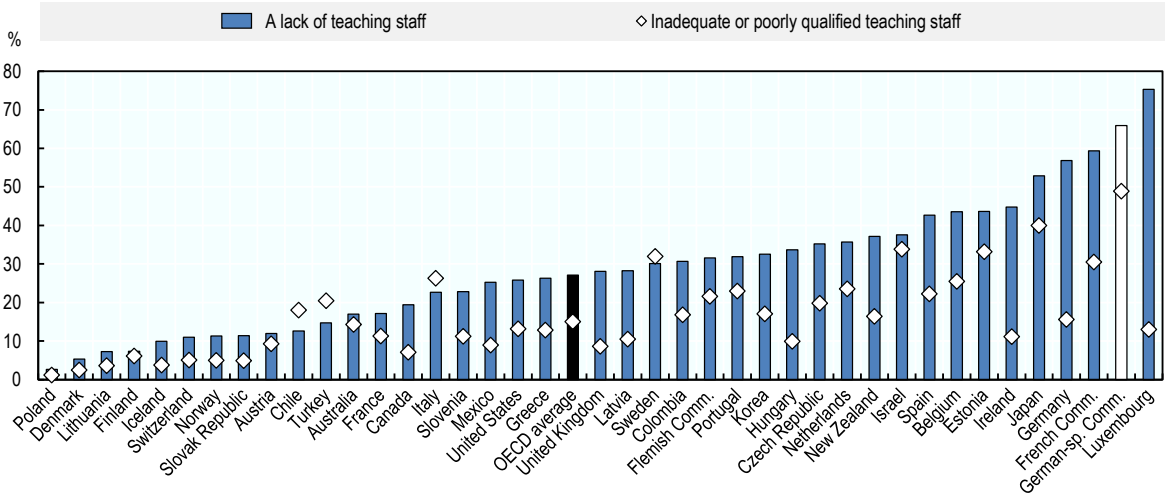
Schools of the FSU network enjoy greater autonomy in the recruitment of their teachers. Instead of the point-based ranking system used by the OSU and GUW networks, the FSU provider receives and distributes applications to school leaders who then organise interviews to select suitable candidates. Although school leaders prioritise candidates with open-ended contracts and those that successfully completed their career entry period, they can consider a wider range of factors to determine the candidates' fit than leaders of the OSU and GUW schools. Nevertheless, FSU schools follow the same qualification requirements as other schools and need to employ teachers with insufficient qualifications under the deviation system.

Teacher supply and shortages

Although detailed national data on teacher shortages is not available, school principals' reports suggest that the German-speaking Community faces considerable shortages of teaching staff, at least at the secondary education level. In the PISA 2018 survey, two thirds (66%) of 15-year-old students attended a school whose principal believed that teacher shortages hindered its capacity to provide instruction to some extent or a lot (see Figure 4.4). This was the highest proportion among any OECD jurisdiction apart from Luxembourg and significantly above the OECD average of 27.1% (OECD, 2020, p. Table V.B2.4.2[4]). Likewise, almost half of the 15-year-old students attended a school whose principal reported that instruction was hindered by inadequate or poorly qualified teaching staff in 2018 – the highest proportion among participating OECD jurisdictions.

Figure 4.4. Perceived shortages of teaching staff, 2018

Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported that teacher shortages hindered instruction



Source: OECD (2020[4]), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en, Tables V.B2.4.2 and V.B1.4.2.

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The decentralised staffing system of the German-speaking Community has so far prevented the ministry from systematically monitoring staff shortages and keeping track, for example, of unfilled vacancies, staff hired without requisite qualifications or missed classes due to a lack of substitute teachers. There is a perception, however, that the reliance on lateral entrants and teachers employed under a "deviation" provision due to a lack of sufficiently qualified staff has increased. Teacher shortages also tend to intensify over the course of the school year. According to the ministry, factors contributing to the reported teacher shortages include the insufficient number of students joining the profession, the increase in part-time work, frictions in the recruitment process (see below) as well as an increasing frequency and duration of medical leave among teachers in both primary and secondary schools (MDG, 2022[1]; Walther, 2020[13]). Another reported factor contributing to shortages – particularly in the southern municipalities of the Community – is the competition from schools in neighbouring Luxembourg, which offer considerably higher salaries (see Figure 4.7).

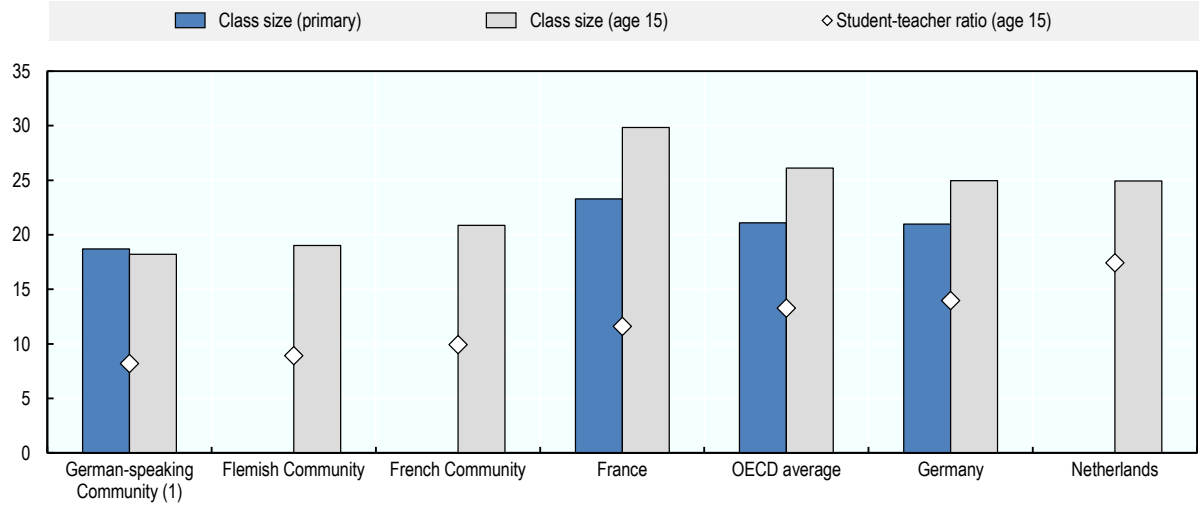
Experience from other OECD countries also shows that staff shortages rarely affect all schools to the same extent and are often concentrated in specific regions, school types of subject areas (OECD, 2019[5]). A 2016 survey of schools and providers suggested that secondary schools in the German-speaking Community experienced staff shortages of varying year-by-year intensity across all subjects. In 2021, the GUW network failed to find sufficient fully-qualified teachers in 41 subject areas (among them 10 general subjects, 7 vocational subjects and 13 technical subjects). Recruitment has proven particularly challenging in German and other languages, the natural sciences, mathematics, as well as business and economics (MDG, 2022[1]).

In order to evaluate staffing needs and potential shortages going forward, the ministry (Department for teaching personnel) is currently engaging in a prognostic exercise to forecast the demand for teachers until 2040 (*Lehrerbedarfsprognose*). The ministry hopes to use this system for continuous monitoring purposes going forward (including starting to systematically monitor teachers' activity status and staff

shortages brought on by long-term illness) to identify potential shortages going forward and to evaluate the effects of reforms (MDG, 2022[1]).

On average, schools in the German-speaking Community offer low student-to-teacher ratios and small class sizes. Based on ministry's information, the average class size in primary schools was 18.7 in 2020, slightly below the OECD average of 21 for primary schools in 2018 (OECD, 2020, pp. 383, Table D2.3[2]). The ministry does not collect information on the average class sizes at the pre-primary and secondary levels (MDG, 2022[1]), but based on PISA 2018 data, the average class size in year 10 (i.e. at the start of upper secondary education or the end of lower secondary education in the vocational track) was 18.2 – significantly smaller than the average across the OECD and neighbouring jurisdictions. As shown in Figure 4.5, there were, on average 8.2 students per teacher in the German-speaking Community in year 10, compared to 13.3 on average across the OECD. There are no central prescriptions or guidelines concerning the minimum or maximum class size in the Community though and class sizes in one of the schools visited by the OECD review team were reportedly closer to 30 students.

Figure 4.5. Average class size and student teacher ratios, 2018



1. Class size at the primary level based on national data for 2020.
Note: Class sizes at the primary level calculated based on the number of students and number of classes; Class sizes and student-teacher ratios at age 15 based on principals' reports about the modal grade (grade 10 in Belgium).
Sources: OECD (2020[4]), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en, Tables V.B2.4.11 and V.B2.4.10; OECD (2020[2]), *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en, Table D2.3.

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Induction and continuing professional learning in schools

Induction and mentoring

The *Autonome Hochschule Ostbelgien* (AHS) offers a programme to accompany new teachers during their first two years on the job. It is open to all new teachers, including those trained in other higher education institutions or entering the profession through alternative pathways. The programme involves regular group meetings organised by level of education (primary education, since 2019/20, secondary education and, since 2020/21, pre-primary education) with experienced teachers or pre-primary staff and psycho-pedagogical staff of the AHS. During the meetings, novice teachers deepen their psychological and

pedagogical-content knowledge and discuss problems that may arise at school and develop practical strategies to resolve them.[12]

Although some schools are implementing a mentoring system for new teachers, the practice is not systematic and widespread since schools need to use their allocated teacher resources to do so and few have spare capacity given the prevailing staff shortages in many schools (MDG, 2022[1]). Beyond the AHS' induction programme offered to all new teachers, there are no system-wide induction offers that address the specific needs of lateral entrants. Their level of support depends primarily on the school's internal practices and the voluntary initiative of their peers (MDG, 2022[1]).

Teachers' continuing professional learning

Since 2010, the AHS is responsible for the organisation and implementation of in-service training for teachers on behalf of the ministry (Eurydice, 2020[14]). The professional learning offer is based on a professional development "catalogue" that is developed each year by a professional development commission following the consultation of stakeholders and taking into account learning needs arising from political priorities and/or changing regulations (AHS, 2021[15]). The professional development commission is comprised of representatives of the different school networks (including network co-ordinators and school leaders), the Centre for Special Needs Pedagogy (*Zentrum für Förderpädagogik*, ZFP), the Institute for Vocational Education and Training in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (*Institut für Aus- und Weiterbildung im Mittelstand*, IAWM), the external evaluation as well as the ministry and the AHS (MDG, 2022[1]).

Teachers' engage in professional learning both individually and in the context of school-wide training days:

- **School-based professional learning**: School leaders develop a professional learning plan in line with their school development plan and can choose three days a year to suspend instruction and dedicate to the professional learning of all teaching and support staff (*Konferenztage*). School leaders can choose whether to organise this professional learning with the AHS' pedagogical advisory service (*Fachberatung*), through the school development counsellors (*Schulentwicklungsberatung*) or an external provider. Participation in school-wide training days, if they are held, is mandatory for all teachers in the school. Since 2019, schools can request a fourth professional learning day, provided that it focuses on a topic that the minister has declared a priority for that year, such as heterogeneity, transversal competencies or language education (MDG, 2022[1]).
- **Individual professional learning**: Teachers can request to engage in additional training. If the school leadership approves teachers' requests, they are released from their teaching duties and replaced by a colleague for the duration of their training. For this, teachers may choose from the trainings offered by the AHS, which are mostly free of charge and open to all teachers of the German-speaking Community. They can also choose from the training offer of other Belgian professional learning institutes across the Communities (usually for subject-specific training at the secondary level) or of international providers in German-speaking systems in Germany, Austria or Switzerland. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers have also increasingly taken advantage of online learning formats. Teachers can request central financial support for external training. The requests are evaluated and approved by the ministry, which may contribute up to 50% (up to a maximum value of EUR 247.89) per training. The remaining cost is covered by the school, if resources are available, or by teachers themselves.

Although the participation in further training is one of the duties defined in the 1998 Decree against which teachers are evaluated, there is no specific requirement or central guideline concerning the amount of individual professional learning that teachers in the German-speaking Community should engage in, nor is there a right to a given amount of training hours per year. Particularly in smaller primary schools teachers' participation in external training is sometimes constrained by the difficulty to find replacement teachers

(MDG, 2022[1]). Reports of secondary school principals also suggest that teachers' participation in continuing professional development activities was significantly below the OECD average (see further below) (OECD, 2020, p. Table V.B2.4.7[4]).

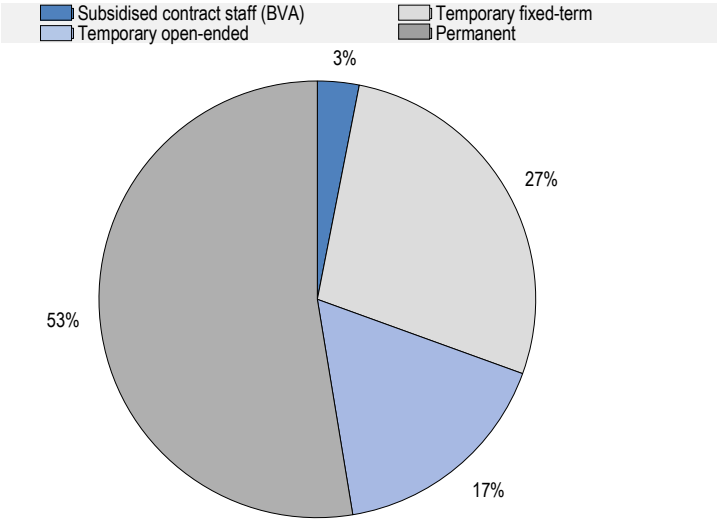
Schools of the grant-aided OSU and FSU networks are expected to pay for professional development out of the grant that they receive for pedagogical purposes (calculated based on the weighted number of students in the school). GUW schools cover expenditures on professional learning out of their main operating grant (MDG, 2022[1]). School leaders are free to decide which proportion of their funding to devote to teachers' professional development and to what extent they cover the cost of teachers' individual professional learning beyond the school-wide training days.

Teachers' career structure and remuneration

Contract status

Teachers in the German-speaking Community are employed under four types of contractual status: i) temporary fixed-term (*zeitweilig befristet*), ii) temporary open-ended (*zeitweilig unbefristet*), iii) permanent (*definitiv*), and iv) as subsidised contract staff (*bezuschusste Vertragsarbeitnehmer*, BVA). In 2021, around half of all teachers and school leaders' contracts were permanent, 17% of contracts were temporary open-ended, 27% were temporary fixed-term and 3% were BVA contracts (see Figure 4.6). While teachers in the FSU are "employed" (*eingestellt*), teachers in the GUW and OSU networks are "designated" (*bezeichnet*) for temporary open-ended posts and "appointed" (*ernannt*) for permanent employment.

Figure 4.6. Contract status of teachers and leaders in the German-speaking Community, 2021



Note: On 1 January 2021, 279 staff members were employed under more than one contract modality, the sum therefore does not equal the total number of teaching and leadership staff (1879); Subsidised contract staff (*bezuschusste Vertragsarbeitnehmer*, BVA) are teaching or non-teaching staff hired to provide additional support, particularly to students with special education needs (see Chapter 3 for more detail).
Source: Ministry of the German-speaking Community of Belgium.

StatLink https://stat.link/25oegn

Until the 2021/22 school year, all new teachers joining the profession were employed on fixed-term contracts lasting at most one year and needed to reapply for their positions at the end of each contract period. Once teachers completed at least 720 days of service within a school network (corresponding to

at least 3 years of full-time work), fulfilled all employment conditions and received at least a "satisfactory" rating in their latest evaluation, they were entitled to a temporary open-ended contract, provided that there was an open position to fill for at least one year from the 1st of September.[13] Teachers on temporary open-ended positions no longer need to apply for annual contract renewals, enjoy additional rights to vacation and greater job protection. Teachers who have cleared this step are automatically eligible for a permanent employment, which comes with even greater job security, as soon as a vacant position becomes available (MDG, 2022[1]).

With the start of the 2021/22 school year the contractual status of beginning teachers has been reformed in order to increase the attractiveness of the profession and reduce the administrative burden on recruiters. Under the new system, teachers who fulfil all formal employment criteria receive an open-ended contract from the moment they join the profession, provided that there is an open position to fill for at least one year. This absolves teachers from re-applying for their positions every year and provides them with greater job security during this career entry period (*Berufseinstiegsphase*).[14] As under the previous system, teachers are entitled to transition to the temporary open-ended contract (and, if a position is vacant, a permanent contract) after 720 days of service, obtaining additional rights related to contract termination and vacation in the process. Teachers can still be dismissed during this period if their performance is deemed "insufficient" in their evaluation (see below). The 720 days need to be completed under the same school provider (i.e. within a school network and, in case of the OSU schools, a single municipality). The period lasts at least 3 years and longer for part-time teachers. Applicants who do not fulfil all formal employment criteria when joining the profession and those who apply for a position lasting less than one school year will continue to be offered the previous one-year fixed-term contracts (MDG, 2022[1]).

Career structure

The teacher career structure in the German-speaking Community provides limited opportunities for professional advancement. There is no strongly developed career ladder for teachers with multiple stages of progressive responsibility and levels of competency. The only pathways for teachers to obtain formal promotions to positions with increased remuneration is to apply for a limited number of "selection positions" (*Auswahlämter*) or "promotion positions" (*Beförderungsämter*):

- **Selection positions** comprise a limited number of middle-leadership positions in secondary schools. Selection positions include the role of vice principal (*Unterdirektor*) in secondary schools of at least 550 students and the newly created part-time role of middle managers, of which there are two in secondary schools with less than 600 students and three in secondary schools with more than 600 students. Furthermore, vocational and technical secondary schools can nominate one or two workshop leaders (depending on the school's size), who support the quality of instruction and co-operation among teaching staff within their area. Special education schools at the secondary level usually have five department heads, a full-time co-ordinator of the school's *Time-Out* centre and a part-time para-medical co-ordinator – all of which are selection positions. There are no selection positions in pre-primary and primary schools.[15]
- **Promotion positions** are reserved for the school leaders of different school types as well as several roles in the school administration, including that of school inspectors and school development counsellors.

School providers advertise vacancies for selection and promotion positions and organise the recruitment process. The requirements and selection criteria for all positions have been revised over the past ten years, notably to permit permanent staff members to assume a selection position without losing their right to return to their previous role under the same conditions. Now, staff assume selection and promotion positions on open-ended fixed-term contracts and, for most roles, only transfer to a permanent contract after five years (staff also need to be 50 years or older and must have received at least a "satisfactory" rating in their last evaluation). The reform also permitted schools of the GUW network to consider a wider

range of criteria (beyond their seniority, formal qualifications and previous evaluation) when selecting candidates for selection of promotion positions, including their social skills, relevant prior experience and motivation. The reform also opened selection positions up to experienced external candidates who have not previously worked as teachers (MDG, 2022[1]).

Despite the lack of a strongly developed career ladder for teachers, schools may provide teachers with additional responsibilities internally in exchange for a reduction in their teaching hours instead of an increase in remuneration. For example, teachers over the age of 55 are eligible to reduce their teaching hours to 3/4 of the regular load in order to ease their transition towards retirement and may replace another quarter of their teaching hours to engage in supporting pedagogical tasks, such as mentoring new teachers, organising extracurricular activities, supporting newly arrived immigrant students (*erstankommende Schüler*, EAS) or – with the teacher's consent – take on administrative tasks. In the year 2020/21, 73 staff members were participating in this pre-retirement scheme, i.e. around 25% of those eligible (MDG, 2022[1]).

