

Teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations

Guiding Principles for policy development
in school education

Produced by the ET 2020 Working Group Schools 2016-18

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Report from the ET2020 Working Group Schools 2016-18

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1. About

ET2020 Working Group on Schools

Under its current mandate, ET2020 Working Group on Schools¹ is examining successful and emerging, or potential new, policy developments in Member States concerning the governance of school education systems that can support and improve quality, inclusion and innovation. This work focuses on the capacity for systemic change in the four key interlinked areas: 1) quality assurance for school development; 2) continuity and transitions in learner development; 3) teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations; 4) networks for learning and development across education systems.

Teachers and school leaders

The centrality of teachers and school leaders to the learning process in schools is self-evident. However schools are organised, and whatever pedagogies may have been introduced, pupils are ultimately dependent for their academic and social progress on the expertise, energy, inspiration and imagination of the adults to whom they are entrusted. Teachers generally are motivated by this privileged responsibility, but it is not an easy challenge. Societal and governmental expectations are demanding. They may reflect priorities, such as economic imperatives, that diverge from notions of a love of learning that teachers themselves might view as paramount. There may, too, be an awkward tension between the autonomy vested in teachers and school leaders, and the accountability that might reasonably be expected of them.

Against this background, the personal and collective identities that teachers and school leaders form are critical. If teachers and school leaders are respected and feel fully integrated into the wider education system, they can be motivated to improve that system, at local level, and potentially beyond. They will feel valued, and committed to their own professional development as part of a learning community. They will want to contribute positively to their successful school as learning organisation. By contrast, if there is disconnect between the aims and ethos of schools and the goals of the communities, including the wider educational system that they serve, inefficiencies and a disenchanted work force will result. Communication and dialogue to shape the direction of education policy will make a considerable impact on the well-being and effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, while trust and delegation of authority and responsibility will help progressive education policy to be implemented at local level.

This report

This report sets out guiding principles for policy development. Based on evidence from recent research in this area of school education the principles are the result of joint reflection and exchange by representatives of European education ministries and stakeholder organisations in the ET2020 Working Group on Schools. The principles are further illustrated with examples from countries.

¹ Representatives from all Member States, EFTA and EU Candidate countries, plus European social partner and stakeholder organisations. More information about mandate, membership and results is available on http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/schools_en.

The content comes from a series of meetings held in Brussels, and a Peer Learning Activity. Policy examples from countries and stakeholder organisations are contributions from Working Group members. The report was compiled and edited by Jonathan Allen (Ecorys) and Thomas Pritzkow (European Commission) in May-August 2017 with review and validation by Working Group members.

How to read this report:

This report is structured around a set of nine Guiding Principles for policies to support teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations.

The report is aimed primarily at those making and shaping policies with an impact in and on education systems. It takes a broad perspective on the governance of school education systems, taking into account not only structures, but also relationships, capacity, culture and accountability at multiple levels.

There are clearly connections, or overlaps, between the nine principles. However, each one of them addresses considerations at different levels within the education system. Moving from principle No 1 to No 9 the focus broadly shifts from the system level, i.e. (central) authorities through schools to individual teachers and school leaders. This schema is set out in Figure 3.

Chapter 1 of the report explains the context of this report by the ET2020 Working Group on Schools and how it was produced

Chapter 2 introduces the Guiding Principles and explains which values underpin them

Chapter 3 puts the principles into the broad context of current policies and research thinking, and explains how they were developed

Chapter 4 looks at each of the nine principles in more detail.

Key references are listed at the end of the report.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 About the principles

The statements – or ‘Guiding Principles’ - presented below (Section 2.3), highlight the key policy messages from the ET2020 Working Group on Schools (2016-18). They are based on recent research, policy experiences from European countries and joint peer learning. They provide a frame for the sharing and analysis of recent developments in countries, as discussed and reported by Working Group members.

2.2 Values

This section discusses the values that have underpinned the work of the Working Group across different topics linked to the governance of school education systems.

The view of the Working Group has been that learning is a pre-requisite for growth and development. Improving the experiences and outcomes of all learners are consequently the central of concern in pursuit of quality in school education.

Vision at the level of national and regional policy should value and respect the role of teachers and school leaders in the education system.

It is recognised that teachers and school leaders ultimately work in their local context, albeit set in a national or regional framework of governance for the education system. Teachers and school leaders have a real and immediate setting for their work. The concept of the school as learning organisation, discussed in more detail in section 3.1.1, is considered helpful, not least because the actors identified extend beyond school staff into the local community, including parents and employers, as well as networks of schools. All stakeholders are by definition important to the success of a school and should be enabled to share and implement progressive measures.

