

2015 INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION COUNTRY UPDATE ON 2014 GOALS

NETHERLANDS

At the conclusion of the International Summit for the Teaching Profession 2014, the Netherlands formulated the following three ambitions:

1. Promote a learning culture through:

- Professional learning communities within and among schools and teacher education programs
- Peer review
- Creating a continual learning mode in a safe environment
- Learning from best practices
- Focusing on flexibility to meet all talents of all students

2. Stimulate that adaptive education partnerships take on responsibility for local policies affecting pupils who need additional support, as well in disadvantaged situations as in achieving excellence on an individual level.

3. Stimulate and facilitate the ongoing professional development of teachers (lifelong learning). We intend to increase the number of teachers who are educated to masters' level and who are skilled by using feedback instruments. We will develop attractive career perspectives.

The Teachers Program 2013-2020 was presented in October 2013. The program was drawn up in cooperation with educators, and this consultative approach will be continued; we will regularly discuss progress together with professionals from the field.

At all levels of education, the government aims to commit stakeholders to education policy through agreements such as for primary and secondary education, which were signed in 2014. The three ambitions feature prominently in the Teachers Program 2013-2020 and these agreements. Below is a list of initiatives that are associated with the three ambitions.

Ad.1 Promote a learning culture

- We started pilots for professional learning communities by providing additional funding for teacher training and schools. Approximately 40 professional learning communities were set up in the school year 2014-2015. These communities are stimulated and facilitated by external experts. The pilots will serve to expand the body of knowledge on best practices for various forms of professional learning communities.
- Peer review gives teachers a chance to look at their colleagues work in the classroom. They give feedback and are able to learn from the examples their colleagues set. Through a special

program by a Dutch Foundation, called *Stichting LeerKRACHT*, peer review is enhanced and stimulated. Two years ago, this foundation started out with 16 participating schools. This number has now, two years later, increased to 200 participating schools/institutions.

- The frequency of classroom visits also increased significantly. At the start, 70% of the teachers said they were visited by a peer only once a year (or not at all) in their classes, whereas now 63% say they have a peer review at least once a month. The idea is that the methods *Stichting LeerKRACHT* uses will lead to greater job satisfaction and greater enthusiasm to experiment with giving useful feedback to colleagues and students, which will, in turn, lead to better results by students.

Ad.2 Stimulate that adaptive education partners take on responsibility

- In the Netherlands, a strong focus has been placed on developing support systems in and around primary, secondary and vocational schools. As from August 2014, the new act on student-centred education (*Wet Passend Onderwijs*) has been enforced for primary, secondary (i.e., pre-vocational, higher general and scientific preparatory education) and vocational education.
- This act arranges that schools in the same region are combined in collaborative alliances. With the help of these alliances, schools need to fulfil their “care duty” as described in the act. The alliances receive funding from the government to arrange facilities to support children with special needs. Moreover, schools need to develop care plans that are aligned with the municipalities, which are responsible for youth care.
- Already before the implementation of the new act on student-centred care, many schools in primary, secondary and vocational education had internal care teams and took part in regional care and advice teams.
- Internal care teams are available in most schools. In primary and secondary education, about 80% of the schools have an internal care team and in vocational education about 90%. Internal care teams consist of an internal care manager (from the school) and often a school social worker (for 74%, 56% and 100% of the teams in primary, secondary and vocational education, respectively). In primary education, 53% of the teams also include a youth health care professional.
- Besides the legislation around special-needs education, the decentralisation of various government responsibilities to the municipalities plays an important role. From the 1 of January 2015, the municipalities became in charge of youth care, long-term care, and the support and activation of youth with disabilities. The idea behind the reforms is to create stronger incentives and opportunities to offer integrated services and to align policies across sectors at the local level. Currently, services are separately organised by different players at different institutional levels (e.g., municipal, regional or national level) and often focus on one aspect of the problem, while many clients are in contact with several services and would benefit from an integrated approach.

Ad.3 Stimulate and facilitate the ongoing professional development

- In all sectors, agreements are made about the professional development of teachers. Based on the agreements for primary, secondary and vocational education and the collective salary agreements between social partners in these sectors, teachers have more time and money for professional development.
- In 2012, the teachers' organisation Education Cooperative (*Onderwijscoöperatie*) started with teacher registration on a voluntary basis. To stimulate the ongoing professional development of teachers, the existing register will be incorporated in educational legislation. Hereby, registration for all teachers in primary, secondary and vocational education is compulsory as of 2017. Only those who meet the requirements set by the profession remain registered and will be allowed to take full responsibility for the teaching process. Legislation is expected to be sent to Parliament later this year. Meanwhile, the Education Cooperative is stimulating more teachers to register voluntary.
- In the agreements for both primary and secondary education, we have formulated and agreed upon targets for the number of teachers who are educated at a master's level in 2020. In order to attain these goals, relevant stakeholders (including the government) partake in a number of activities that, amongst other things: will facilitate teachers to enroll in master's programs (whilst still working part-time as a teacher); that will allow for more master's educated students/lateral entrants to become teachers; and that will help improve the HRM-policies at schools.
- With regard to the latter, we believe that headmasters consciously making decisions about teachers' tasks and responsibilities – that will attract and retain master's educated teachers and will therefore contribute to the quality of the school – are illustrative of improved HRM-policies.