Since 2018/19, secondary schools can also nominate teachers to assume additional responsibilities as subject team leaders (*Fachteamleiter*) in mathematics, German language, French language and natural sciences or as subject advisors (*Fachberater*) in exchange for a slightly reduced teaching load (see section on middle managers and other school staff below).[16]

Remuneration

All teachers from pre-primary to upper secondary education, regardless of their school network and level of education, are paid directly by the German-speaking Community based on a common salary scale. Teachers' salary primarily depends on their seniority and their highest level of educational attainment. There are no extra allowances for difficult working conditions, specific subjects or responsibilities, teaching in areas of shortage, or for good performance. Since a 2009 reform, teachers are assigned to one of four salary grids (III, II, II+ or I) based exclusively on their highest level of attainment (see Table 4.3). Previously, teachers' assignment to salary grids was based on a combination of teachers' attainment, their role and the level at which they taught. This system was abolished with a view to ensure greater simplicity, transparency and reduce the scope for administrative errors. Staff on selection and promotion position are paid according to separate salary scales specific to those roles and independent of their highest level of attainment.

Teachers' salaries increase with seniority in increments of two years, reaching the maximum salary after 22 to 26 years of experience. Teachers who reached the end of their salary scale are entitled to an additional step at age 59. Previous experience in public service, education-related non-profits (or relevant professional experience in the case of technical and vocational teachers) can count towards their recognised years of service when they join the profession. In line with other public sector salaries, teachers' salaries are regularly increased by 2% to adjust for inflation based on a consumer price index (the most recent adjustments occurred in February 2020 and October 2021) (MDG, 2022[1]). Most teachers are remunerated based on Scale II+ (around 70% of teachers) or Scale I (around 25% of teachers).

Table 4.3. Teachers' salaries in the German-speaking Community, Sept 2020

Gross salaries by salary scale and years of experience for full-time staff, in EUR

	Scale III	Scale II	Scale II +	Scale I
Highest level of attainment	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
Starting salary	30 377	30 865	31 627	39 850
After 5 years	32 156	33 438	34 837	44 402
After 10 years	34 823	37 297	39 653	51 229
After 15 years	36 601	39 870	42 863	55 781
After 20 years	39 268	43 729	47 678	62 609
Maximum salary	41 936 (after 26 years)	46 302 (after 24 years)	50 889 (after 24 years)	64 885 (after 22 years)

Note: Excluding additional allowances (e.g. family allowances) and annual vacation and year-end premiums paid to all teachers; Salaries reported here are based on a consumer price index of 1.741 (January 2021), which has since been raised to 1.7758 in September 2021.
Source: Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

The Flemish and French Communities of Belgium remunerate their teachers based on a similar system of salary scales. Based on national data and calculation of the ministry, starting salaries for teachers with a bachelor's degree in the Germans-speaking Community are about 3-4% higher than in the French Community and 1-2% higher than in the Flemish Community throughout teachers' careers and progress at a similar rate, although teachers' end-career salaries are slightly lower in the German-speaking Community due to a smaller number of steps. The differences are similar, though slightly more pronounced for teachers with a master's degree (MDG, 2022[1]).

International comparisons between teachers' salaries in the German-speaking Community and those in other OECD jurisdictions should be treated with caution due to potential differences in reporting standards. Nevertheless, it appears as though, in 2020, the starting salaries for teachers with the most prevalent qualifications (i.e. a bachelor's degree in the German-speaking Community) are slightly above, but close to the OECD average of USD 36 116 in purchasing power parities (PPP) at the lower secondary level. The salary of a mid-career teacher (after 15 years of experience) is also close to the OECD 2020 average of USD 49 701 (see Figure 4.7).

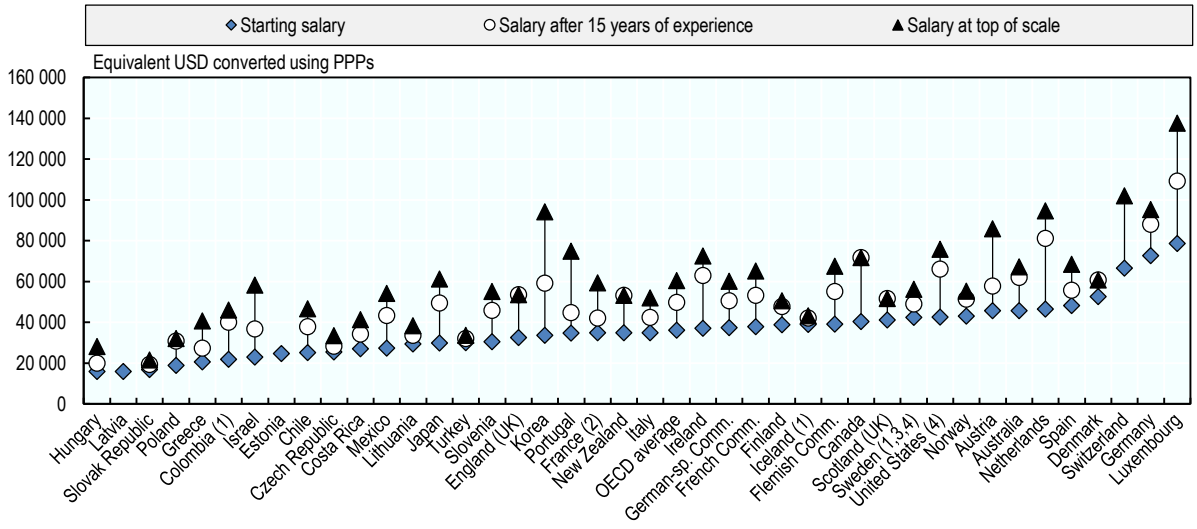
The range of teachers' pay scales and their slope (i.e. the rate at which salaries increase over the course of a teacher's career) vary significantly across OECD countries with available data (OECD, 2021[3]). In a number of countries, teachers earn comparatively little at the beginning of their careers but experience a stronger salary increases as they gain further qualifications or seniority. In 2018, Chile, Hungary, Israel and Korea, for example, top-end salaries for teachers with the highest qualifications can exceed those of beginning teachers with minimum qualifications by more than 150%. By contrast, the salary scales in countries like Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, which offer some of the highest starting salaries, are more compressed (OECD, 2019, p. 394[16]).

Salary scales in the German-speaking Community of Belgium are somewhere between those extremes and relatively close to the OECD average (see Figure 4.7). Based on 2020 current salary scales, teachers with the most prevalent qualifications, i.e. a bachelor's degree, earn about 61% more if they are at the end of their career compared to their peers who just joined the profession. This progression is slightly smaller than the 67% difference observed on average across the OECD. The difference between the starting salaries of teachers with minimum qualifications and those of the most qualified teachers at the end of their careers is 114% (above the OECD average of 85%). The pursuit of additional qualifications – particularly of master's qualification, can thus accelerate an otherwise modest salary progression – as is the case in jurisdictions like England (United Kingdom) (OECD, 2019, p. Table D3.1a[16]). However, it should be noted that the minimum qualification for teachers in the German-speaking Community (i.e. below upper

secondary for teachers on deviation contracts) is low in international comparison and few teachers are remunerated based on salary scales II and III.

Figure 4.7. Teachers' salary progression (ISCED 2, general programmes), 2020

Annual statutory salaries of teachers with the most prevalent qualifications in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for private consumption



1. Year of reference 2019.
2. Includes the average of fixed bonuses for overtime hours.
3. Excludes the social security contributions and pension-scheme contributions paid by the employees.
4. Actual base salaries.

Note: Comparability between salaries in the German-speaking Community and other OECD jurisdictions is limited by methodological differences; Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of starting salaries of teachers with the most prevalent qualifications.

Sources: OECD (2021[3]), *Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators*, https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en, Table D3.1; Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

StatLink https://stat.link/yf5ms2

Regulation of teachers' time

Teachers in the German-speaking Community are employed based on a teaching load system, which defines their weekly hours of instruction, but not their overall workload. Central regulations stipulate minimum and maximum teaching loads depending on teachers' level of instruction and subjects taught (see Table 4.4). School leaders decide whether to exhaust the maximum number of teaching hours or assign teachers other tasks and responsibilities instead of the remaining instruction time (i.e. 2-4 hours per week). The tasks teachers are expected to perform in their working time are defined by the 1998 Decree (Parlament der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, 1998[17]). There is no reduction in the teaching hours for beginning teachers. Based on 37 weeks of instruction per year, the annual statutory teaching hours in general lower secondary education would amount to around 814 to 888 hours, compared to the OECD average of 723 in 2020. In primary education, the statutory teaching hours in the German-speaking Community amount to around 888 to 962, compared to the OECD average of 791 (OECD, 2021, pp. 393, Table D4.1[3]).

Table 4.4. Regulation of teachers' time in the German-speaking Community, 2021

Minimum and maximum teaching hours of full-time teachers, as defined by legislation

		Minimum	Maximum
Pre-primary education		28	28
Primary education		24	26
Mainstream lower secondary	General and technical subjects	22	24
	Vocational or technical and vocational (year 1)l	22	24
	Technical and vocational (years 2 +3)	24	28
	Vocational (years 2+3)	30	33
Mainstream upper secondary	General and technical subjects	20	22
	Technical and vocational	24	28
	Vocational	30	33
Special secondary education	General and technical subjects	22	24
	Technical and vocational	24	28

Source: Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

Schools can request additional release time for teachers to engage in non-instruction activities (*Sonderaufträge*) for a limited period of time and for specific tasks or school project (e.g. related to support for gifted students, student heterogeneity or the *École Numérique* programme). Requests for additional release time are granted by the minister, usually on a part-time basis, and often amount to a few hours a week. Across the 65 primary and secondary school sites and the AHS, 157 staff (52 FTE) were granted release time in 2020/21. The total release time granted for school teachers increased from around 30 FTE in 2016/17 to 47 FTE in 2020/21, 16 FTE of which related to assignments outside of schools, relating to multiple levels of education (see Table 4.5). Centrally granted release time can only be given to teachers on open-ended or permanently appointed contracts, but schools can decide to reduce teaching hours or reallocate them internally to allow individual teachers to engage in special tasks. (The ministry does not monitor this practice) (MDG, 2022[1]).

Table 4.5. Release time granted for special pedagogical assignments (*Pädagogische Sonderaufträge*) in school education, 2016-2020

Full-time equivalents

Type of school	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Special needs education	6.4	9.6	8.9	9.3	7.3
Primary school	0.4	4.6	3.4	8.9	6.6
Secondary school	1.8	1.4	5.7	12.6	16.6
Working across levels	21.1	19.8	19.2	17.0	16.1
Total	29.8	35.4	37.1	47.8	46.7

Note: Some additional release time is granted for staff working at Kaleido and the music academy (1.7 FTE in 2020/21), which is not included in this table. Examples of assignments across levels of education include, for example, work in the minister's cabinet, pedagogical work in cultural institutions, co-ordination work for the OSU and FSU networks or work with teacher unions.
Source: Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

Teachers' well-being at work

A 2020 study commissioned by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community observed a steady increase in the total number of days teachers reported incapacity for work, rising by 41% from around

21.200 days (10.9 per teacher) in 2015/16 to 29 800 days (14.6 per teacher) in 2018/19. Over the same period, the report observed an increase in the average duration of sick leaves from 8.6 days to 10.6 days. In the school year 2018/19, 4% of teachers' working days were lost to illness or other incapacity to work (it has steadily increased from 3% in 2015/16) (Walther, 2020[13]).

Teachers, but also other staff working in schools, can face a high amount of stress on the job (Johnson and Simon, 2015[18]). The relationship between teachers' working conditions, their occupational well-being, their job satisfaction and the quality of their teaching is receiving increasing attention from policy makers and researchers (Boeskens and Nusche, 2021[6]). Research in multiple OECD countries has documented that chronic teacher absences are a great concern not only for their own well-being, but also for their students' learning, given its disruptive effects and the frequently less experienced substitutes that replace them (Viac and Fraser, 2020[19]; Herrmann and Rockoff, 2012[20]; Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006[21]). The rise in the prevalence of long-term illness among teachers in the German-speaking Community has renewed the focus on teachers' health and well-being and further initiatives are planned to improve the situation (MDG, 2022[1]).

All school providers in the German-speaking Community have access to some external services to promote their teachers' well-being, including psycho-social risk analyses and consultations, prevention programmes around health and well-being and surveys of teachers' well-being and satisfaction. The FSU and GUW networks have also conducted a psycho-social risk analysis in all of their schools. Some of the initiatives that have been taken to promote teachers' well-being include central training for "persons of trust" (*Vertrauenspersonen*) who can provide advice and mediation in situations such as workplace harassment, bullying or excessive workloads. More recently, the FSU network has launched a virtual platform ("*It's Teacher Time*") focused on well-being to allow their teachers to share experiences and practices during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic (MDG, 2022[1]).

Teacher evaluation

Teachers in the German-speaking Community are evaluated by their school leaders. The frequency of evaluations depends on their contract status. Teachers on temporary fixed-term contracts (and the newly introduced open-ended contracts during the career entry period) are expected to be evaluated at least once a year and teachers on temporary open-ended contracts are expected to be evaluated at least every three years. There is no requirement for teachers on permanent contracts to undergo regular evaluations, unless they are requested by the staff in question, the school leader or the school provider, or in case a formal complaint has been filed (MDG, 2022[1]).

Teachers' evaluations are carried out by their school leaders and based on a lesson observation and subsequent conversation to set objectives for the next evaluation period. The external evaluation has developed a lesson observation sheet highlighting indicators of effective teaching, which can be used to guide principals' evaluation.[17] School leaders are joined by a member of the school inspectorate for the evaluation of teachers who have been employed in spite of insufficient qualifications (under a "deviation" contract) for three years, for teachers who will be eligible to complete their career entry period in the following year, and for permanently employed teachers whose evaluation has been requested by the school leader or provider.

Evaluations conclude with an evaluation report and an overall grade (very good [*sehr gut*], good [*gut*], satisfactory [*ausreichend*], insufficient [*ungenügend*], deficient [*mangelhaft*]). The evaluation is guided by a framework provided by the Government that is common for all schools. The framework lists the teachers' main duties as defined in the 1998 Decree and asks principals to evaluate each with a grade. The duties include teachers' core duties of lesson preparation, teaching and fostering competencies in line with the core curriculum. Teachers need to obtain a good grade on their teaching-related duties in order to receive a good overall grade. In addition, teachers are rated on a range of other duties, including the participation in professional learning and teacher conferences, participation in the school's internal evaluation,

interactions with parents, collaboration with psycho-medical-social staff and external school services, and displaying "teacher competencies" (subject knowledge, language competency and social competency). In addition, the evaluation report allows school leaders to define goals for the upcoming evaluation period and a space to assess whether teachers have fulfilled their goals in the preceding evaluation period.[18]

Within the relatively limited scope of their application, teacher evaluations in the German-speaking Community serve both formative and summative purposes. Following an "insufficient" evaluation, school providers can decide not to renew teachers on temporary fixed-term contracts (or the new open-ended appointment during the career entry period) after 30 June of a given school year. If teachers on temporary open-ended contracts receive a "deficient" or "insufficient" rating, the school leader is required to conduct another evaluation in the following year, at which point an "insufficient" rating leads to the termination of their contract after 30 June that year. The same process applies to teachers on permanent contracts.

School leadership and other staff

Profile, selection and preparation of school leadership

Every primary and secondary school is headed by a school leader. As of 2021, there were 10 school leaders at the secondary level and 27 school leaders at the primary level, 13 of whom were responsible for more than one of the 57 primary school sites, particularly in rural areas (MDG, 2022[1]). The great majority of school leaders in the German-speaking Community are between 40 and 60 years old. This is roughly in line with the pattern observed in most OECD countries where – on average at the lower secondary level – school leaders were 52.2 years old, with 92.3% above the age of 40, and 20% above the age of 60 in 2018 (OECD, 2019, p. Figure I.3.2[12]). In contrast to the teaching profession, the majority of school leaders in the German-speaking Community are men (57% at the primary level and 50% at the secondary level) (MDG, 2022[1]).

Apart from a few exceptions, most school leaders have a teaching qualification and were previously employed as teachers in a school at their respective level of education (MDG, 2022[1]). Until recently, primary school leaders were required to have obtained either a teaching qualification for the pre-primary, primary or secondary level (AESI/AESS) or another master's degree in a pedagogical subject. Since 2020, difficulties to fill leadership positions have led the Community to drop the requirement for school leaders at the primary level to hold a teaching certificate. Now, the position only requires a bachelor's degree, which had already the case for school leaders at the secondary level for several years.[19]

The selection processes for school leaders are organised by the schools' respective networks. In the case of GUW networks, an independent commission assesses candidates based on their qualifications, experience, an interview and a strategic school development plan that needs to be submitted as part of the application.

Within the first five years on the job, school leaders of all school networks are required to complete a part-time professional development programme, which lasts two years and is offered jointly with an external provider. At the time of the review, the programme was offered with the German Academy for Pedagogical Leadership (*Deutsche Akademie für Pädagogische Führungskräfte*, DAPF) in Dortmund (Germany).[20] The programme includes modules on school management and development, team building and communication, school evaluation, relevant legal frameworks and a module designed by each school network to address topics specific to their schools. The programme is also open to teachers who are interested in assuming school leadership roles in the future. Primary and secondary school leaders without a teaching qualification are required to complete an additional module (10 ECTS) on pedagogical matters, but do not need to do so before taking up their positions (MDG, 2022[1]).