Policy should promote team learning and collaboration among all staff. Just as values of inclusivity and embracing diversity are considered important for the development of young learners, so they apply to teachers and school leaders. Staff should be encouraged to work as a team, with distributed leadership and an emphasis on peer-learning. Staff should feel at ease with each other in an atmosphere of trust and fairness, able to turn to colleagues for advice.

Sustainable innovation and inclusion are key aspects in the consideration of the work of teachers and school leaders. It is considered important to move beyond the more traditional concept of ‘school improvement’, which has narrower connotations associated with external inspection and assessment. The wide range of influences within the system is important, so the recruitment, retention and professional development of teachers and school leaders should not be considered in isolation.

From the deliberations of the Working Group so far on the governance of school education, it is implicit within all of the following Guiding Principles that:

- i. **Improving the experiences and outcomes of all learners**, also including teachers and school leaders, should be the central pursuit of school education policies. It is therefore important that **policies are both inclusive and flexible**;

- ii. Policies should involve all relevant stakeholders in partnerships to **create shared ownership and accountability**. This can be achieved by (a) building mutual trust and understanding, (b) articulating a shared vision, common aims and standards, (c) aligning budgets and decision-making structures, all with the learner at the centre;
- iii. **Developing the capacity and role of teachers and school leaders** is essential for schools to provide a clear strategic vision and leadership that guides and fully supports learners, and which enables effective communication with other practitioners and stakeholders.
- iv. In increasingly complex education systems, **different levels of governance matter** and will need to interact in order to improve education both globally and locally. This scope often includes the national, regional and local levels. The capacity for both leadership and organisational learning needs to be considered at all relevant levels.

2.3 Guiding Principles on policies to support teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations²

1. EDUCATION AS A LEARNING SYSTEM: Education should be an inclusive learning system with a key role for teachers and school leaders.

In school education, the learning system should function in an inclusive manner that respects diversity to ensure that no school, nor individual teacher, is isolated or is unable to participate effectively. Regular review of the system, involving national and local government as well as the schools themselves, should identify and strengthen connectors across networks, but allow sufficient time for change to take place and be embedded. The system should be open and provide opportunities to engage multiple stakeholders as part of the process, including social partners, pupils and their families.

2. COHERENCE OF POLICIES: Policy-makers should aim to achieve coherence across the system, aligning different policies directly affecting teachers and school leaders and embedding them in wider school policies, to serve the ultimate objective of ensuring high quality education for all learners.

Ensuring coherence, or continuity, between different policies (e.g. on professional development, staff careers, support measures, leadership, curricula etc.) avoids tensions and contradictions and makes systems more effective. Coherent policies should also seek to create room for experiment and innovation. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including social partners, in meaningful dialogue may help achieve this coherence.

3. SHARED VISION AND UNDERSTANDING: Shared vision and understanding, which consider national, regional and local perspectives and priorities on school policy, give direction to the work of schools as learning organisations and to the systems by which they are supported.

Developing a shared vision and understanding strengthens teachers' and school leaders' ability to develop effective learning and teaching, and to collaborate rather than compete. Ensuring opportunities for interpretation in the local context will help teachers and school leaders gain ownership of the vision and engage with the management of change.

4. SETTING EXPECTATIONS: Clear expectations for the engagement of teachers and school leaders, that can be set through frameworks, such as standards, competence frameworks and curricula, help define roles within learning organisations.

These expectations can guide the provision of appropriate support, whilst maintaining freedom to take risks, develop and innovate, have ownership, and stimulate collaboration within and across areas of curriculum and school development.

5. SCHOOL LEADERS AND TEACHERS SHAPING LEARNING SYSTEMS: Schools leaders and teachers should be acknowledged and respected for their expertise and their contribution to developing the education system at different levels.

Through their own endeavours as learners, teachers and school leaders act as role models, adding to the development of the school as a learning organisation. But they should also be supported in their efforts to increase capacity to work across networks of schools and professionals. Involving teachers and school leaders in the design of new initiatives and reforms from the start will help

² See Figure 3 for a schema illustrating how the nine Guiding Principles relate to each other.

improve the system and empower staff to engage in leadership, be innovative and take (as well as manage) risks.

6. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE: Education systems can help schools develop professional working and learning cultures that motivate teachers and school leaders.

Fostering a desire and providing capacity in schools to learn and improve together will help teachers and school leaders better adapt to changing needs of learners and society. Motivation can be influenced by internal and external factors and should be taken into account when considering the recruitment and retention of staff. Collaboration, distributed leadership and networking offer significant potential for a professional culture that supports working and learning at school.