School leaders' career structure and remuneration

School leaders, once selected, are employed on open-ended contracts without trial period (MDG, 2022[1]). In the school year 2020/21, primary school leaders in the German-speaking Community were paid according to separate salary scales depending on the size of their school and – in contrast to teachers – independent of their highest level of educational attainment (see Table 4.6). For primary school principals, all prior work experience, regardless of the type of work, counts towards new principals' recognisable years of service and their position on the respective salary scale (the end of the scales are reached after 25-27 years of experience). Secondary school principals were remunerated based on a single scale but received a fixed monthly bonus depending on the type of school they led (EUR 497 for mainstream schools with fewer than 600 students; 746 for mainstream schools with more than 600 students; EUR 1 393 for special needs secondary schools) (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Salaries school principals, 2020

Annual gross statutory salaries (incl. monthly bonus for secondary principals), in EUR

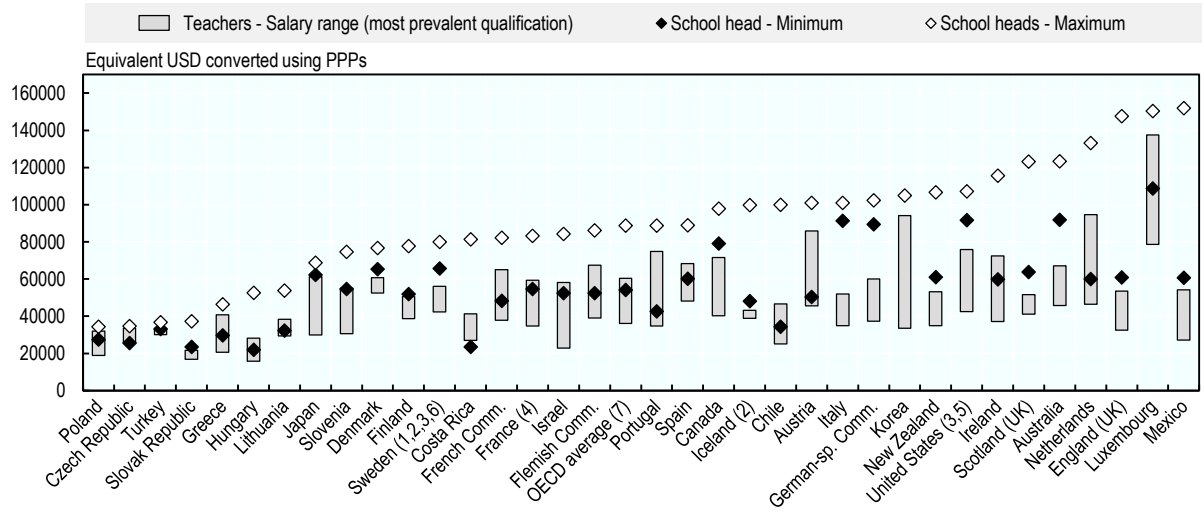
	School type	Minimum salary (no prior experience)	Maximum salary
Primary schools	Up to 71 students	33 057	55 279
	72 to 140 students	34 489	56 730
	141 to 209 students	39 128	64 884
	210 students and more	39 128	64 884
	From Sept 2021: Fewer than 300 students	51 897	81 127
	From Sept 2021: At least 300 students	54 028	83 258
Secondary schools	Mainstream, fewer than 600 students	76 693	83 750
	Mainstream, at least 600 students	79 677	86 734
	Special education	87 439	94 496
	From Sept 2021: Fewer than 600 students	68 039	113 211
	From Sept 2021: At least 600 students (and SEN)	89 781	126 733

Note: Minimum salaries for secondary school principals in 2020 are based on 19 years of prior experience, all other minimum salaries are based no prior experience (i.e. effective starting salaries will be higher); Salaries for 2020 based on the indexation value of 1 January 2021 (1.741); Salaries from Sept 2021 based on the indexation value of 1 Sept 2021 (1.7758).
Source: Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

Evidence from OECD reviews suggests that the status and attractiveness of school leadership roles can suffer if their compensation fails to reflect their higher level of responsibility (Nusche et al., 2016, p. 172[22]). For leadership positions to be financially attractive, they need to be competitive with those of jobs with similar levels of responsibility in the public and private sectors, but also compared to those of senior teachers among whom most school leaders are recruited (OECD, 2019[5]). Although maximum salaries for school leaders typically exceed those of teachers, their salary ranges overlap in many OECD systems (see Figure 4.8). In the German-speaking Community, the salaries of secondary school principals are attractive in international comparison and well differentiated from those of teachers (although the potential salary progression for principals is comparatively small). By contrast, at the time of the OECD review, the maximum salaries of school leaders at the primary level (not shown in the Figure) were not much higher than those of their most experienced teachers. This was the case particularly in smaller primary schools, where the leaders' maximum salary (EUR 55 279) was little above that of a teacher with the most common qualifications (EUR 50 889) (MDG, 2022[1]).

Figure 4.8. Minimum and maximum statutory salaries for teachers and school heads, 2020

Annual salaries in public lower secondary institutions (general programmes)



1. Year of reference 2019 (for principals).
2. Year of reference 2019 (for teachers).
3. Actual base salaries.
4. For teachers, includes the average of fixed bonuses for overtime hours.
5. Minimum principals' salary refers to the most prevalent qualification (master's degree or equivalent) and maximum salary refers to the highest qualification (education specialist or doctoral degree or equivalent).
6. For teachers, excludes the social security contributions and pension-scheme contributions paid by the employees.
7. Principals' averages exclude countries for which either the starting salary (with minimum qualifications) or the salary at top of scale (with maximum qualifications) is not available. It refers to the average value for the ratio, and is then different from the ratio of the average maximum salary to the average minimum salary.

Note: Comparability between salaries in the German-speaking Community and other OECD jurisdictions may be limited by methodological differences; Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of maximum salaries of school heads; All salaries for teachers with most prevalent qualifications and school heads with minimum qualifications.

Sources: OECD (2021[3]), *Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators*, https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en, Tables D3.1 and D3.4; Ministry of the German-speaking Community of Belgium.

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Since the OECD review visit took place, principals' salaries in the German-speaking Community have been significantly increased, starting with the 2021/22 school year (Parlament der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, 2021[23]). This included moving all primary school principals to a unified salary scale above the one previously reserved for the largest primary schools as well as adding a bonus based on school size. This raised their maximum annual salary to about EUR 81 100 for principals of primary schools with fewer than 300 students and to around 83 300 for schools with at least 300 students, thus significantly narrowing the gap between the salaries of primary and secondary school principals (MDG, 2022[1]). Likewise, new salary scales were introduced for principals of secondary schools (with fewer and more than 600 students respectively), raising their maximum salaries further above the OECD average (see Table 4.6).

Middle managers and other staff in schools

In secondary schools with at least 550 students, the school leader is supported by a vice principal (*Unterdirektor*). In addition, secondary schools can employ two teachers as part-time middle managers

(those with more than 600 students can employ three). The role of middle managers was created in 2018, replacing the previous role of co-ordinators, which had been introduced in 2014.[21] Middle managers support school leaders and assume different responsibilities related to school development, quality assurance, knowledge transfer and the support of teacher collaboration (Parlament der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, 1998[17]). They receive a monthly bonus of around EUR 435 for their work (MDG, 2022[1]).[22] Middle managers of all secondary schools (GUW and FSU) can participate in regular meetings to engage in professional exchange, which are usually held about twice a year.

School leaders in secondary education can select teachers to serve as subject team leaders (*Fachteamleiter*) in mathematics, German language, French language and natural sciences. In addition, two system-wide subject advisors (*Fachberater*) can be nominated by the minister. These roles are not remunerated but those who hold them benefit from a reduced teaching load and six two-day training modules to prepare them for their roles. Subject team leaders receive a 2-hours teaching load reduction to support the quality of teaching in their subject area by convening regular subject group meetings within their schools and attending inter-school meetings of teachers convened by the subject advisors. Subject advisors' teaching load is reduced by a quarter to allow them to support subject team leaders in their roles, co-ordinate professional learning in schools and co-ordinate the schools' work with the pedagogical advisory services of the AHS (MDG, 2022[1]).

The school leader of the special needs secondary school is supported by five *Fachbereichsleiter* (instead of middle managers), who can assume responsibilities related to, for example, the implementation of core curricula, the acquisition of pedagogical materials, collaboration among staff or the development of school calendars. (For a more detailed description of staff available to support students with special education needs, see Chapter 3).

School leaders can reduce individual teachers' instruction hours to allow them to contribute additional time to school projects or other non-instruction tasks (e.g. related to the use of ICT systems and the *École Numérique* programme). They can do so by requesting additional resources from the ministry to reduce individual teachers' instruction hours (*Sonderaufträge*), provided that they are on open-ended or permanently appointed contracts, or by reallocating teaching hours internally. These measures are temporary though and not associated with a formal change of status, contract modalities or remuneration (MDG, 2022[1]).

In addition, every secondary school in the German-speaking Community has a resource library (*Schulmediothek*) including digital resources and a school librarian responsible for advising on the use of these resources to teach information and media competency (IMK) based on the teachers' guide (*IMK-Leitfaden*) (MDG, 2022[1]). Each secondary school can also hire a finance and property manager (a "selection position") and – starting with the school year 2021/22 – a full-time ICT co-ordinator (*IT-Beauftragte/r*). In 2018, administrative support for primary schools was strengthened through the introduction of a head secretary (*Chefsekretär/in*) role. Primary school providers receive resources for head secretaries based on the total number of primary students in their jurisdiction, which they can then allocate to schools. Those with fewer than 100 primary school receive a quarter position and an additional quarter position for each additional 100 students.[23]

Strengths

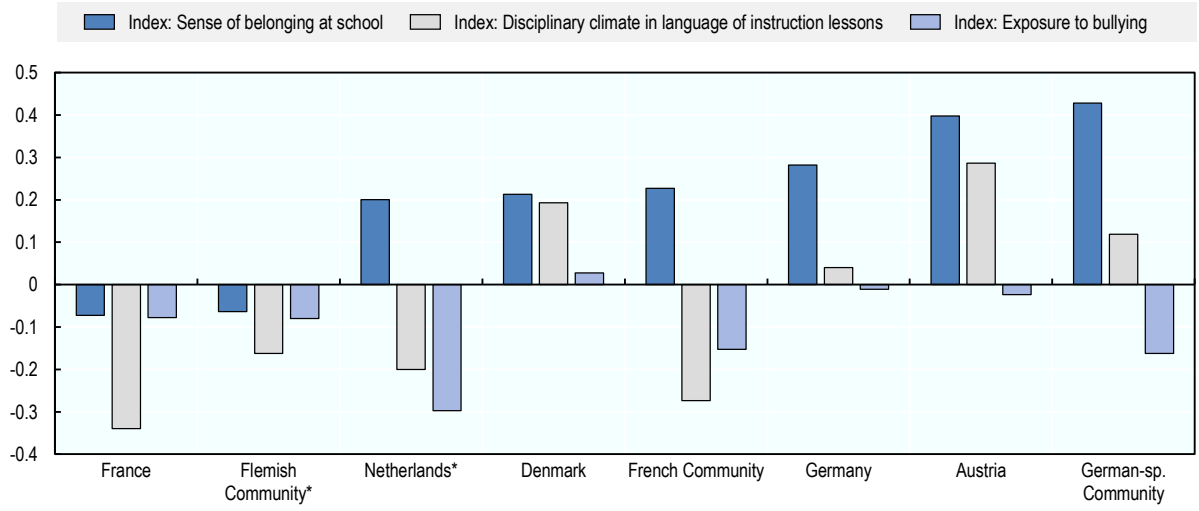
A positive school climate provides a good basis for further strengthening student-teacher interactions and student-centred, high-quality teaching

By international comparison, the school climate in the German-speaking Community appears to be very positive. In PISA 2018, 15-year-old students in the German-speaking Community reported a strong sense of belonging at school (0.43), a lower than average exposure to bullying (-0.16), as well as a good

disciplinary climate (0.12) (OECD, 2019, p. Tables III.B2.9.1 and III.B2.3.1[24]) (see Figure 4.9). This speaks to the fact that schools in the German-speaking Community manage to create a welcoming environment in which students feel well and appreciated.

Figure 4.9. School climate and students' sense of belonging at school, 2018

Based on 15-year-old students' reports



Note: The PISA indexes reported here have an average of 0 and the standard deviation is 1 across OECD countries.
Source: OECD (2019[24]), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*, https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en, Tables III.B2.9.1, III.B1.9.1, III.B2.2.1, III.B1.2.1, III.B2.3.1 and III.B1.3.1.

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Lesson observations conducted by the external evaluation between 2016 and 2020 confirm that the vast majority of schools are successful in creating a learning environment that minimises disruptions and allows teachers to spend their time in the classroom effectively (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 17[25]). This creates good overall conditions to further strengthen teachers' interactions with students and foster a more differentiated and student-centred approach to teaching.

There is a recognition that the improvement of teaching and learning in the German-speaking Community needs to be embedded in a more holistic reform process

There is a widespread recognition among key stakeholders in the German-speaking Community that the policy framework of the teaching and school leadership professions requires reform. In 2015, the Community started a process to modernise and simplify the teacher service code (*Dienstrechtsreform*) as part of the "good personnel for good schools" initiative (*Gutes Personal für gute Schulen*, GPGS) (Minister of Education and Scientific Research, 2015[26]).[24] The reform initiative's scope was wide-ranging, including topics such as teachers' recruitment and career structure, their professional development and working conditions as well as related topics such as the organisation of the school year. Following a stakeholder consultation process and discussions documented in two interim reports (Koordinierungsgruppe GPGS, 2016[27]; Koordinierungsgruppe GPGS, 2016[28]), it was agreed in 2016 that the successful reform of the teacher service code should not be pursued in isolation but would need to be embedded in a coherent vision for the entire school system and pursued in line with the development of the overall vision for the education system (the "*Gesamtvision Bildung*", henceforth *Gesamtvision*).

This is an important strategic choice as it allows to ensure greater coherence across multiple areas of reform and to create synergies between related policy domains, including the reform of the core curricula, school leadership and teaching, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation. It also provides an important opportunity to align the reform of teaching and school leadership with the German-speaking Community's overall vision for its school system – for example, as a system that places students at the centre and ensures that all students can succeed. This can help to create a clearer narrative around the aims the reforms of teaching and teacher policy are intended to pursue, which speaks to teachers, leaders and other stakeholders alike.

There have already been encouraging efforts to make teaching and school leadership more attractive professions

In light of the significant staff shortages and concerns about the deterioration of teachers' well-being, raising the attractiveness of a career in schools is an important policy objective for the German-speaking Community. In recent years, several encouraging efforts have been undertaken and there remains a political commitment to pursue further reforms to make teaching and school leadership more attractive professions.[25]

One of the challenges that has recently been addressed is the job security of beginning teachers. While the system of permanent employment has made the teaching career attractive for incumbents, it creates significant uncertainty among beginning teachers who have to reapply for their positions on an annual basis until they obtain a permanent post. Starting with the 2021/22 school year, this system has been reformed and all new fully-qualified teachers will be offered a new type of temporary open-ended contract, provided that they also fulfil the additional job requirements (*Bezeichnungsbedingungen*), notably the requisite language skills, and that a position is available for the school year.[26] This can be expected to ameliorate the situation somewhat by providing greater job security at the beginning of teachers' careers and by reducing the high administrative burden associated with recurring applications for beginning teachers.

The creation of the middle manager and subject team leader roles has created new career opportunities for teachers in secondary education while strengthening school capacity and reducing the burden on school leaders. This forms part of a wider set of measures aimed at increasing the attractiveness of working in schools. These also included raising school leaders' salaries in the 2021/22 school year, the introduction of head secretaries in primary education, which should lower the administrative burden on primary school leaders, and the introduction of pre-primary assistants (*Kindergartenassistenten*) to support the work of pre-primary teachers.

In 2019/20, the AHS has extended its support groups for beginning teachers to the pre-primary and secondary levels of education. Particularly in a context where support for beginning teachers remains limited at the school-level, these groups can offer an important platform for teachers to learn from one another and collectively address challenges they encounter during their first years on the job. Overall, these initiatives and reforms constitute important steps in the right direction and can be further built upon to strengthen the teacher profession in the German-speaking Community.

School-wide professional learning days can be an effective way to complement self-directed and other forms of professional learning and advance school improvement

Schools in the German-speaking Community can choose three to four days a year to dedicate to the professional learning of all of their teaching and support staff. The release time dedicated to these professional learning days constitutes a significant investment in teachers' professional learning and provides an opportunity for all staff to receive coordinated training or discuss and contribute to school development plans in a collective setting. As illustrated in Box 4.1, jurisdictions in several OECD countries

have introduced system-wide professional learning days, similar to the ones in the German Community's schools, albeit with specific characteristics.

Box 4.1. Professional learning days in selected school systems

Professional learning days for teachers and school leaders that are agreed or mandated at system level have been introduced in several OECD jurisdictions, although approaches vary between systems.

- In **New Zealand**, "Teacher-Only Days" (TODs) or "Call-back days" for professional learning have historically been organised during school holidays. However, the latest collective agreement between the central government and the main teaching unions creates eight additional teacher-only days spread over the three years 2020 to 2022 to support the implementation of changes to national secondary-school examinations (NCEA), as well as wider strengthening of curriculum, progress and achievement practice. The dates of the days are fixed in the collective agreement and materials and guidelines are developed and distributed nationally.
- In **Canada**, the negotiated number of professional development days in Canada range from 20 days per school year in Quebec to three days in Newfoundland and in Saskatchewan. In Quebec, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia, some of these centrally-mandated days can also be used by teachers for self-directed professional learning. The provision of funding for self-directed learning days in other provinces typically depends on individual school board policies that make allowances for one or two individually directed learning days per teacher per year.
- In **Victoria (Australia)**, each teacher is entitled to one "Professional Practice Day" (PPD) per term (four days per year), when they are released from their scheduled duties to focus on the improved delivery of high-quality teaching and learning. These days are in addition to the four existing "pupil-free days" per year, organised as "whole-school" activities in line with guidelines from the state government. Teachers must use their PPDs on professional learning activities that are consistent with state-wide priorities and the School Strategic Plan (SSP) in their school. Supporting resources for teachers and for school leaders in planning PPDs have been developed by the Victorian Department of Education.

Sources: New Zealand Government (2020[29]), *Accord Teacher-Only Days*, Ministry of Education, https://www.education.govt.nz/school/school-terms-and-holiday-dates/accord-teacher-only-days/ (accessed on 15 December 2021); Campbell et al. (2017[30]), *The State of Educators' Professional Learning in Canada,* Learning Forward, Oxford, OH, https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/state-of-educators-professional-learning-in-canada.pdf; Victoria State Government (2020[31]), *Professional practice days*, Victoria State *Government - Education and Training*, https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/ppe-practice-days.aspx (accessed on 15 December 2021); Adapted from OECD (2021[32]), "Teachers' professional learning study: Diagnostic report for Wales", *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 33, https://doi.org/10.1787/caf912c7-en.

The success of school-wide professional learning days depends on what this time is used for and how it complements the self-directed and other forms of professional learning undertaken by school staff. All-staff training can be particularly effective to raise awareness of national policy or collectively engage in school-wide development projects (OECD, 2021, p. 28[32]). The central guidance on topics that should be pursued in the fourth annual school-wide development day is a useful steering tool that can help to align professional development activities pursued at the school level with system-level development needs.

To achieve sustained, cumulative and quality professional learning as a basis for effective teaching, whole-school events need to be complemented with activities that allow teachers – on their own or in groups – to transfer and assimilate new ideas into their classroom practice (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017[33]). This requires time, follow-up and support and – ideally – should involve iterative

combinations of exploration of students' learning needs and experiences, new ideas from research and best practice and professional dialogue rooted in analysing evidence from teachers' experiments with those ideas and approaches in classrooms (Cordingley et al., 2015[34]). To achieve a balance between these complementary forms of professional learning, some systems combine whole-school development days with individual development days that teachers can use more flexibly through the year to pursue their own professional learning. An example of this in Victoria (Australia) is described in Box 4.1.

The Community draws on external capacity and expertise and attracts experienced professionals through alternative pathways into teaching

The German-speaking Community draws on international expertise to overcome some of the inherent limitations imposed by its limited capacity and size. The initial preparation of secondary teachers takes place abroad, mostly in the French Community of Belgium. While this reduces the Community's scope to align teachers' ITE with its own vision for high-quality teaching and can create difficulties for teachers starting to teach in a different language than that of their ITE, it also provides prospective teachers with a specialised education that the German-speaking Community could not offer, due to its limited size. Likewise, the Community complements its continuing professional development offer for teachers and school leaders with courses offered by international providers, mostly from German-speaking countries.

The German-speaking Community also attracts many second-career teachers and, in recent years, has taken additional steps to attract professionals with experience in other sectors, e.g. by recognising previous experience and creating more flexible qualification requirements for primary school leaders. Although lowering qualification standards to attract teachers comes with risks (see further below), it has allowed the Community to mitigate some of the negative impact of teacher shortages. It has also allowed the Community to build a strong technical and vocational sector that is closely connected with industry by bringing in motivated teachers with professional expertise.

Challenges

The implementation of a student-centred curriculum is held back by a lack of ownership in the profession and insufficient emphasis on collaboration within and between schools

The successful implementation of the Community's revised core curricula will depend on their widespread acceptance and socialisation among teachers and school leaders and the ability of schools and their staff to use them effectively to help all students attain their learning goals. Doing so will require actively involving the profession throughout the revision process and strengthening a culture of collaboration and continuing learning within schools (Sinnema and Stoll, 2020[35]). The German-speaking Community's core curricula (*Rahmenpläne*) describe the general and subject-specific competencies that students are expected to develop at key stages of their primary and secondary education. Teachers in each school are expected to work in teams and take these central core curricula as a basis to develop their own school-based curricula (*schulinternes Curriculum*), defining the school's approach to specific subjects (*Fachcurricula*) in line with the school's educational project, as well as the school's approach to teaching interdisciplinary competencies across subjects (*Teilcurricula*). The core curricula, as described to the OECD review team, are thereby intended to play a central role in encouraging teachers to collaboratively tailor the content and pedagogical approaches they use to the needs of their pupils while fostering competency-oriented teaching and – by encouraging teachers to work across subjects – promoting student-centred learning. The revisions of the core curricula are intended to declutter and modernise them and increase their coherence across grades.

These ambitions are laudable, given that teaching in the Community remains insufficiently student-centred and educational outcomes remain below the Community's potential (see below). Yet, the

German-speaking Community is far from realising these aspirations and using the core curricula as a key driver of teaching quality and progress towards the development of school-based curricula has been limited (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 36[25]). School evaluations conducted between 2016 and 2020 suggest that many schools had not yet developed school-based curricula and that the majority of teachers questioned their use. Where school-based curricula were developed, they were usually weakly connected to the schools' own learning projects (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 36[25]). Interviews conducted by the OECD team added to the impression that most teachers felt little ownership over the core curricula (and had little awareness of their revision) and some expressed doubts about the purpose of working with them. Although the core curricula are intended to provide high-level guidance rather than detailed prescriptions, some teachers felt they were overloaded or constraining. Teacher interviews conducted during the first diagnostic phase of the *Gesamtvision* process confirmed that widespread uncertainties remained around their purpose and application (VDI Technologiezentrum, 2020[36]). Likewise, schools are lacking a culture of systematic collaboration and the structures needed to co-ordinate instruction across subject lines and around a holistic conception of students' learning.

Teaching is not sufficiently student-centred and does not give enough weight to interdisciplinary competencies

In interviews with the OECD review team, multiple stakeholders have expressed their concerns that teaching in the German-speaking Community is not sufficiently student-centred and that it fails to accord sufficient weight to interdisciplinary competencies (incl. 21st century skills). A commitment to fostering student-centred and differentiated instruction was conveyed to the OECD review team by different ministerial actors and the preamble of all core curricula states that "Competency-oriented teaching means that the student is at the centre of instruction."[27] Nevertheless, this ambition is not reflected in high-level strategic documents, such as the vision statement (the *Leitbild* "*Bildungsregion DG – Unser Zukunftskapital*") guiding the regional development concepts (MDG, 2009[37]). While the vision statement mentions individualised support for gifted students and those with SEN, it lacks an explicit commitment that could underpin a strategic orientation towards these goals for all students.

While the school inspectorate and development counsellors noted some progress, recent evaluation reports based on lesson observations in 28 primary and 2 secondary schools found that teaching in many schools remains „highly teacher-centric" (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 43[25]). According to evaluation reports, about two thirds of the evaluated schools (42 of 64) also showed deficits in developing a competency-oriented assessment concept linked to their school-based curricula (MDG, 2022[1]). The external evaluation also identified deficits in the area of cognitive activation (less than half of observed lessons adequately promoted self-directed learning) and differentiated teaching (only a third of observed lessons provided students with individual and adaptive support) (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 24[25]).

Evaluation reports and interviews with students corroborated that further improvement is needed to raise the quality of teaching in schools. There was a general perception that instruction was dominated by frontal methods and focused on content knowledge. The 2018 PISA survey also indicates a need to provide students with more regular feedback to help them self-evaluate. 15-year-old students in the German-speaking Community reported below average levels of teacher support (-0.49 s.d.) (OECD, 2019, p. Table III.B2.5.1[24]), and one of the lowest levels of teacher feedback in any OECD country (lower than in the Flemish and French Communities) (OECD, 2019, p. Tables III.B1.6.3 and III.B2.6.3.[24]). This suggests a relatively widespread feeling among Belgian students that their teachers could provide them with more feedback on how to improve their performance, where they can improve and where they see their strengths. Different stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team also suggested that the importance of students' well-being as a condition for their learning success was not yet accorded sufficient attention in teachers' and school leaders' initial and continuing education.

Effectively implementing a competency-oriented curriculum that places learners at the centre will require teachers to work together within and across subject groups to develop their school-based curricula and co-ordinate their teaching practices. Teachers' social competencies and their "ability to cooperate with colleagues in their school team" are among the seven competency pillars defined by the AHS and the OECD review team noted a strong sense of collegiality and willingness among most teachers to help one another out. This was echoed in the reports of the external school evaluation, which saw evidence of systematic cooperation among staff in nearly all schools (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 51[25]). Yet, there is limited systematic and effective collaboration in schools to co-ordinate teaching around a holistic conception of students' learning.

Not all forms of collaboration are equally effective in translating into deeper forms of collegiality or the development of professional practice within and across schools. To make teams effective, it is crucial to support collaborative working cultures with expertise, dedicated time, specific designs, protocols, structures, and processes to guide conversations so that peers can improve their practice (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018[38]). In the German-speaking Community, this kind of support for systematic collaboration focused on collaborative professional development, the improvement of teaching practices and student learning, remains limited. As highlighted in the results of external school evaluations, teachers in many schools also fail to effectively collaborate across subject lines to integrate the competencies described in core curricula into their teaching (MDG, 2022[1]).

Although there are some schools in the German-speaking Community that set aside weekly time for co-ordination and collaboration as well as some schools that emphasise interdisciplinary learning projects bringing together teachers from different subjects, overall, the culture of professional collaboration is weakly developed. The OECD review team saw no evidence, for example, of regular peer observation in schools and there was no shared conception that collaboration is expected of all teachers. This may be rooted in the lack of clear and widely acknowledged teacher standards as well as the fact that school leaders have little leverage to set expectations and motivate teachers to engage in collaborative work. Some teachers resist the notion that their professional obligations extend beyond their instruction hours and their individual work, for example on lesson preparation and marking. Although effective collaboration can make teachers' work more efficient and rewarding, there is a risk that teachers and school leaders perceive a zero-sum trade-off between time spent on collaboration and other obligations – with the former losing out amid a busy school schedule.

Teachers feel little ownership over the core curricula and are not sufficiently involved in their revision

The revision of the core curricula offers an opportunity to provide teachers with a shared aspiration for student learning around which they could be supported to further develop their practice and collaborate as they translate them into school-based curricula that cater to their students' needs. Research suggests that curricula that are less prescriptive and afford more decision-making freedom to schools – such as the German-speaking Community's – may appear less focused and offer less guidance to teachers, but they tend to be more sustainable in the long run, provided that school leaders and teachers understand the principles underlying the curriculum and build capacity to teach accordingly (Nieveen and Kuiper, 2012[39]; OECD, 2020[40]). Participating in ongoing school and curriculum development activities could also provide a good context for continuing professional learning and for fostering teachers' sense of belonging to a recognised profession. For this to be the case, however, the German-speaking Community needs to ensure that the process of developing, revising and implementing the new core curricula is sufficiently inclusive for teachers and other school staff to develop a sense of ownership and commitment to them (see Chapter 2). Maintaining stakeholder engagement throughout all stages of a reform facilitates trust in the process and broader ownership of its vision, which are key for the design, implementation and sustainability of policies in the medium and long term (Viennet and Pont, 2017[41]).

As it stands, professional ownership of the core curricula is low. Few of the teachers interviewed by the OECD review team appeared to see the core curricula as a useful instrument and reference to guide their professional practice and few were aware of their revision. First drafts of the revised core curricula are developed by ministerial staff and external experts without input from the profession before they are submitted for revisions to a working group comprised of only two teachers per school network (MDG, 2022[1]). This can give the impression that the curricula's revision is seen as a technical exercise conducted by experts, rather than building on the involvement of a broad set of stakeholders (which could also involve parents' representatives, teacher unions, school providers, industry representatives, the department of youth and culture etc.). Although there are plans to invite school leaders to comment on the revisions and ask them to solicit feedback from their teachers, the involvement occurs late in the process and it is not clear how the quality of teachers' involvement at the school level will be guaranteed.

The teaching profession lacks a clear vision, opportunities and support to engage in continuing professional growth from the beginning to the end of their careers

Highly effective teachers are key to improving students' learning outcomes, their cognitive as well as social and emotional competencies (Kraft, 2017[42]; Jackson, 2018[43]; Chetty, Friedman and Rockoff, 2014[44]). As discussed above, the German-speaking Community is suffering from a shortage of teachers (see Figure 4.4). According to the ministry, this has resulted in an increase of out-of-field teaching, particularly in the natural sciences at the secondary level, which has been hypothesised to be one factor explaining the decreasing share of top science performers in recent PISA tests.

In order to attract promising candidates to pursue a career in schools and retain its best teachers, the Community needs to undertake further efforts to ensure that the profession is intellectually rewarding and motivating throughout the entire career. Supporting teachers to engage in continuing professional learning, facilitating their collaboration with peers and rewarding their growing expertise with new responsibilities lies at the heart of this challenge. This is particularly vital for a system with a large number of teachers who enter the profession with minimal pedagogical training or completed their initial teacher education outside the Community. To achieve this goal, the German-speaking Community needs to make continuing professional learning a key element in its vision for the teaching profession and strengthen its support for continuing professional growth at all stages of the teacher career.

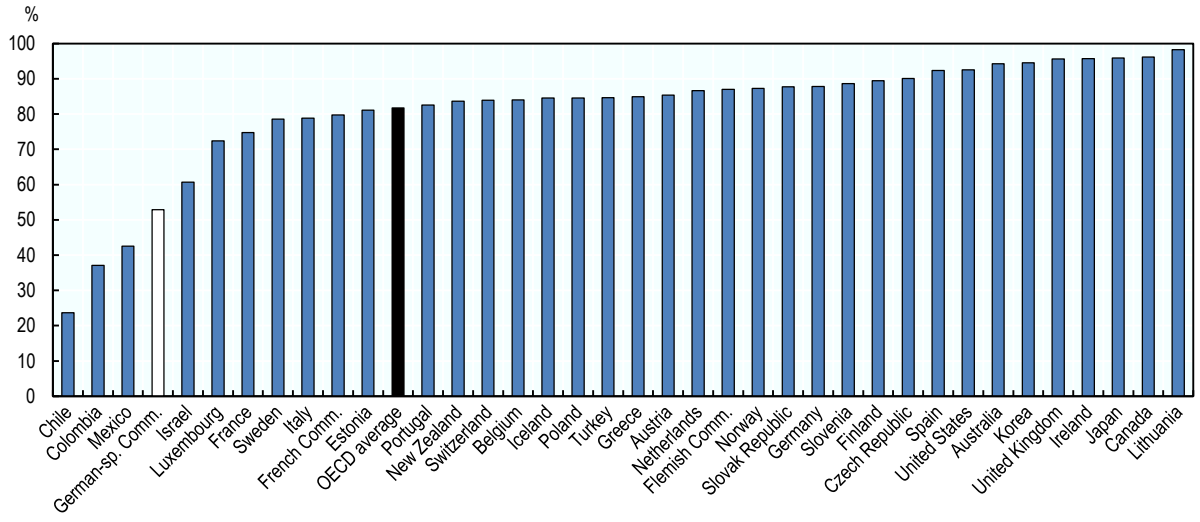
Different standards for teaching have been developed by different actors in the system, covering different elements of the teacher profession (including the AHS' "teacher competency pillars" guiding their primary and pre-primary ITE programmes and the external evaluation's lesson observation sheet). Yet, the OECD review team gained the impression that there is no widespread knowledge or sense of ownership of these standards among the profession, that they were developed in relative independence of one another and that there is no document describing an overarching vision that could serve as an aspirational document guiding the development of teachers at all levels and throughout their careers.

A large number of teachers enter the profession without requisite qualifications and are not sufficiently prepared when beginning their work

Ensuring that teachers are well-prepared for their work and supported during their first years on the job is a significant challenge in the German-speaking Community since a high proportion of staff enter the profession without requisite qualifications and no ITE for secondary teachers is offered in the Community. Although the share of staff entering the teaching profession through alternative pathways is not yet centrally monitored, principals' responses to the PISA questionnaire suggest that they comprise a significant proportion of the staff at the secondary level. In 2018, secondary school leaders reported that just 52.9% of their teaching workforce was fully certified (less than in any OECD jurisdiction outside of Latin America and considerably below the OECD average of 81.8%) (see Figure 4.10). Many of these teachers are presumably employed under the "deviation" system.

Figure 4.10. Percentage of fully certified teachers in secondary education, 2018

Results based on reports of principals of 15-year-old students



Source: OECD (2020[4]), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en, Table V.B2.4.6.

StatLink https://stat.link/hd19bo

Although pre-primary and primary school teachers employed under the deviation system eventually need to obtain a teaching diploma in order to transition to a regular (temporary fixed-term) contract, targeted support is needed to ensure that they rise to the challenges of teaching when they first enter the classroom. At the secondary level, lateral entrants are encouraged to pursue CAP/CAP+ qualifications of limited scope (15-30 ECTS) via in-service training, which – on its own – is unlikely to provide them with all that is needed to be a successful teacher. Even secondary teachers joining the profession through the conventional pathway have completed their initial education abroad – mostly in the French Community. As a consequence, beginning teachers may face difficulties adjusting to teaching in a new language of instruction (or, for teachers of German, teaching the subject as a first rather than a second language) and working with the German-speaking Community's curricula.

The German-speaking Community is not the only OECD education system in which a notable share of teachers join the profession through alternative pathways. In Estonia and Lithuania, 18.5% and 15.3% of lower secondary teachers who had completed their formal teacher education in the last five years prior to TALIS 2018 reported that they had obtained their certification through a fast-track or specialised programme. Other countries where a significant proportion of new teachers completing such a programme include the Flemish Community of Belgium (13.3%), Colombia (13.6%) and England (United Kingdom) (14.1%) (OECD, 2019, pp. 207, Table I.4.12[12]). Nevertheless, the German-speaking Community stands out in international comparison and recent reforms aimed to address staff shortages by attracting more second-career teachers and school leaders are likely to exacerbate the challenges surrounding the successful integration of lateral entrants.

Although rigorous evidence on the effects of alternative pathways in advanced economies is limited (OECD, 2019[5]), critics tend to point to their risk of "de-professionalising" teaching and devaluing of the complex skills of teachers (Zeichner, 2014[45]). What is certain is that lowering entry requirements and attracting more lateral entrants makes it all the more important to support teachers during their first years

on the job and setting them on a path of continuous improvement in order to avoid aggravating their lack of preparedness and lowering the quality of teaching.

Support for beginning teachers can be strengthened

The transition from initial education to primary and secondary teaching is a critical stage in preparing teachers and helping them to be effective in the classroom (Jensen et al., 2012[46]; Paniagua and Sánchez-Martí, 2018[47]). Although much remains to be understood about the types of support that work best, and why, effective induction programmes of sufficient duration and intensity have been shown to significantly improve the retention of beginning teachers and the quality of their teaching (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011[48]). Supporting teachers from the start of their careers is particularly important for a system where many teachers enter the profession with limited pedagogical training. Against this backdrop – despite recent improvements – the level of support provided to beginning teachers in the German-speaking Community is too limited, especially for those entering the profession laterally.

On average across OECD countries participating in TALIS 2018, 22% of beginning lower secondary teachers reported that they participated in formal induction activities during their first employment, while 31% participated in informal induction programmes. 22% of beginning teachers reported having been assigned a mentor as part of a formal arrangement at their school (OECD, 2019, p. Tables I.4.38 and I.4.64[12]). While the AHS offers a two-year induction programme consisting of regular meeting for secondary, primary and pre-primary teachers to learn from one another during their first years on the job, there is no systematic support at the school level. Intensive pedagogical coaching and direct feedback have been shown to have the strongest impact on beginning teachers. This type of support is best provided closer to the teacher, in a format that allows for continuous, hands-on and more contextualised support to help new teachers address the day-to-day challenges they encounter in their schools (OECD, 2019[49]).

Although the OECD review team saw examples of schools providing beginning teachers with mentors, the practice is not widespread or supported through additional personnel resources, which makes it difficult for schools to provide this support systematically in practice. Starting with the 2020/21 school year, accompanying and providing advice to beginning teachers and student teachers has been added to the list of all teachers' formal responsibilities, which signals a clear commitment to improve the support for beginning teachers. However, effective mentorship takes time and preparation. The absence of structures and systematic support (also, for example, in the form of reduced instruction hours) can create challenges, especially in light of the large number of teachers joining as lateral entrants who may face greater difficulties adjusting to the new working environment.

There is also no dedicated systematic support for teachers entering the profession without requisite qualifications, either at the central or the school level. Many of teachers entering secondary school through alternative pathways do not immediately pursue in-service training for the CAP/CAP+ during the year they enter a classroom. To become effective educators, it would therefore seem particularly important to provide them with dedicated support to address the unique challenges they may face.

Teachers' continuing professional learning is weakly linked to individual and school-wide development processes and school-based, collaborative formats are not widely spread

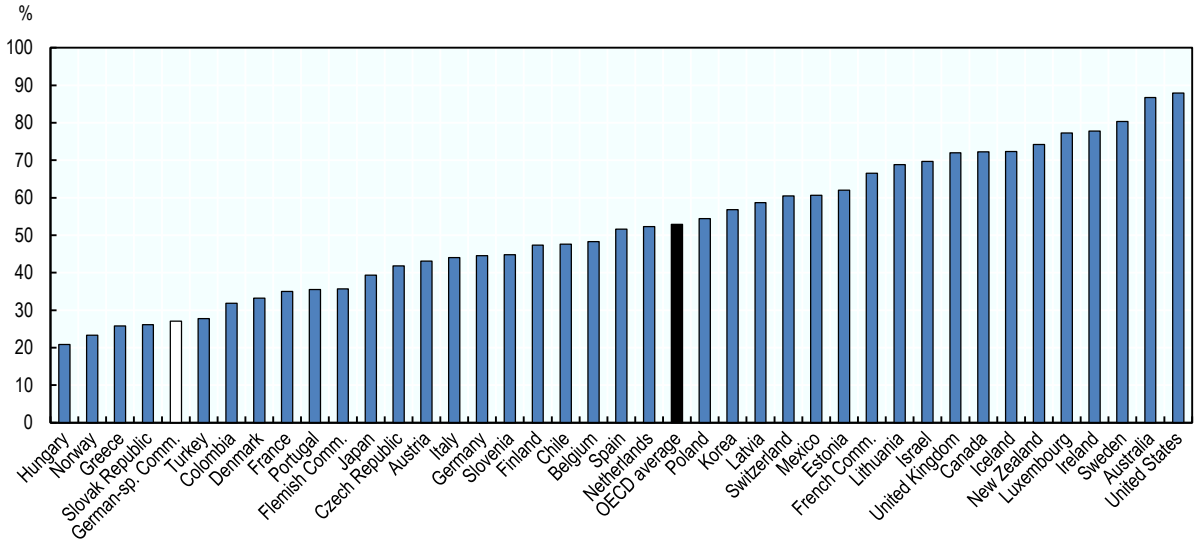
Continuing professional learning (CPL) is vital for teachers to refresh, develop and broaden their knowledge, and to keep up with changing research, tools and practices to respond to students' needs (Kraft and Papay, 2014[50]). The evolving context of learning and teaching in the German-speaking Community will continue to place new demands on teachers, such as their active involvement in the ongoing development of school-based curricula or providing differentiated teaching to increasingly diverse learners. To successfully meet these challenges, teachers will need to continue improving their practice throughout their careers.