7. RESEARCH, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND ENQUIRY: Policies should support a culture of research, reflective practice and enquiry-based learning at school.

Practice-oriented research and enquiry should be embedded along the continuum of school leaders' and teachers' professional development, including Initial Teacher Education. This will stimulate teachers' motivation and competence to engage in research with the purpose of informing and enabling action across the system. Researchers in schools, higher education institutions and other organisations should have opportunities to disseminate their work, share expertise, and exchange information and ideas.

8. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES, CAPACITY AND AUTONOMY: Teachers and school leaders should be supported in their professional development, autonomy and growth in a continuum spanning all phases of their careers.

Teachers and school leaders should be trusted, supported and empowered as professionals who can be agents of change contributing to school development and who have the capacity to take responsibility and be accountable for the impact of their actions. Teachers and school leaders should be expected, enabled and encouraged to collaborate; their competences and capacities, as well as their autonomy and accountability should therefore be considered not just individually but also collectively, as part of professional teams.

9. LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE: Systems should provide opportunities for school leaders and teachers to develop leadership competences that support them in strategic thinking and planning.

Teachers and school leaders should be inspiring and be able to set priorities for self and others. They should be able, and enabled, to identify their own needs and opportunities for professional development, and to lead others in reflective practice as part of the process of change.

3. Context

3.1 Policy and research context

There is general recognition that change in education makes repeated demands on teachers and school leaders to develop new competences, and to work together in ways different to those accepted historicallyⁱ. Over recent years considerable attention, supported by research, has been given to matters of policy in respect of teachers and school leaders.

Quality and equity in a school system require policies that enable school staff to work together constructively, and to contribute to school development. However, implementing such policies presents challenges of locus and control in systems that by past convention have been hierarchical, but are now increasingly moving towards more decentralised models, which often give more autonomy for schools and staff.

3.1.1 Recent research

Research that informs policy in Europe has explored a range of factors that influence the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. The context of their work is now envisioned in the concept of the school as a learning community, or even more recently, as a learning organisation. In the latter model, which has gained traction in recent years, the school is seen operating at a number of levels: the individual; teams; and a level of organisation-wide practices. Together these efforts create an organic “learning culture”, characterised by a shared ethos of team working and the goal of fostering professional learning. Mutual trust is critical to the success of the model, and the capacity, freedom and time for inquiry, innovation and exploration are paramountⁱⁱ. Underpinning the model there is a strong identification of the importance of collaboration and cooperation, and of the benefits of schools being embedded in a supportive community^{iii, iv, v, vi}). The model is represented diagrammatically (Figure 1).

One implication is that professional development to a significant extent becomes local, generated from within the school and its immediate network. This perception gives rise to the “self-improving school system” of Hargreaves^{vii, see also viii}. The emphasis on flexibility and diversity is noteworthy. Parallels may be drawn from work carried out in the field of cognitive psychology on routine expertise and adaptive expertise (or “competence”), the latter being the ability to apply knowledge and skills creatively in a range of situations^{ix}. In the school as a learning organisation, in a perpetual state of change and flux, the ability to respond at a point along the continuum of routine and adaptive expertise would seem valuable for teachers in developing their pedagogical capability as “knowledge workers”. It is also relevant to note that, while research on schools as learning organisations tends to address the consequences for schools and actors in schools, the Working Group aimed to consider the implications of the concept for governance systems and policy making.

The model of the school as learning organisation was found helpful in this context for a number of reasons:

- Schools are asked to respond to rapid changes of policy and ever higher quality expectations. The school as learning organisation engages all staff in meeting these challenges and avoids over-reliance on conventional hierarchies to ensure ownership in their implementation.

- The school as learning organisation encourages and enables teachers and school leaders to help shape policy and improve pedagogy through local research and networking that refine current practice.
- A prerequisite to success for the school as learning organisation is a culture of trust and shared commitment that supports collaborative effort. It was considered that these positive characteristics have become even more important and valuable as education systems decentralise and delegate responsibility.

This report, and the Guiding Principles, aim to elaborate on the policies required to stimulate, support and facilitate the transformation of schools into learning organisations, and more specifically on the roles of policy makers, school leaders and teachers.