Engagement in continuing professional learning remains low

Although the AHS offers a range of professional development courses, in international comparison, teachers' participation in continuing professional learning in the German-speaking Community appears limited. In 2018, principals reported that around 27% of teachers participated in professional development activities over the previous three months, on average (Figure 4.11). This was significantly below the OECD average of 53% and lower than in the Flemish Community (36%), the French Community (67%), as well as countries like Germany (45%), France (35%) or the Netherlands (52%) (OECD, 2020, p. Table V.B2.4.7[4]).

Figure 4.11. Teachers' participation in professional development activities, 2018

Percentage of teachers who attended a programme of professional development in the previous three months, based on principals' reports.



Note: Not all forms of (independent or informal) professional learning are captured by this statistic and the timing of professional learning activities may affect the results in some countries, for example those that concentrate them in a particular time of the year.
Source: OECD (2020[4]), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en, Tables V.B2.4.7 and V.B1.4.7.

StatLink https://stat.link/bipc8l

No system-level information is systematically collected on teachers' participation in learning activities or the quality of the professional learning offer. Nevertheless, ad hoc analyses of the external evaluation confirm that participation in individual professional learning activities outside of the 3-4 compulsory training days remains low. In the school year 2018/19, the external evaluation estimated that 40% of staff members engaged in professional development beyond the school-wide training days,[28] the majority of whom engaged in a single full-day or half-day course (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 63[25]).

There is a lack of clear expectations around teachers' continuing professional learning

A number of factors contribute to teachers' low level of engagement in professional learning. Participation plays a marginal role in the teacher recruitment process, opportunities for career advancement are limited and professional learning is only weakly linked to teachers' appraisal process. In the absence of central requirements, there are few incentives for teachers to engage in professional development beyond the school-wide training days, at least once teachers have obtained a permanent or open-ended fixed-term

contract. Participation in professional learning then largely depends on teachers' individual motivation and the OECD review team formed the impression that there was a lack of clear expectations around teachers' professional learning.

The German-speaking Community lacks a clear vision for the teaching profession that is based on a clear commitment to teachers' continuing professional growth. There are no widely acknowledged standards or competency profiles detailing what is expected of effective teachers at different stages of their careers. Although the seven competency pillars defined by the AHS state that beginning teachers should "enter into a dynamic of ongoing development", they are not widely used beyond initial teacher education and the teachers interviewed by the OECD review team had little awareness of the document and its ongoing revision. (It remains to be seen whether the AHS' newly developed competency profile, which includes an emphasis on self-reflection and professional development, will find applications beyond initial teacher education (AHS, 2021[9])). The review team also formed the impression that the quality criteria developed by the external evaluation to guide lesson observations (*Unterrichtsbeobachtungsbogen*) were not well-known or widely used as a reference document to clarify the skills that teachers are expected to display outside the context of their evaluation.

There is little structural support for teachers' engagement in professional learning

While the school-wide professional learning days are a significant and important investment in teachers' development, there is little structural support for teachers' engagement in sustained, collaborative CPL beyond them. In many successful school systems, time is made available to ensure that professional learning is a normal part of daily work life in schools (Jensen et al., 2016[51]). By contrast, teachers in the German-speaking Community do not have the right to a given number of individual professional learning days or courses per year and there is no time, besides the whole-school training days, that is explicitly set aside in their schedules to engage in learning activities with their peers. School leaders cited their difficulties in freeing up time for teachers to attend external CPL opportunities, following up on them and creating conditions for teachers to team teach or observe each other. This means that even motivated teachers may find it difficult to take part in professional learning, especially if their school suffers from staff shortages.

Another factor limiting teachers' engagement in professional learning, particularly at the secondary level, may be the limited training offer and the limited input that teachers have in shaping it. Although some teachers interviewed by the OECD review team were content with the learning offer, others noted the lack of relevant training to meet their learning needs. Although they may be consulted or provide feedback through their school leaders, active teachers are not usually represented on the professional development commission that decides on the training on offer. This limits opportunities for the profession to provide bottom-up input on the training offer (Boeskens, Nusche and Yurita, 2020[52]).

In addition, the AHS has limited capacity to provide subject-specific training for secondary school teachers and faces difficulties to establish itself as a partner that is perceived as legitimate and competent in supporting professional learning at the secondary level. Though teachers can engage in training offered by external providers outside the AHS, some teachers and school leaders reported difficulties in obtaining funding to take advantage of these opportunities. Although there are options to apply for additional training to be partially reimbursed by the central level, additional funding is difficult to obtain, particularly on shorter notice, and teachers in GUW schools reported that they would expect having to pay themselves for external training on specialised topics (such as dealing with specific special education needs). This constitutes a strong disincentive for teachers' engagement in continuing professional learning, particularly given the limited incentives linked to teacher evaluations, pay rises or career progression.

School-based, collaborative learning formats remain the exception

Teachers' CPL can take a great variety of formats, including both formal and informal activities aimed at helping teachers to update, develop and broaden their skills, knowledge and expertise. Despite growing international consensus that the most effective forms of CPL involve school-based, continuous and collaborative learning (Boeskens, Nusche and Yurita, 2020[52]), CPL in the German-speaking Community remains dominated by short one-off courses, a top-down approach to training contents and linear modes of provision through external trainers. Evaluations frequently find that these forms of professional learning fail to produce meaningful improvements in teaching quality or student outcomes (Garet et al., 2016[53]; Harris and Sass, 2011[54]). Apart from the school-wide training days, there is little continuous school-based professional learning embedded in teachers' everyday work and teachers rarely engage in professional learning with their peers, although the OECD review team has seen some examples of school leaders encouraging their teachers to serve as multipliers, passing on what they had learned to their colleagues.

Professional learning is weakly linked to individual and school-wide development processes

Finally, for teachers' professional learning to be effective, it needs to be responsive to the needs of schools, individual teachers and, ultimately, their students. Linking teachers' professional learning to their regular formative appraisal can be an effective strategy to accomplish this goal, yet CPL in the German-speaking Community is weakly linked to individual and school-wide development processes. There is a recognition that teacher evaluation could be strengthened as a tool for professional growth by placing greater emphasis on the improvement of teaching quality and strengthening its links to individual goal-setting and professional learning opportunities. There had been discussions in the context of the "good personnel for good schools" (GPGS) initiative to reform the evaluation system for beginning teachers and to place greater emphasis on formative appraisal. Although no reforms of the evaluation system had been announced at the time of the OECD review visit, there are plans to offer coaching to school leaders and introduce more systematic mentoring support (including training for mentors) for teachers as a pilot project in 2022 (MDG, 2022[1]; Koordinierungsgruppe GPGS, 2016[28]).

Furthermore, formative appraisal is not mandatory and rarely carried out for teachers on permanent contracts. As a consequence, few schools practice a culture of regular feedback for teachers of all levels of experience that could guide their choice of professional learning activities. Recent reports of the external evaluation confirm this impression, noting that 53% of evaluated schools did not adequately take into account the qualification and learning needs of staff when planning their professional learning and in 39% of schools, the competencies gained through professional learning were not systematically used to promote the school's quality development (Cormann and Goor, 2021, p. 39[25]). As a consequence, teachers' choice of professional learning activities is mainly guided by their personal interests and not always centred on improving teaching or their school's development goals.

Opportunities for professional growth and teachers' career advancement are very limited

The career structure for teachers in the German-speaking Community offers few opportunities for professional growth and promotions that would allow teachers to assume progressive responsibilities in schools. At the secondary level, the introduction of the middle manager role constituted an important step towards strengthening leadership teams and providing teachers with formal leadership responsibilities and increased remuneration. The role of subject team leaders (*Fachteamleiter*), while not remunerated, also constitutes a step in the right direction by recognising the ability of experienced teachers to share their knowledge and co-ordinate teachers' collaboration to raise the quality of teaching in their schools. Beyond this, however, opportunities for career advancement within the classroom remain very limited, especially in pre-primary and primary schools where no selection positions exist.

Although school leaders in the German-speaking Community can create some degree of job differentiation by giving teachers special pedagogical assignments (*Pädagogische Sonderaufträge*) in exchange for reduced teaching hours, these are temporary and not associated with clear competency profiles or a formal career progression leading to further opportunities to assume leadership. This absence of a merit-based career structure providing opportunities for ongoing professional advancement based on teachers' observed performance risks to reduce their long-term motivation, fails to provide incentives for continuing professional growth and misses an opportunity to mobilise their contributions for leadership and school improvement processes. The minimum age of 50 for permanent contracts in most selection and promotion positions may further diminish the attractiveness of leadership roles for younger talent at a time when many schools struggle to fill vacant positions (MDG, 2022[1]).

In addition to the limited opportunities for professional advancement, the salary progression that teachers with a given qualification can expect over the course of their careers is modest (see Figure 4.7) and fixed salary scales provide school principals with no scope to reward teachers performing informal leadership roles financially (MDG, 2022[1]). Paying teachers based on their seniority and highest level of attainment rather than the relevance of their training, the work they perform or the quality of their teaching also provides few incentives for teacher to improve their skills and practice, particularly since evidence suggests that advanced degrees and experience (beyond the first few years) are not consistently linked higher performance in the classroom (Rockoff et al., 2011[55]; Kane, Rockoff and Staiger, 2008[56]).

School leaders are not sufficiently supported to engage in pedagogical leadership and use their autonomy to raise the quality of teaching in their schools

School leaders play a pivotal role in elevating the quality of teaching and learning in the German-speaking Community's schools. School leadership provides a bridge between system-level reforms and internal school improvement processes and will be critical to ensure that the Community's reforms result in improvements in teaching and student learning. The successful exercise of pedagogical leadership demands taking an active role in the school's self-evaluation and improvement efforts, in developing school-based curricula in pursuit of the school's educational project, in observing teachers in the classroom and supporting staff in their continuing professional learning to respond to the evolving needs of their students.

The reform of school leaders' salaries and introduction of new support roles at the primary level have been important steps to make the principals' role more attractive. Nevertheless, the OECD review team identified multiple challenges that need to be addressed for school leaders in the German-speaking Community to exercise their role as effectively as they could. First, school leaders have few opportunities to gain relevant experience prior to assuming their positions and some feel insufficiently prepared for their new roles. Second, school leaders have too little capacity and lack the structural support to pursue their pedagogical leadership role effectively. Third, school leaders lack control over key aspects of their school management, which limits their ability to build and lead successful teams of school professionals. The low level of preparation, training and support, combined with school leaders' limited autonomy in some areas of school management reduce the attractiveness of their role, which makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified and motivated individuals to the school leadership career. The following sections describe these challenges in more detail.

School leadership is not sufficiently distributed and school leaders lack capacity to effectively engage in pedagogical leadership

School leaders can play a critical role in raising school quality, in shaping their school's pedagogical profile by implementing the new core curricula and in creating an environment in which teachers continuously improve their competencies to support student learning. To engage in these tasks effectively, further efforts are needed to build their capacity and strengthen their role as pedagogical leaders. This starts with school

leaders' preparation and continuing development. This will be even more important for the German-speaking Community going forward since dropping the requirement for school leaders to hold a teaching certificate means that lateral entrants into the profession may that have neither the expertise, nor the perceived legitimacy to provide instructional leadership when assuming their roles.

Although the leadership training offered to prospective and serving principals is an important contribution to their professionalisation, interviews conducted as part of the OECD review visit suggest that some school leaders felt insufficiently prepared when assuming their roles and experience little support once they start. For many principals, learning happens mostly on the job. The limited opportunities for teachers to gain prior experience in intermediary leadership roles (see above) may contribute to these difficulties, as does the absence of mentorship structures that would allow experienced school leaders to support new colleagues. (At the time of the OECD review visit, there appeared to be little systematic collaboration among school leaders on topics such as school improvement or development and professional exchange appears to focus more on technical or procedural matters, such as the implementation of new regulations).

Although the creation of middle managers in secondary schools and head secretaries in primary schools can be expected to bring improvements, school leaders, still receive relatively little structural support in the form of an extended leadership team that could alleviate their administrative burden and assume shared responsibility for key aspects of school improvement. At the primary level, school leaders have no personnel supporting them in their leadership responsibilities, which is particularly problematic for leaders of larger primary schools and can contribute to a sense of professional isolation. As a consequence, the OECD's interviews suggested that – despite their expressed desire to engage in pedagogical leadership – school leaders find too little time to support their teachers' development, for example by engaging in regular lesson observation and providing feedback. In secondary schools, middle managers can offer support with these tasks, although the precise articulation of their roles varies from one school to another.

The external evaluation also identified widespread deficits in the area of leadership for school improvement, noting that not all schools operate an effective school improvement cycle, drawing on external and internal evaluations and other forms of evidence to develop and implement school improvement plans (see further below) (MDG, 2022[1]). This suggests a need for further capacity building and targeted support for school leaders.

The teacher recruitment system limits school leaders' ability to build effective teams of educators and the lack of a single service code creates inefficiencies

The teacher recruitment process in schools of the GUW and OSU networks is rigid, inefficient and undermines school leaders' ability to develop talent and create a good match between the staff and the schools' pedagogical project. Although school leaders in the German-speaking Community enjoy significant autonomy over the pedagogical orientation of their schools, the teacher recruitment system leaves them with little control over the hiring process. School leaders in the GUW and OSU networks are required to select teachers using a point-based ranking system (*Klassierung*) based on a limited number of criteria that privilege experience and formal qualifications but do not include interviews, letters of motivation or trial lessons, which could provide more evidence of teachers' performance, motivation and their fit with the schools' profile. This significantly reduces school leaders' ability to exercise professional judgement and autonomy in the selection of teachers. It also makes it difficult to develop and retain talent and create a good match between the teaching staff and the schools' pedagogical project (MDG, 2022[1]).

The decentralised nature of the teacher recruitment process and lack of a unified service code gives rise to inefficiencies, limits teachers' mobility and creates uncertainty for both teachers and schools. Each of the three school networks (and, in the case of the OSU network, each municipality) organise their own teacher recruitment process, applying slightly different selection and eligibility criteria. Teachers on temporary fixed-term contracts have to reapply for their positions each year and many of them apply to more than one provider (at the primary level, they can in theory apply to up to 11 – the GUW network, the

FSU network and 9 municipalities). Due to the lack of central co-ordination, candidates who are offered a position at the end of a lengthy selection process in June frequently turn down their offer for that of another provider at a late stage, making It difficult for providers to find a suitable replacement candidate before the start of the school year (MDG, 2022[1]). The differences in teachers' service codes across providers have created obstacles for synergies, such as the creation of a shared pool of substitute teachers, and reduce teachers' mobility since the 720 days of service required to obtain a permanent position need to be completed in schools of a single provider.

The regulation of teachers' working time fails to recognise the breadth of their responsibilities and reduces principals' ability to making time for continuous improvement

The work that teachers perform outside of the classroom is increasingly recognised as an integral part of their professional role and activities such as lesson preparation, marking, peer collaboration and professional learning demand a substantial amount of teachers' time (Boeskens and Nusche, 2021, p. 50[6]). On average across OECD countries, lower secondary teachers in TALIS 2018 reported working 38.8 hours per week and spending 20.6 hours teaching (in the German-speaking Community, official regulations stipulate 22-24 teaching hours for lower secondary teachers in general or technical subjects). That means, on average across the OECD, almost half of teachers' working time is spent outside the classroom, including tasks, such as lesson planning (6.5 hours), correcting students' work (4.2 hours), working with peers (2.7 hours) and professional development (1.7 hours) (OECD, 2019, pp. 205, Table I.2.27[12]).

The German-speaking Community is among a minority of OECD school systems that regulate teachers' working time solely based on their teaching hours, rather than their overall workload. 29 of 35 OECD countries and economies with available data specify teachers' overall statutory working time (i.e. the hours teachers are expected to work, including the time spent on teaching as well as non-teaching tasks) for at least one level of education. By contrast, 9 OECD systems only specify their teaching hours (across all levels of education in Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico and the Flemish Community of Belgium, as well as for secondary school teachers in the French Community of Belgium and New Zealand, and for uppers secondary school teachers in Austria) (Boeskens and Nusche, 2021[6]).[29]

Failing to recognise and explicitly account for the full breadth of teachers' responsibilities within and outside the classroom can be detrimental to their use of time and the status of their profession. It also diminishes school leaders' capacity to plan their teachers' time based on a holistic conception of their work. Particularly given the lack of clear and shared expectations concerning teachers' responsibilities outside the classroom, the regulation of teachers' time makes it difficult for school leaders in the German-speaking Community to dedicate time in teachers' schedules and motivate them to engage in collaborative work and peer learning in schools (Boeskens and Nusche, 2021[6]; OECD, 2019, p. 162[5]).

There is a need to build further capacity for schools' self-evaluation and to strengthen synergies between the inspectorate, the external evaluation and support services

Raising the quality of education in the German-speaking Community requires schools to engage in a continuous process of improvement and the Community has taken important steps to place a greater emphasis on schools' development. Since 2009, all schools in the German-speaking Community are subject to external evaluations every five years and are required to engage in an internal evaluation once every three years. In 2016, the external evaluation process was reformed with the intention to involve schools more closely in the process (e.g. by allowing schools to select areas for special emphasis during the evaluation) and to place greater emphasis on strengthening schools' capacity to engage in self-evaluation.

Despite the important progress made, the OECD's interviews suggested that the capacity for self-evaluation was not equally developed in all schools. Reports of external school evaluations carried out

between 2016 and 2019 noted that most school leaders were setting goals for the further development of their schools and the quality of teaching but underlined that the majority showed deficits in the management of school improvement processes. According to the evaluations, almost half of schools lacked a structured process for their school improvement cycle. Many failed to make their schools' development goals clear and transparent, to develop multi-year school development plans and to make use of the "school project" as a steering tool for school improvement (the school project should include an assessment concept [*Leistungskonzept*] and a professional learning concept [*Weiterbildungskonzept*]). Significant deficits were also observed in schools' collection and use of relevant data to improve their quality (Cormann and Goor, 2021[25]). It was also noted that school leaders required further support to select evaluation areas that are aligned with their school project (interview partners pointed to a deficit-oriented approach to school evaluations prevailing in many schools), to place teachers' professional learning and the quality of teaching at the centre of their school project and development plans, and to actively build on evaluation results in the process.

The OECD review team formed the impression that few schools embraced the external evaluation process as a tool for school improvement and an integral part of their improvement cycle. Although there have been some efforts to build capacity and awareness of the importance of school development (the AHS initial teacher preparation programmes now includes a module on school development and evaluation), some school leaders and teachers still appear to view the evaluation process through the lens of control. Interview partners suggested that self-evaluation reports were often seen as compliance documents rather than instruments to be actively worked with by all stakeholders in a school to advance its improvement between external evaluation intervals. Although, at the time of the OECD review, nearly all schools had undergone an external evaluation since the reform's process in 2016, and 42% of them had undergone a second evaluation, further efforts may be needed to improve school leaders' familiarity with the process and their ability to make most use of it to advance their schools' development.

To strengthen schools' capacity for self-evaluation, further integrate internal and external evaluation, and improve the follow-up on evaluation results, the Community needs to ensure that its monitoring and evaluation system is effective and coherent. A range of services can support schools in their improvement of teaching and learning, including the school development counselling service (*Schulentwicklungsberatung*), which can help schools in their development and implementation of school improvement projects and the AHS' pedagogical advisory services (*Fachberatungen*), which provide professional support to teachers and school leaders on subject-specific matters and the implementation of core curricula. However, the OECD review team gained the impression that, in many schools, the available services were not used to their full potential. One of the reasons for this may be their limited capacity, which places significant constraints on the ability of the school development counselling service and the pedagogical advisory services to effectively follow up on schools' evaluation results (at the time of the review, for example, there was only one counsellor focusing on school development).

Another reason for the low intensity of evaluation follow-up may be more structural, stemming from the institutional divides between the different support services involved as well as the distribution of responsibilities during the evaluation phase. As it stands, the external evaluation and pedagogical advisory services are under the auspices of the AHS, while the school development counsellors and the inspectorate are under that of the ministry. To effectively support schools in following up on their evaluation results, the pedagogical advisory service and school development counselling service need to collaborate closely. Despite the actors' constructive collaboration, their institutional divide may cause frictions in the flow of information, interrupt the continuity of support and make it harder for schools to understand whom to turn to for support. In interviews conducted during the first diagnostic phase of the *Gesamtvision* process, only 14% of stakeholders felt as though the external evaluation and follow-up support were well-aligned (VDI Technologiezentrum, 2020[36]).

In addition, there are some concerns around the division of evaluation responsibilities between the ministry's school inspectorate and the AHS' external evaluation team. The inspectorate contributes to the

summative appraisal of individual teachers prior to their permanent appointment. However, it also plays a role in school-level evaluations by validating and providing feedback on the school's development goals, ensuring that schools pursue and fulfil the goals they set following the external evaluation and checking if the development goals and competencies stipulated by the subject-specific curricula are taught. Given that school development plans are meant to build on the results of and inform future external evaluations, the rationale for the inspectorate's role in overseeing their development is not clear. This division of responsibilities between the inspectorate and the external evaluation team is unusual, in international comparison (OECD, 2013[57]) and may add to procedural frictions and uncertainty among schools concerning the different actors' roles. Likewise, if schools require further support in creating and implementing their development plans, they need to be referred back to the ministry's school development counselling service or – for subject-specific support – to the AHS' pedagogical advisory service.

Policy options

Bring teachers on board to successfully develop and implement the new core curricula

As discussed in Chapter 2, the core curricula can serve as a powerful tool to carry the German-speaking Community's overall vision for the education system into the classroom, provided that core curricula's revision is aligned with the goals formulated for the education system more widely. The core curricula's adaptation into school-based curricula has the potential to make them more relevant to the local context and thus more engaging for students, but it also requires teachers and school leaders to take responsibility for shaping the curricula. Without a sense of ownership among the profession, no curriculum – regardless of its design and content – will live up to its promise and affect meaningful changes in the classroom. In order to foster this professional ownership and ensure teachers' buy-in during the implementation phase, it is critical that teachers, students and other relevant stakeholders are strongly engaged in the development and revision of curricula, from the beginning (OECD, 2019[58]).

The OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 project has identified teachers' agency and active involvement during the curricula development as a critical factor for their success. While this engagement can take different forms, Ontario (Canada) offers one example of a curriculum design process that involved a wide variety of stakeholders, including school boards, educators, researchers, editors and others. Based on the inputs collected from these stakeholders, content editors prepared and revised drafts of curriculum documents through an iterative process of co-development that allowed for innovative ideas coming out of the consultations to be integrated in real time (OECD, 2020, p. 32[59]). An intensive engagement process can also increase the quality of the curricula, ensuring the relevance of their contents, avoiding overload and striking the right balance between guidance and flexibility (Gouëdard et al., 2020[60]).

Currently, a small group of teachers is invited to make adjustments to curriculum revisions proposed by experts and ministry officials while the rest of the profession may be consulted by their school leaders to provide feedback on complete drafts. Instead, teachers' input should guiding the curricula's revision from the very start and it has to be ensured that teachers' involvement at the school level is of sufficient intensity, involving structured discussions and professional exchange. Only if this involvement is sufficiently broad and meaningful will the German-speaking Community succeed in building teachers' sense of ownership over the core curricula and turn them into aspirational documents that give teachers a shared vision for student learning around which they can be supported to collaborate and professionalise. Achieving teachers' buy-in will also require authorities to demonstrate a credible long-term commitment to the new curricula. They should therefore be designed to be broad and general enough to ensure their long-term relevance and flexible enough to allow schools to adapt them to emerging needs over time.

Several other OECD countries have, in recent years, made successful efforts to involve the teaching profession and various education stakeholders in the revision of their curricula. Wales, for example, has

engaged in a process of "co-construction" that accorded a central place to the teaching profession and fostered its ownership over the revision of the curriculum (OECD, 2020[40]) and Finland has chosen a similarly inclusive approach when constructing its new curriculum between 2010 and 2016. A similar process is currently underway in New Zealand, where intensive support was found to play a critical role in improving the regard that educators have for the curriculum and increased their confidence and ability to give effect to the curriculum in their practice when they were first introduced in 2007 (OECD, 2021[61]) (see Box 4.2).

Box 4.2. Involving teachers and other stakeholders in the development of new curricula

"Co-constructing" the new Curriculum for Wales

In January 2020, the Welsh Government published its new Curriculum for Wales, which was developed based on a process of "co-construction" involving a large variety of stakeholders as "curriculum designers" over the course of several years. The curriculum is built around "four purposes" of education – a shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person to become:

- ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The curriculum is organised around "statements of what matters", which describe what is essential for students to learn in six "Areas of Learning and Experience" covering all school subjects. The type of learning promoted is holistic, interdisciplinary, and integrates knowledge, skills and experience together (i.e. competency-based). The four purposes have been a key driver of the curriculum framework development, providing the designers of the curriculum with a common language and direction to move forward. Experts and government officials worked directly with a network of "Pioneer Schools" and educators to design, test and refine the new curriculum before presenting the framework to the public for feedback and further refinement. The Welsh Government co-ordinated this development over the course of several years. For a full list of stakeholders involved in the curriculum development process, see OECD (2020, pp. 62, Table 3.1[40]).

Collaborative curriculum design in New Zealand

In New Zealand, work is underway in 2021 to refresh the national curriculum so that teachers will be better supported to design relevant and exciting learning experiences and make a positive difference for learners, their families and communities. Ministry officials have signalled their commitment to a collaborative process of co-design with opportunities for educators across the sector, learners, parents and families to be involved at all stages of the refresh. As one of the first elements of the New Zealand Curriculum to be refreshed, the "New Zealand's histories curriculum" has seen a draft designed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. The draft has been the focus of widespread public consultation over several months, including a survey. Schools have also been invited to test the draft content over two school terms and provide feedback on their experience to the Ministry of Education.

Inclusive stakeholder consultation for Finland's new curriculum

In 2012, Finland launched a comprehensive reform of national curricula from pre-primary to upper secondary level to provide greater coherence across the system. The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), approved the new National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCCBE) and for Pre-primary Education at the end of 2014. The reform was the outcome of a "top-down, bottom-up" design and implementation process, which is frequently cited as a positive example of policy

co-creation. Teachers were involved from the very beginning and the participatory development helped foster teachers' commitment to the curriculum and collective sense-making across the system. To develop the curriculum, EDUFI established 34 national working committees and steering groups made up of various stakeholders (representatives from relevant ministries, municipal workers, teachers' unions, industry groups, parents' associations, textbook publishers, ethnic groups etc.), each with a specific focus. Their work was informed by a national survey administered digitally to students aged 13-16, which garnered 60 000 responses. The committees fed into the drafting of a 500-page national curriculum that was put to public consultation through three online commenting cycles receiving over 4 000 comments. EDUFI disseminated further targeted surveys among local education authorities and main stakeholders to capture their feedback (OECD, 2020, p. 20[62]).

The national core curriculum is supplemented by local curricula that allow schools to respond to regional characteristics and needs. Although local approaches varied, most municipalities established working groups responsible for taking the national guidelines and interpreting them within local contexts. They were directed to nearly 180 issues with concrete instructions and obligations on how to connect local educational goals with the national ones. Some municipalities hired curriculum coordinators to oversee the process. The local curricula were implemented in classrooms for grades one to six from the start of the school year 2016/17 and then on a year-by-year basis for grades seven to nine until 2019. In 2017, the ministry also allocated EUR 100 million for school providers to hire over 2 000 tutor-teachers to support school and teachers in implementing the curriculum.

Sources: OECD (2020[40]), *Achieving the New Curriculum for Wales*, Implementing Education Policies, https://doi.org/10.1787/4b483953-en; Welsh Government (2020[63]), *Curriculum for Wales guidance*, http://hwb.gov.wales/storage/b44ad45b-ff78-430a-9423-36feb86aaf7e/curriculum-for-wales-guidance.pdf (accessed on 15 December 2021); New Zealand Ministry of Education (2021[64]), *Refreshing The New Zealand Curriculum*, https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/changes-in-education/curriculum-and-assessment-changes/new-zealand-curriculum/ (accessed on 15 December 2021); Adapted from OECD (2021[61]), "Teachers' professional learning study: Diagnostic report for the Flemish Community of Belgium", *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 31, https://doi.org/10.1787/7a6d6736-en; Lavonen, J. (2020[65]), "Curriculum and Teacher Education Reforms in Finland That Support the Development of Competences for the Twenty-First Century" in Reimers, F., *Audacious Education Purposes. How Governments Transform the Goals of Education Systems*; OECD (2020[62]), "Education Policy Outlook in Finland", *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 14, https://doi.org/10.1787/f162c72b-en.

Efforts should be undertaken to better familiarise teachers with the content, design and structure of the revised core curricula. Teachers (and other stakeholders) will need to be reassured that the core curricula do not aim to prescribe detailed disciplinary learning contents but instead allow for a more holistic approach to students' learning across subject areas and to encourage reflections at the school level, positioning teachers as curriculum designers with freedom to develop their own learning approach. To ensure the curricula's successful implementation, teachers will need opportunities to practice their skills in developing and implementing school-based curricula based on the core curricula and to assess their students' progress against the competency-oriented learning goals. School leaders should play a key role bringing the school community together to learn about the curricula's rationale and in leading the development of a vision for meaningful school-based adaptations of the curricula that will inspire educators (Sinnema and Stoll, 2020[35]). To support the introduction of the new core curricula, the Community should consider dedicating school-wide professional learning days to this topic. Given that the development of school-based curricula requires coordinated preparation, discussions and information sharing among teachers, collaborative school-based learning formats would allow teachers to engage with the core curricula in a hands-on setting with direct applications to their work. At the same time, throughout the implementation process, the evaluation system should consider the extent to which both schools and teachers have embraced the new curriculum and succeeded in adapting it to local contexts.

Strengthen teacher professionalism and support continuing professional growth throughout the teaching career

In order to sustainably address teacher shortages, attract talented individuals to the teaching career and sustain their motivation over time, the German-speaking Community needs to undertake further efforts to ensure that the profession is intellectually rewarding and oriented towards continuing professional growth. Creating conditions in which the teaching profession can thrive and effectively promote student learning is a complex undertaking that requires a careful co-ordination between the different elements that govern teachers' careers, their working conditions and continuing professional growth. An OECD review of evaluation and assessment practices highlighted some of these elements whose alignment the German-speaking Community should pay specific attention to when planning and prioritising reforms affecting the teaching profession in the years to come (OECD, 2013, p. 93[57]):

- alignment between teaching standards and student learning objectives
- alignment between teaching standards and the teacher appraisal process
- systematic linkages between teacher appraisal and professional development
- alignment between teaching standards and teachers' career structure
- articulation between school-based teacher appraisal and external teacher appraisal
- linkages between formative teacher appraisal and high-stakes teacher appraisal
- alignment between skills taught in teacher education and teaching standards assessed in teacher appraisal.

While many of the elements characterising the governance of the teaching profession in advanced education systems are already in place in the German-speaking Community, others are less developed. In particular, the systematic linkages between teacher appraisal and professional development as well as the alignment between standards of high-quality teaching and a formal career structure are insufficiently developed. The system also lacks a clear vision and professional standards for the teaching profession that could serve an integrating role in harmonising these different elements. The following policy options describe how a clearer vision for the teaching profession and teacher standards could promote this integration, galvanise teachers' aspirations, foster a dialogue on the future of the profession and set high expectations for quality teaching. They also propose specific measures that should be considered to strengthen teachers' support during the first years on the job and their continuing professional learning.

Create a shared vision for the teaching profession and standards that can integrate different aspects of their career and professional development

With its overall vision for the education system (*Gesamtvision*), the German-speaking Community has set out to develop a shared vision that can guide reforms across the system in order to raise the quality and equity of education in light of the 21st century's challenges and opportunities (MDG, 2021[66]). It is clear that the teaching profession will play a pivotal role in ensuring that reforms translate into meaningful changes in the classroom and improvements in student learning. To mobilise the profession in achieving this vision for the education system, it will be important to reflect on the types of competencies and attitudes that teachers will need to play their part in fulfilling it. The Community currently lacks a clear, widely shared vision for the teacher profession and the development of the *Gesamtvision* could be a good opportunity to develop one. In the spirit of student-centred education, such a vision should be developed in close connection with the core curricula and guided by the question what and how the Community want students to learn, and what teachers need in order to enable this. It will be particularly important to recognise teaching as an evolving practice that requires continuing professional learning (the German teacher standards, for example include as a core criterion that "teachers understand their profession as a continuous learning task").[30]

Alongside a concise vision statement for the teaching profession, the German-speaking Community should consider developing a set of teacher standards that offer a description of what teachers should know and be able to do (Toledo, Révai and Guerriero, 2017[67]). Clear, well-structured and widely supported teaching standards are a powerful mechanism to define what constitutes good teaching and to align the various elements involved in developing teachers' knowledge and skills (OECD, 2005[68]). As policy tools, such standards could serve as a reference point to inform the curricula for teachers' initial education, to guide school-level teacher evaluations and to support teachers' self-directed professional development (Révai, 2018[69]). In due course, they could also provide the basis for a transparent, merit-based career ladder (see further below).

Existing standards that have been developed by different actors over the years to cover specific aspects of the German-speaking Community's teaching profession could serve as a starting point for developing a unified set of standards. One of them is the newly developed competency profile (*Kompetenzprofil*) and the previous "competency pillars" (*Kompetenzsäulen*) developed by the AHS with a view to inform initial teacher education (AHS, 2021[9]). The quality criteria developed by the external evaluation to guide lesson observations (*Unterrichtsbeobachtungsbogen*) could also inform this process.

Other than is currently the case for the existing documents, a unifying set of standards could be strengthened by providing teachers and the evaluating school leaders with concrete examples of effective teaching practices and by differentiating them according to different levels of experience (e.g. beginning, intermediate and advanced). This would make them more effective tools for structuring formative evaluations and give teachers a clear sense of the steps they can take to advance their careers, especially if these standards are aligned with and direct teachers to a relevant professional development offer and, ultimately, opportunities for professional growth (OECD, 2019[5]).

As discussed in Chapter 2 – with reference to the revision of the core curricula – the key to the successful implementation of teacher standards will be to involve the profession in their design from the very start and to socialise them to ensure that the teaching profession develop ownership over them. The Professional Standards for Teachers developed in Australia provide a model for the development and use of teaching standards (see Box 4.3).

Box 4.3. The development and use of professional teaching standards in Australia

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were developed through a collaborative process led by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and published in 2011. The standards describe what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at different stages of their career. They were developed by synthesising descriptions of teachers' knowledge, practice and professional engagement used by teacher accreditation and registration authorities, employers and professional associations. The process built on the close consultation with the teaching profession, employers and teacher educators, bringing together state governments, professional organisations and teacher unions, and involving almost 6 000 teachers in the standards' validation.

The standards are organised in a framework covering three domains of teaching (professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement) and seven Standards:

1. know students and how they learn
2. know the content and how to teach it
3. plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
6. engage in professional learning
7. engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

Within each Standard, focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These are then separated into Descriptors at four professional career stages: graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead (see

Table 4.7 below for an example). In addition, the AITSL's website (https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards) provides numerous "illustrations of practice" showcasing practical examples of teachers demonstrating the Descriptors in a classroom setting.

The Australian standards are used in teachers' registration process and underpin the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes. They also inform teachers' voluntary certification for advanced career stages (of highly accomplished and lead teachers). In addition, the standards provide a framework can inform the professional development offer and the AITSL offers online resources to help teachers engage in high-quality professional learning that is aligned to both to their individual needs and the goals formulated in the standards. This includes an online Teacher Self-Assessment Tool with which teachers can review their practice against the Standards and receive personalised feedback. The tool may be used informally for self-reflection, identifying strengths and areas for further development, professional learning planning or to set career goals. It can also be used as part of formal processes, such as performance and development goal-setting, certifications and performance reviews.

Sources: AITSL (2011[70]), *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards (accessed on 15 December 2021); Adapted from Révai, N. (2018[69]), "What difference do standards make to educating teachers?: A review with case studies on Australia, Estonia and Singapore", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 174, https://doi.org/10.1787/f1cb24d5-en; OECD (2021[32]), "Teachers' professional learning study: Diagnostic report for Wales", *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 33, https://doi.org/10.1787/caf912c7-en.

Table 4.7. Focus areas and Descriptors for Standard 6 ("Engage in professional learning") of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Focus area	Descriptors by career stage			
	Graduate	Proficient	Highly accomplished	Lead
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.	Use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs.	Analyse the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, support colleagues to identify and achieve personal development goals and pre-service teachers to improve classroom practice.	Use comprehensive knowledge of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan and lead the development of professional learning policies and programs that address the professional learning needs of colleagues and pre-service teachers.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.	Participate in learning to update knowledge and practice, targeted to professional needs and school and/or system priorities.	Plan for professional learning by accessing and critiquing relevant research, engage in high-quality targeted opportunities to improve practice and offer quality placements for pre-service teachers where applicable.	Initiate collaborative relationships to expand professional learning opportunities, engage in research, and provide quality opportunities and placements for pre-service teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.	Contribute to collegial discussions and apply constructive feedback from colleagues to improve professional knowledge and practice.	Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.	Implement professional dialogue within the school or professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.	Undertake professional learning programs designed to address identified student learning needs.	Engage with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities to address student learning needs.	Advocate, participate in and lead strategies to support high-quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning.

Note: The focus areas and Descriptors provided above only cover one of 7 Standards of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. For the full set of descriptors, refer to the source below.
Source: AITSL (2011[70]), *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards (accessed on 15 December 2021).

Strengthen teachers' support during their career entry period

The German-speaking Community should make additional efforts to strengthen the support it provides to teachers at the start of their careers. The reform of teachers' career entry period (*Berufseinstiegsphase*) and the newly introduced open-ended contracts stand to provide them with additional job security during the first years on the job. However, to ensure that teachers are successful in launching their careers and joining the profession, they should be provided with additional support to address common challenges experienced by new teachers, such as bridging the gap between theory and practice, dealing with workload challenges, improving classroom practice and management, and understanding the school culture. This is particularly needed given the high share of teachers entering the profession through alternative pathways or who completed their ITE outside the Community.

Several indicators have raised concerns about a deterioration of teachers' well-being in the Community (including an increase in the frequency and duration of sick leave) (Walther, 2020[13]). Education authorities should take these signs seriously since they may be point to structural problems that can threaten the retention of teachers, the profession's attractiveness and, ultimately, its sustainability (Viac and Fraser, 2020[19]; Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, 2018[71]). The Community should

therefore continue to investigate the underlying causes of the phenomenon and address structural problems that may affect teacher's well-being. While professional support is only one of many factors that can contribute to teachers' well-being at work, the German-speaking Community should consider it as one important lever not only to improve their quality of teaching, but also to reduce their professional strain.