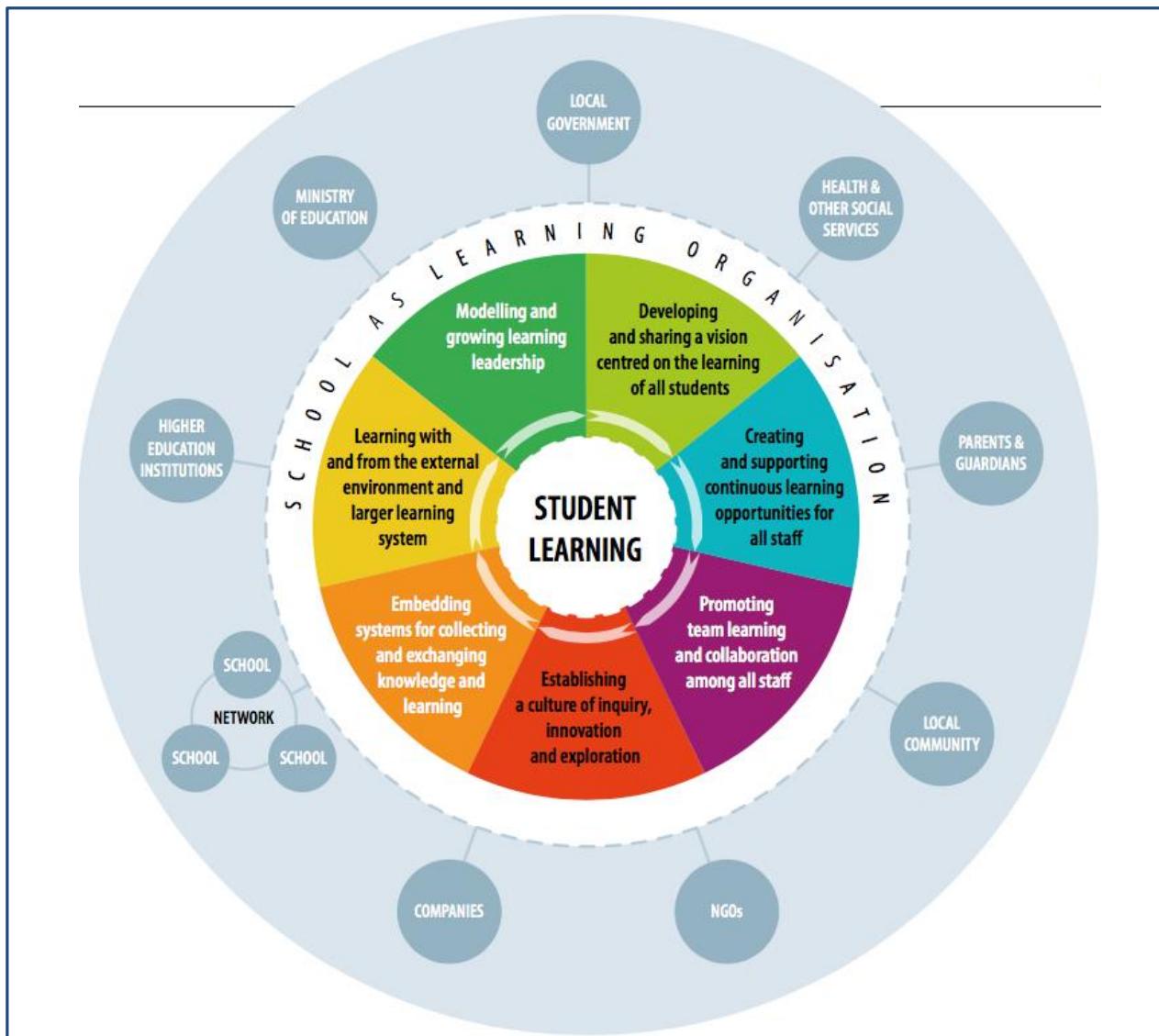


Figure 1: What makes a school a learning organisation? (OECD/UNICEF 2016, p.1^x)

Unsurprisingly, teacher education has been a focus of research in this context. For many reasons, not least financial, the best way of organising Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a major policy concern and priority in many countries. There has been an associated trend to higher levels of formal qualifications for Initial Teacher Education (ITE), but also a trend towards more diversified

forms of professional development than were available in the past^{xii}. Teacher education can usefully be seen as an element of the more general policy objective of increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession^{xiii}.