The support groups organised by the AHS are a valuable platform for beginning teachers to exchange and learn from each other's' experience, but they should be complemented by more continuous forms of support at the school level. A number of OECD countries have introduced induction initiatives designed to support teachers in the early years (OECD, 2019[49]; Jenset, Klette and Hammerness, 2017[72]). Since 2019, for example, the Flemish Community of Belgium has provided novice teachers with a right to an induction process to be organised by their schools and Japan has required schools to provide induction programmes since 1988 (see Box 4.4). The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) in Ontario is another example, which requires schools to offer orientation, on-the-job training and mentoring for all new teachers while providing the necessary financial support.[31]

Box 4.4. Induction as a right for new teachers in the Flemish Community of Belgium and Japan

Since September 2019, the **Flemish Community of Belgium** has established a right for novice teachers to receive induction and mandated schools to offer this support to ensure teachers' successful entry into the profession. Each school has the responsibility develop an induction programme for new entrants and can autonomously decide how they design and organise this support. The development of a framework for induction is supported by a Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) project on implementing an effective induction system in Flanders, funded by the European Commission. Schools give time to a member of staff to lead the implementation of their induction programmes and designate mentors. In many cases, the induction period provides novice teachers with opportunities to observe colleagues, to be observed by school leaders and receive feedback, and to team-teach or co-teach.

In **Japan**, the Boards of Education (BOE) of the 47 prefectures have been mandated to provide new teachers with 1-year induction training since 1988. BOEs can decide on the delivery and contents of induction programmes following guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The law requires the assignment of a mentor for every new teacher and central guidelines describe the tasks and responsibilities of: *Guidance teachers*, who are responsible for providing support to the new teachers for the school-based part of the teacher induction programme (generally 2 days per week); *subject specialists*, who are responsible for subject-specific training (generally 1 day per week); and *school principals*, who are the interface between the new and more experienced guidance and subject specialist teachers.

According to the central guidelines, induction programmes in Japan should consist of 300 hours of training, including 120 hours of in-school training, and at least 25 days of off-site training. The in-school training (generally 3 days per week) includes consultation, demonstration and observation sessions with the guidance teacher and subject specialist. Lessons are often preceded or followed by detailed discussions of lesson plans, instructional technique, and successes or challenges. At the end of the induction period, teachers need to pass an evaluation to obtain an unconditional employment status.

Sources: OECD (2021[61]), "Teachers' professional learning study: Diagnostic report for the Flemish Community of Belgium", *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 31, https://doi.org/10.1787/7a6d6736-en; Eurydice (2020[73]), *National Reforms in School Education - Belgium - Flemish Community*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-reforms-school-education-3_en (accessed on 15 December 2021); OECD (2018[74]), *Mandatory 1-year induction for new teachers in Japan*, OECD Initial Teacher Preparation Study.

Induction processes can take a range of forms and may include orientation events for new teachers, sequences of first-year courses, mentoring, coaching and more (OECD, 2019, p. 283[5]). The German-speaking Community currently has no provisions for a sustained period of mentorship that is characteristic of induction practices in many high-performing countries (OECD, 2019[49]), but the OECD review team has seen examples of schools encouraging informal mentorship arrangements. The Community should consider ways to formalise these arrangements and ensure that each beginning teacher is assigned a mentor who can provide them with feedback on their work during their first year on the job. To make this practice sustainable and systematic, schools would need resources, including protected time for mentors to engage in regular support (including lesson observation and feedback or team teaching), a lighter teaching load for beginning teachers, as well as training for prospective mentors. Plans to introduce systematic mentoring support (including training for mentors) as a pilot project in 2022 should be welcomed as an important step in this direction. The results of the pilot should be carefully evaluated to determine the intervention's effectiveness and consider adjustments before rolling it out more widely.

Support teachers' engagement in continuing professional learning and link it more strongly to their regular appraisal and career progression

Teachers' engagement in effective forms of continuing professional learning is critical to raise the quality of teaching in the German-speaking Community and empower teachers to take an active role in the development of school-based curricula and implementing a student-centred approach to learning. As it stands, teachers' level of engagement in professional learning (beyond the mandatory school-wide training days) is limited. Embedding CPL as a core part of their practice will require a change in teachers' mind-sets. Including teacher's engagement in continuing professional learning as a dimension of their professional standards (see above) would help to clarify that teachers are expected to improve their practice throughout their careers. To increase teachers' sense of ownership over the training offer and to ensure that it matches teachers' needs, the Community should also consider how to involve them more actively in the development of the professional learning catalogue (e.g. by ensuring the representation of active teachers in the professional development commission).

Teachers' professional learning should also be linked more strongly to their individual development needs and those of the system, their schools and their students. To address this challenge, the Community should strengthen the role of formative appraisal in guiding teachers' professional learning. Teachers at all levels of experience should receive regular feedback on their work and school leaders should use these formative appraisals as an opportunity to discuss teachers' goals and learning needs and create individual professional learning plans to address them. This would strengthen teachers' accountability while supporting them in their learning choices. There is also scope to review more systematically how the school-wide training days are used and how activities undertaken during this time can be linked effectively to schools' improvement plans.

The appraisal of teachers' learning needs should focus on improving the quality of teaching, but also on building teachers' capacity to assume leadership in the school improvement process. The skills that teachers acquire through their successful engagement in professional learning should be recognised and rewarded. As discussed further below, connecting professional learning to opportunities for career advancement could be an effective means to incentivise teachers' continuing improvement and ensure that highly effective teachers assume responsibilities in the school community that are concomitant with their skills. Teaching standards with differentiated competency levels could guide teachers on this path of improvement. At the same time, teachers should be provided with the necessary supports to facilitate their engagement in more collaborative forms of professional learning (see below). At the time of the review, there was no central guidance on the characteristics of effective professional learning, but a set of quality criteria (*Gütekriterien*) currently in preparation by the professional development commission could provide further guidance for school leaders and teachers to decide on suitable learning activities.

Supporting teachers' engagement in continuing professional learning would not only require the right incentives, but also the removal of barriers that may prevent a more widespread participation in continuing professional learning. In addition to setting clear expectations concerning the professional learning that teachers need to engage in to improve their practice and advance their careers, teachers should be provided with the time and resources to pursue a corresponding amount of individual professional development. Many OECD countries set aside such time for their teachers. In Singapore, for example, every teacher is given 100 hours per year to invest in training, with guidance for their development decisions and access to teacher networks (OECD, 2019, p. 155[12]). As a result, the pursuit of continuing learning has become a regular part of teachers' day-to-day work and is engrained in schools' shared vision of the profession. Even though Singapore does not require teachers to engage in CPL, it is one of the countries with the highest levels of participation in training.

Besides a lack of time, prohibitive costs can be another important barrier for teachers' engagement in learning activities. Countries like Italy have therefore provided teachers with a training allowance that permits teachers to exercise autonomy and assume leadership over their professional learning journey (see Box 4.5). Schools in the German-speaking Community can use their grant for pedagogical purposes to support individual teachers' participation in training offered third party providers for topics not covered by the AHS. However, since there is little central guidance on the use of these resources, the Community should continue monitoring whether a difficulty to obtain funding in a reasonably timely manner constitutes a barrier for some teachers' engagement in the training they need.

Box 4.5. Combining mandatory professional development with a training allowance in Italy

The Italian government is focusing on school-level autonomy as a key lever for educational improvement. Reflecting this orientation, in-service professional development provisions at the school level and chosen by teachers are a key feature of the Good School reform (*La Buona Scuola*), introduced in 2015. The reform has made in-service training mandatory, permanent and structural. These provisions were designed to respond to the low participation of Italian teachers in professional development activities. First, the Italian government made a large financial investment (EUR 1.5 billion) exclusively for training in areas of system skills (school autonomy, evaluation and innovative teaching) and 21st century skills (such as digital skills, schoolwork schemes) and skills for inclusive education. Second, the programme stands out because of its tailored approach and scope of choice for teachers to participate in professional development according to their needs. This is done by providing teachers a sum of EUR 500 per year on their "Teachers Card" to participate in training activities, purchase resources (books, conference tickets, etc.) and offering matching processes to align training offers with training demands using a digital platform.

Source: OECD (2019[12]), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en.

Create the conditions for greater collaboration within and between schools in order to implement a student-centred approach to teaching and learning

Foster cooperation and exchange among teachers, within and between schools

For the German-speaking Community to implement its competency-oriented core curricula successfully it will be necessary to foster greater cooperation and exchange among teachers. The development of school-internal curricula and the integration of inter-disciplinary competencies will only be effective if it is

understood as a collective endeavour that all teachers in a school engage in, across subject lines. Despite mounting evidence on its effectiveness, teachers in the German-speaking Community engage in little continuous, collaborative and school-based professional learning embedded in their everyday work. Yet, the experience in OECD countries shows that the implementation of curricula is greatly facilitated if schools operate as learning organisations in which the importance of individual, collaborative and collective learning is recognised at all levels (Sinnema and Stoll, 2020[35]). The development of the German-speaking Community's overall vision could be good opportunity to anchor the system-wide commitment to student-centred education in a high-level strategic document and explain that increased collaboration across subject lines and types of school staff is needed to do justice to a more holistic view of the learner and students' well-being.

The Community should encourage schools and teachers to make professional learning a collaborative effort. Schools should promote peer learning among teachers, not only by encouraging them to act as multipliers passing on their learning from professional development courses, but also through a greater use of peer observation (e.g. lesson study) or enquiry projects (see Box 4.1 in (OECD, 2021[32])). If done well, with dedicated and shared time in teachers' schedules, teacher leadership, protocols and attention to culture, teachers' collaboration can increase their job satisfaction and students' growth (Kraft and Papay, 2014[75]; Johnson, Kraft and Papay, 2012[76]). To be effective, collaboration needs to be focused on improving the quality of teaching and requires specific designs, protocols, structures, and processes to guide teachers' conversations and actions (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018[38]). Central authorities can support these efforts, not only by strengthening school leaders' competencies to support collaboration and by making time in teachers' schedules, but also by offering technical support and developing protocols that schools can draw on (see Box 4.8 in (OECD, 2019[5]) for an example from Ontario [Canada]).

Project-based teaching and learning across subjects can help to bring the Community's revised core curricula "to life", encourage teacher collaboration and strengthen a student-centred approach to teaching. The OECD review team learned about several instances where schools implemented competency-oriented learning projects across subjects, including a two-year project on civic education developed by a secondary school in collaboration with the AHS' *Institut für Demokratiepädagogik* (IDP, 2020[77]). The Community should think about ways in which the lessons from such encouraging projects can be systematically preserved, shared and taken up by other schools. The regular meetings of school leaders could be an important platform to facilitate this transfer of knowledge across schools, as could a strengthened school development counselling or pedagogical advisory service.

Fostering a culture of collaboration within and across schools and creating awareness of its benefits will take time and needs to be supported by pedagogical leadership and resources (Stoll et al., 2006[78]; OECD, 2019[5]). Some education systems have set aside staff resources specifically to support teachers' collaboration, team teaching or peer observation (see Box 4.6). Freeing up additional teaching hours for teacher collaboration can be difficult in a context of acute teacher shortages, but school leaders could seek to create dedicated time for collaboration and collaborative learning by co-ordinating teachers' non-teaching hours. Their ability to do so can be facilitated or constrained by the way teachers' working time is regulated, which is discussed in the following section. It should also be considered to dedicate one of the school-wide learning days to promoting student learning in key competencies through inter-disciplinary instruction and teachers' collaboration across subjects. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Community should also consider the trade-off between keeping classes small and giving teachers more time to work and learn together.

Box 4.6. Support for collaborative learning in schools

Time for professional collaboration in Shanghai

In Shanghai, the school structure allows for teachers to collaborate on a daily basis as a part of their continuous professional learning. The system allows for this to happen by limiting the teaching time to 12 hours per week to leave room for collaborative time. During this time, teachers are involved in observing other teachers' lessons or taking up mentorship duties for new or struggling teachers. A key part of Shanghai's collaborative professional development is the sharing of best practices among teachers.

Structured team teaching in new Secondary Schools in Austria

Austria has introduced several opportunities for its teachers to collaborate as a part of the New Secondary School Reform (*Neue Mittelschule*, NMS). Several structures in the NMS allow for teachers to lead and work with their colleagues, through the creation of new roles, such as learning designers, subject co-ordinators and school development teams. The NMS also includes additional teaching resources for teachers to work jointly as teams in a single classroom. The team teaching approach was first piloted in the Austrian context in only a few subjects and later expanded to all the subjects of the lower secondary curriculum. This approach had implications on increasing the number of staff for each subject area in Austrian schools, while keeping the overall number of teaching hours the same. It allowed teachers to learn from each other by working in the same class and also to provide more student-centred teaching, especially additional support for low-achieving students. Some of this team teaching also allows teachers from different schools and varying education levels to come together and share best practices. The foundation of these structures was laid in 2008 with the introduction of the NMS Reform, but it applies to all teachers from the academic year 2019-20 onwards.

Sources: Adapted from OECD (2020[7]), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals*, TALIS, https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en; Nusche, D. et al. (2016[22]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Austria 2016*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264256729-en.

Effective collaboration in schools requires not only time, but also guidance and support. Assigning subject team leaders or middle managers to focus on teacher collaboration and whole-of-school projects can be an effective strategy for secondary schools with sufficiently developed leadership structures. (Plans to finance an additional middle manager for secondary schools, starting with the 2022/23 school year, and explicitly giving them the responsibility to co-ordinate the integration of inter-disciplinary competencies could be an important step in this direction). The Community should consider creating similar opportunities for teacher leadership at the primary level and enable them to assign these responsibilities to motivated teachers in exchange for reduced teaching hours (more on this below).

In addition, the Community should consider whether the capacity of existing sources of external support, such as the pedagogical advisory services, could be strengthened to enable them to work with groups of teachers and school leaders, to build professional learning communities, to spread promising practices and to ensure that work in the learning communities is informed by evidence. Several OECD systems also use online platforms to make research evidence on effective teaching and learning available in accessible and applicable formats in order to support teachers' professional learning and collaboration.[32]

Reconceptualise teachers' working time to include both teaching and non-teaching time

The German-speaking Community should consider the benefits of employing teachers under a workload system that defines their overall working time. Conceiving of teachers' working time exclusively in terms of

their teaching hours fails to provide formal recognition for the time that teachers spend on important tasks outside the classroom. At the same time, it can diminish school leaders' capacity to plan their teachers' time based on a holistic conception of their work. The shortcomings of the current approach to teachers' working had previously been identified in discussions during the GPGS project (Koordinierungsgruppe GPGS, 2016[28]). In the current context, such a reform would have the potential to address multiple challenges identified by the OECD review team and support related reforms proposed by this review:

- First, teachers need dedicated time to engage in collaborative work with their peers in order to learn with and from each other and to successfully implement the core curricula at the school level. Revising teachers' contracts to be based on their overall workload could provide school leaders with more scope to set aside protected time for teachers to work on shared priorities in their school.
- Second, a workload-based conception of teachers' working time could provide a basis for granting schools more flexibility to create diversity in teachers' roles. For example, more of individual teachers' time might be allocated to instruction or non-instruction activities, depending on the functions they perform at their school. This would enable schools to recognise teachers' initiative and strengthen distributed forms of leadership (more on this below).
- Third, explicitly recognising teachers' overall workload (e.g. 38 hours a week for full-time teachers) and the time they spend on non-teaching activities would help to clarify and more clearly communicate expectations around teachers' tasks beyond the classroom. This could complement the qualitative descriptions of highly effective teachers' work included in the teaching standards, discussed above, by recognising the corresponding time commitment that this work entails.

In recognition of these advantages, several OECD countries have reformed their regulation of teachers' working time in recent years. In 2013, for example, Estonia, reformed its employment system to specify teachers' overall working hours (see Box 4.7). There is significant diversity in countries' approaches to implementing such a workload-based approach to teachers' time, how they balance teachers' teaching and non-teaching time and whether they specify how much time teachers should spend on the school premises (Boeskens and Nusche, 2021[6]). Taking these decisions need not be a matter of central regulations alone. Some OECD systems, for example, have taken a decentralised approach to teaching load adjustments, giving local actors more flexibility in managing teachers' time based on their own criteria and assessments of teachers' tasks, competency or experience. In Denmark, for example, the implementation of Act no. 409 (2013) gave school leaders greater discretion to adjust the teaching hours and preparation time for individual teachers, e.g. to re-distribute the teaching load between experienced and inexperienced teachers or across subjects (Nusche et al., 2016, pp. 52, 88[79]). The implementation of Denmark's new framework demonstrated, however, that local actors need time to learn how to use this flexibility effectively and support teachers in changing their practices in ways that takes full advantage of the new arrangements (Bjørnholt et al., 2015[80]).

Box 4.7. Implementing a workload-based regulation of teachers' working time in Estonia

In 2013, teacher employment in Estonia was reformed based on the Working Time of Educational Staff Act. The reform marked a shift from a teaching load system – in which staff contracts only specified teaching hours – to a workload-based system that specifies the total number of working hours and defines the full range of tasks that teachers are expected to perform. The reform defined teachers' total annual workload to be 1 610 hours in pre-primary education and 1 540 hours in primary to upper secondary education (corresponding to 35 weekly hours). These overall working hours are below the OECD average, as were the teaching hours specified by the old system. The total annual working hours specified under the new system exceed the previously defined teaching hours by 290 hours in pre-primary education, 921 in primary and lower secondary education and 972 in upper secondary education. Given that the new regulations no longer specify teaching hours, the precise distribution of teachers' overall workload across teaching and non-teaching tasks is at the discretion of the school management. In some cases, school leaders' decisions on the use of teachers' time are subject to political agreements at the municipal level or with a school's teacher council.

Sources: Santiago et al. (2016[81]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Estonia 2016*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251731-en. Reproduced from OECD (2019[5]), *Working and Learning Together: Rethinking Human Resource Policies for Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/b7aaf050-en.

Expand elements of distributed leadership to strengthen school leaders' focus on pedagogical leadership and involve all staff in student-centred school improvement

In order to successfully implement student-centred curricula and develop schools into learning organisations, the German-speaking Community will need to strengthen its schools' capacity for pedagogical leadership. Creating more opportunities for teachers – not only in secondary education – to assume greater responsibilities associated with formal career steps would facilitate distributed leadership by enabling principals to delegate certain aspects of their work to experienced teachers and focus on their core responsibilities. Creating deputy or middle manager roles in primary schools above a certain size and adding additional career steps in secondary schools would strengthen school leaders' ability to capitalise on teachers' skills, exercise autonomy in their differentiation of roles within the school while at the same time creating a pipeline for future school leaders.

The career structure could build on existing roles, such as those of middle managers and subject team leaders, but further formalise teachers' career progression. Career stages should be linked to competency levels (e.g. corresponding to a differentiated set of teacher standards and including a dimension for leadership competency). Teachers' advancement should be associated with salary progression and based on merit, rather than their seniority. The Community should consider removing the minimum age for permanent contracts in selection and promotion positions for the same reason. A renewed process for career advancement could be based on a voluntary system of registration statuses that teachers need to obtain to apply for a promotion and periodically renew.

The decision on teachers' career progression or certification for professional advancement should have an external component and a greater degree of formality than teachers' regular formative appraisal, in order to ensure fairness across schools. While the process can be mostly school-based and led by the school leader (or another member of the management group), the inspectorate or an accredited external evaluator with expertise in the same area as the appraised teacher should be involved (OECD, 2013, p. 334[57]). In systems with an established professional organisation of teachers, like Estonia (see Box 4.8), such organisations can play an important role in the process, which can increase teachers' buy-in while also strengthening the profession's self-governance. Teachers' appraisal could thereby be turned into a regular

opportunity for professional growth and provide additional incentives for teachers to build their expertise by engaging in continuing professional learning (Boeskens, Nusche and Yurita, 2020[52]). Better prospects for career progression could also improve teachers' long-term motivation and raise the profession's attractiveness for top-performing students considering initial teacher education.

Box 4.8 provides an example from Estonia where a multi-stage career structure was introduced at both the primary and secondary levels. Although the career structure – at the time of the OECD review – was still lacking a link to increased salary levels, it used a competency-based process of certification that directly assessed whether a teacher had acquired the skills needed to perform at the different stages of the career, using teacher professional standards as a reference (Santiago et al., 2016, p. 25[81]). Other OECD countries have developed teacher career structures that allow not only for vertical progression, but also for horizontal differentiation. Singapore's career structure, for example, offers three parallel streams (teaching track, a leadership track, and a senior specialist track), each comprising at least four stages of career advancement (Crehan, 2016[82]; OECD, 2019[5]).

Box 4.8. Introducing a multi-stage structure of the teaching career in Estonia

In 2013, Estonia introduced a vertical career structure alongside a reformed system of teacher professional qualifications. Its main aim is to serve as a reference for teachers' competence development and it comprises four distinct stages, reflecting different levels of professional skills and experience. Unlike many other multi-stage career structures, the stages are not formally linked to salaries and access to higher stages is voluntary. The career stage Level 7.1 is awarded indefinitely, while Levels 7.2 and 8 are awarded for a five-year period after which the teacher must reapply.

- Teacher (Level 7.1): Awarded upon entrance into the teaching profession, following the completion of an initial teacher education programme (at Master's degree level) or following the recognition of professional qualifications for this level by the teacher professional body.
- Senior teacher (Level 7.2): Awarded to teachers who, in addition to their regular teaching activities, support the development of the school and of other teachers and are involved in methodological work at the school level.
- Master teacher (Level 8): Awarded to teachers who, in addition to their regular teaching activities, participate in development and creative activities in and outside their school and closely co-operate with a higher education institution.

The Estonian Qualifications Authority has developed professional standards that define the competences associated with each stage of the career structure. A teacher professional organisation (the Estonian Association of Teachers) is responsible for the certification process that determines teachers' advancement across career stages. Twice a year, teachers can apply for a new certification. A three-member committee oversees the two-stage application process, which involves an evaluation of the candidate's application materials and an interview.

Sources: Santiago et al. (2016[81]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Estonia 2016*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251731-en; Adapted from OECD (2019[5]), *Working and Learning Together: Rethinking Human Resource Policies for Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/b7aaf050-en.

Support for school leaders should not only come from a stronger school leadership team, but also horizontally from within the school leader community as well as through external support. The German-speaking Community should consider further strengthening the opportunities for in-service school leaders to receive coaching or developing mentorship programmes between experienced and new school leaders, particularly at the primary level. Plans to offer coaching to school leaders though a pilot project starting in 2022 would be an important step in the right direction and should be carefully evaluated to

determine the intervention's effectiveness. In addition to providing coaching to their peers, school leaders should also play an active role in coaching new members of their expanded leadership team, such as middle managers or subject team leaders.

The strengthening of school leadership teams could also be an opportunity to address the under-representation of female teachers in leadership positions. Countries like Austria, for example, have undertaken efforts to address the under-representation of women across the public service, e.g. by selecting women among equally skilled candidates in the departments concerned and by giving them priority in education and training that enables them to take up roles involving higher functions and advanced skills (see Box I.3.2 in (OECD, 2019[12])).

Reform the teacher recruitment process and service codes to enable school leaders to build successful teams, facilitate teacher mobility and create synergies across networks

The German-speaking Community should seek to harmonise teachers' service codes across school networks and modernise the recruitment process in GUW and OSU schools to enable school leaders to build effective teams of teachers. The Community emphasises the autonomy of school networks and school leaders to develop their own pedagogical profiles and approaches. To turn this pedagogical autonomy into practice, it is important for school leaders to create a good match between their schools' educational project and their teachers to ensure that they can contribute to their schools' vision and continuing improvement. The Community should therefore advance plans, formulated through the GPGS project (Koordinierungsgruppe GPGS, 2016[28]), to allow school leaders, or school providers, to consider additional information to gauge the performance and motivation of applicants as well as their fit with the school. This could involve conducting interviews, considering motivation statements or assigning greater weight to evaluation results. To further mitigate disruptions caused by the points-based hiring system, the Community should also consider giving school leaders the possibility to request retaining teachers on justified grounds, even where the points-based system might assign another teacher priority.

Giving schools a greater say in the recruitment of teachers can carry certain risks, including inequities that arise if advantaged schools are better able to attract the most qualified teachers. More autonomy in the recruitment process also requires sufficient leadership, managerial and administrative capacity (OECD, 2019, p. 251[5]). Some systems therefore combine elements of a centralised recruitment system (e.g. centralised vacancy databases or application processing) to ensure administrative efficiency and equity, with a higher degree of school autonomy, for example by allowing schools to express their preferences over a given number of centrally-ranked candidates or to recruit a certain share of their teaching force locally. Such mixed systems are used by some German federal states that allow schools to exercise greater autonomy in the selection of teachers for a limited number of position while recruiting the remaining teachers through a centralised process (see Box 4.9).

Box 4.9. School leaders' role in teacher recruitment in German federal states

Some federal states in Germany, including Hesse and Baden-Württemberg, operate a mixed teacher recruitment system, which allows schools to select teachers for a certain share of open positions each year by advertising them through a database managed by the state government. These individual vacancy submissions are often related to particularly urgent staff needs or special profiles sought by the school. The remaining positions are assigned by bureaucratic agencies above the school level. Applicants for teaching positions can choose to apply directly for an open position at a specific school or to submit an application to the general pool of applicants. This allow schools to have a say in their teacher recruitment while most of the logistical and administrative demands of the process are dealt with at a higher level of administration.

Sources: OECD (2019[5]), *Working and Learning Together: Rethinking Human Resource Policies for Schools*, https://doi.org/10.1787/b7aaf050-en; Nusche, D. et al. (2016[22]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Austria 2016*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264256729-en.

Another source of inefficiency in the German-speaking Community's teacher recruitment system stems from its lack of a unified teacher service code – a point that has been underlined by stakeholders and authorities during the GPGS reform process (Koordinierungsgruppe GPGS, 2016[28]). Making the service code and the selection and eligibility criteria for teaching positions consistent across providers would increase transparency and provide the basis for further synergies in the recruitment process across the three networks. A unified service code could, for example, facilitate the introduction of a common pool of substitute teachers serving schools of all three networks. To improve teachers' mobility in the first years of their careers, the Community should also consider recognising teachers' prior service across school networks, rather than requiring the 720 days of service needed for a permanent position to be accrued in schools of a single provider.

The German-speaking Community has already made some progress to reduce the administrative burden caused by the teacher recruitment process. In April 2021, the application process for GUW schools has, for the first time, been organised through a new digital recruitment platform, which allows candidates to create profiles and submit materials that they can use again when re-applying in the following years. The application platform should be evaluated based on teachers' experience and, if it is found to have rendered the application process more efficient, it should be explored whether the platform can be expanded to serve the recruitment processes in the OSU and FSU networks as well (MDG, 2022[1]). Greater central co-ordination could also help to reduce frictions in the recruitment process, such as the difficulty to find replacements for teachers' taking late decisions on their offers.

A reform of the teacher recruitment system and service codes could also support efforts to strengthen the central monitoring of key indicators that may affect the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The ministry is currently undertaking an important prognostic exercise to forecast the demand for teachers until 2040. A more unified service code would provide a better basis for centrally monitoring staff shortages, unfilled vacancies or the number of teachers employed without requisite qualifications via the deviation system. Keeping records more systematically could also facilitate monitoring the implementation of new staff policies, such as the open-ended contract during the career entry phase. (For a more detailed discussion of the use of data in the system, see Chapter 2).

Strengthen schools' capacity for self-evaluation and development planning, reconsider the division of responsibilities for external evaluation and create synergies in the follow-up support

Since 2009, the German-speaking Community has made significant progress to foster school improvement by introducing regular internal and external school evaluations. Nevertheless, schools' capacity to engage in self-evaluation and continuous work on their development remains uneven. To address this challenge, the Community should seek to strengthen the capacity of the different external support services to assist schools in following up on evaluation results. It should also work to reduce institutional divisions between the support services that make it harder for them to provide schools with easily accessible help and the seamless assistance that they need.

The government's current working plan for 2019-2024 proposes investigating the feasibility of creating an institute for school development (*Institut für Schulentwicklung in Ostbelgien*, ISEO) to serve as an umbrella for services aimed at supporting schools' development (VDI Technologiezentrum, 2020[36]). The plan suggests that the institute could include the school development counselling service, the external evaluation, the pedagogical advisory services for primary and secondary education, educational research and monitoring, as well as – potentially – the ZFP's competency centre (*Kompetenzzentrum*), which advises schools on the inclusion of children with special educational needs and offers pedagogical diagnostic procedures, complementing the work of the ministry's school advisory service for inclusion and integration (*Schulberatung für Inklusion und Integration*), which was established in 2019 (Regierung der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens, 2021[83]).

More closely integrating the work of the school development counselling service and the pedagogical advisory services could be an important step to create synergies and facilitate their collaboration. Bringing these services together would also make it easier for schools to access the support they need. Furthermore, integrating the AHS' capacity for research and data monitoring could improve the use of data (e.g. from VERA, PISA and the Diploma in French Language Studies [*Diplôme d'études en langue française*, DELF]) to support schools' self-evaluation and improvement efforts. While the creation of the institute could create synergies between the support services and make their work more effective, it should also be seen as an opportunity to review their capacity and strengthen it where needed. This should also identify areas where additional expertise is required, such as pre-primary education or special education needs (the latter would be strengthened through a closer collaboration with the ZFP's competency centre).

Furthermore, the division of responsibilities between the school inspection and the external evaluation creates discontinuities in the school evaluation process and should be reconsidered. The current split of evaluation responsibilities between two institutions is unusual in international comparison and should be reviewed to provide greater clarity on the institutions' role in strengthening school's capacity for continuous improvement. In many OECD countries, the functions currently performed by the inspectorate and the external evaluation in the German-speaking Community, are combined in a single institution (OECD, 2013[57]). Another option would be to more strongly differentiate the institutions' roles by clearly focusing the inspection's role on the summative evaluation of individual teachers (including the evaluation at key career stages, as described above), while endowing the external evaluation with a more formative role and the responsibility to oversee the entire school improvement cycle, including the schools' preparation and implementation of development plans.

In any case, the school evaluations should further emphasise appraising schools' internal evaluation processes in order to support the continued shift from a system of external accountability towards a model based on structured self-evaluation and internal accountability for improvement. The evidence suggests that systems based on "internal accountability" are more effective than compliance-oriented evaluation systems since they encourage teachers and schools to take ownership of their school improvement and exercise agency to make such improvement happen, including through professional learning (OECD, 2013[57]). Evaluations should therefore place particular emphasis on schools' processes for

self-evaluations, formative staff-appraisal and development planning and evaluate whether they use them effectively, rather than focusing on compliance alone. Where needed, targeted, intensive follow-up support (from the school development counselling services, pedagogical advisory services or others) should be readily available to schools to help them implement their development plans and address the needs identified in the evaluation process. In Wales, for example, schools' self-evaluation and improvement plans are reviewed by regional "improvement advisors" who aim to act as "critical, but supportive friends" to schools (OECD, 2020, p. 69[40]).

In the longer-term, the German-speaking Community could consider moving towards a risk-based approach to school evaluation by reducing the frequency and intensity of evaluations for high-performing schools. In the Netherlands, the Inspectorate of Education has implemented risk-based inspections in 2007, which allows schools that are not considered "at-risk" to undergo a "basic inspection" while at-risk schools receive more frequent and in-depth inspections (Nusche et al., 2014, p. 130[84]). A risk-based approach could acknowledge the progress made by schools with strong self-evaluation systems while focusing the evaluation's resources and follow-up support on schools that are most in need of rapid improvement.

One of the main challenges school systems encounter in shifting from compliance and external accountability to primarily internal accountabilities is developing capacity. Fullan et al. (2015[85]) stress that any attempt to reset evaluation and accountability structures must begin by building the professional capacity of teachers and leaders, including their responsibility for continuous improvement and for the success of all students (OECD, 2021[32]). To strengthen this capacity, the German-speaking Community should refine its leadership training and provide appropriate and accessible resources with a view to help leaders develop and use multi-year school development plans to advance their "school project", to place the quality of teaching at the centre, and to collect and use relevant data to support the process. School leaders should also be supported in mobilising the whole school community in their schools' development. A greater emphasis on collaboration, distributed leadership and continuing professional learning in schools (see above) would complement and support this process, as would strengthening inter-school collaboration, e.g. by pairing experienced school leaders with less experienced peers.

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Notes

[1] Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

[2] Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

[3] The general qualifications for teachers are stipulated in the „*Königlicher Erlass vom 22. April 1969 zur Festlegung der erforderlichen Befähigungsnachweise der Mitglieder des Direktions- und Lehrpersonals* […]“ [Royal Decree of 22 April 1969 stating the necessary qualifications of teaching and school leadership staff (…)]

[4] „*Dekret zur Festlegung des Statuts der subventionierten Personalmitglieder des offiziellen subventionierten Unterrichtswesens und der offiziellen subventionierten PMS-Zentren*“ (9 March 2004) [Decree on the statute for subsidised staff members of the official subsidised education system and PMS-centres]

[5] „*Dekret zur Festlegung des Statuts der subventionierten Personalmitglieder des freien subventionierten Unterrichtswesens und des freien subventionierten psycho-medizinisch-sozialen Zentrums*“ (14 December 1998) [Decree on the statute for subsidized staff members of the free subsidised education system and PMS-centres]

[6] The equivalent of the AESS in Germany is the completion of teacher training (*Magister*, 2nd state examination).

[7] Autonome Hochschule Ostbelgien, *Die sieben Kompetenzsäulen für den Studienbereich Lehramt*, https://static.ahs-ostbelgien.be/wp-content/uploads/diesiebenkompetenzsaeulen.pdf (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[8] The seven pillars are: “The teacher as a language expert”, “The teacher as a knowledge expert”, “The teacher as an educator/pedagogue [*Erzieher*]”, “The teacher designs and accompanies learning processes”, “The teacher observes, diagnoses and evaluates”, “The teacher has social competences”, “The teacher as a link of society [*Bindeglied einer Gesellschaft*]”. The new competency profile was still under development at the time of the review.

[9] Autonome Hochschule Ostbelgien (2021), *Bildungswissenschaften - Aufnahmeverfahren*, https://www.ahs-ostbelgien.be/fachbereiche/bildungswissenschaften/aufnahmeverfahren/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[10] To enrol in the CAP programme, applicants need to have completed a master craftsman diploma (*Meisterdiplom*), a bachelor’s degree or equivalent qualification. The CAP+ requires a completed bachelor’s or master’s degree or equivalent qualification.

[11] Data provided by the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

[12] Autonome Hochschule Ostbelgien (2021), *Berufseinstiegsphase*, https://www.ahs-ostbelgien.be/weiterbildungen/berufseinstiegsphase/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[13] Similar rules apply to staff employed at the AHS and Kaleido, but they need at least a “good” rating in their latest evaluation to obtain a temporary open-ended contract.

[14] Government of the German-speaking Community of Belgium (2020), *Dekretentwurf über Maßnahmen im Unterrichtswesen 2021*, https://ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-255/620_read-62349 (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[15] Vice principals receive a monthly bonus of EUR 400 and middle managers and workshop leaders of EUR 250, which are multiplied by a consumer price index (1.741 on 1 January 2021).

[16] MDG (2018), *Fachberater und Fachteamleiter für die Sekundarschulen gesucht!*, http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-75/8302_read-53221/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[17] Externe Evaluation (2021) *Unterrichtsbeobachtungsbogen (UBB)*, https://static.ahs-ostbelgien.be/wp-content/uploads/2001ubb-der-externen-abteilung-fr-externe-evaluation.pdf (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[18] Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (2021), *Beurteilungs-/Bewertungsbericht für Lehrpersonal*, https://www.ostbelgienbildung.be/ResourceImage.aspx?raid=105472 (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[19] Government of the German-speaking Community (2019), *Dekretentwurf über Maßnahmen im Unterrichtswesen 2020*, http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-255/620_read-58835 (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[20] Deutsche Akademie für Pädagogische Führungskräfte (2021), *Führung und Management in der Schulleitung (FuM)*, https://dapf.zhb.tu-dortmund.de/zertifikatskurse/fuehrung-und-management-in-der-schulleitung/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[21] MDG (2018) *Dekretentwurf über Maßnahmen im Unterrichtswesen 2018*, https://ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-255/620_read-53700/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[22] The bonus was raised to a non-indexed value of EUR 250 in the school year 2021/22, as stipulated in Government of the German-speaking Community of Belgium (2020), *Dekretentwurf über Maßnahmen im Unterrichtswesen 2021*, https://ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-255/620_read-62349 (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[23] MDG (2019), *Stellenberechnung im Regelgrundschulwesen*, http://www.ostbelgienbildung.be/PortalData/21/Resources/downloads/home/schulvorschriften/Schulvorschrift_Stellenberechnung_im_Regelgrundschulwesen_13052019.pdf (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[24] Bildungsportal der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens (2020), *Gutes Personal für gute Schulen - Das Konzept für ein moderneres Dienstrecht*, http://www.ostbelgienbildung.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-4810/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[25] Government of the German-speaking Community of Belgium (2021) *Redebeitrag Ministerin Klinkenberg: Vorstellung der politischen Schwerpunkte*, https://www.lydiaklinkenberg.be/news/vorstellung-der-politischen-schwerpunkte (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[26] The new contract offers a temporary open-ended designation or employment from the start of the teaching career („*Bezeichnung oder Einstellung unbestimmte Dauer ab Dienstbeginn*“).

[27] In German, “Kompetenzorientiert zu unterrichten heißt, dass der Schüler im Zentrum des Unterrichtsgeschehens steht”. See Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (2021) *Rahmenpläne* [core curricula], https://ostbelgienbildung.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-2221/4415_read-31778/ (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[28] Only 3 staff members engaged in courses offered by the *Institut de Formation en Cours de Carrière* (IFC), the AHS’ main partner institution in the French Community of Belgium.

[29] Boeskens and Nusche (2021[6]) provide an overview of annual statutory teaching hours in other OECD education systems at different levels of education between 2008 and 2018 (supplementary tables).

[30] „Lehrerinnen und Lehrer verstehen ihren Beruf als ständige Lernaufgabe“ (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004[10]).

[31] Ontario Ministry of Education (2019), *The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)*, www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/induction.html (accessed on 15 December 2021).

[32] The Dutch *Education Lab*, for example, is a network that aims to inform educational policy and practice through scientific research and to communicate scientific evidence on teaching and learning to teachers in accessible ways. The Education Lab grew out of the *Academische Werkplaats Onderwijskwaliteit* [Academic Workshop Educational Quality], a research platform created by Dutch Inspectorate for Education, Maastricht University and Free University in Amsterdam. See www.education-lab.nl (accessed on 15 December 2021).