Under its 2014-15 mandate the ET2020 Working Group developed a conceptual model to describe, and argue for, policies that can effectively support the quality of teachers and teaching through a continuum of the teacher profession. This model links five interrelated perspectives, those of teachers' learning needs (a continuum of teacher education/professional development); (instrumental) support structures; career; professional competence levels; and the cultural (local) perspective of a school (Figure 2):

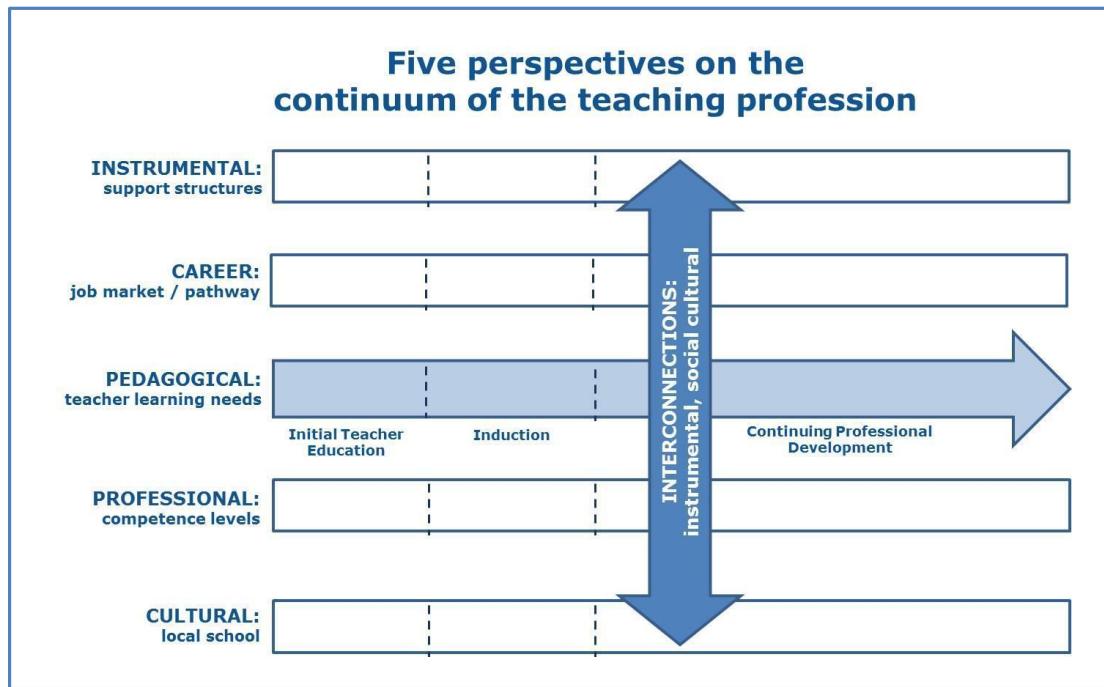


Figure 2: Five perspectives on the continuum of the teaching profession (from European Commission 2015b, p19^{xiii})

While all five perspectives matter in the context of the school as learning organisation, it is the fifth perspective that is of particular importance here: the impact of local school culture on teaching professionals at different stages of their career. From the ITE and induction stages, when local education providers and training schools support mentoring and are partners in the education of future or beginning teachers, through the wider networks of local learning communities and action research projects, energy and drive are derived from the local situation and local imperatives.

The part played by effective leadership has also received attention, and, in this paper and elsewhere, the critical importance of school leaders in introducing and implementing change is acknowledged, as is the part that school leaders play as role models. In particular there has been endorsement of the practice of distributed leadership and the value of networks to enable the exchange of experience and cooperation^{xiv, xv}. Philosophically, this perception of shared endeavour is consistent with the concept of the school as learning organisation. Reflective practice, shared tasks and responsibilities, and from these the joint ownership of ethos, will involve the entire school as a professional learning community. The school head's role under this arrangement becomes one of delegation, encouraging and entrusting individuals and groups in their multi-discipline teamwork and professional collaboration^{xvi}. Policies that aim to build these emphases on teacher leadership capacity consequently have an important role.

The provision of appropriate continuing professional development for school leaders is important, especially when it is considered that, conventionally, leadership rarely features in Initial Teacher Education programmes^{xvii}. In some countries, though, there is now in ITE an emphasis on notions of distributed leadership and teachers as leaders of learning across schools.

3.1.2 Structural considerations to inform policy

This section summarises broader considerations for policy-makers in the context of this report. It makes reference to the results of previous EU-level peer learning and international policy reports.

There is great variation in the arrangements of national and regional school systems. These differences will be reflected in the extent to which policy makers are inclined or enabled to support teachers and school leaders in their efforts to adopt new ways of working. In most countries there will be financial limitations, but some obstacles may be structural, with constraints not so much of cost but from existing practice that is sub-optimal. Policy changes may be possible to alter how the system works without necessarily incurring significant additional expenditure. The following considerations illustrate this view.

There are several key areas in which policy may directly support teachers and school leaders. These include:

- **establishing participative processes** supported by legislation and implementation guidelines which will stimulate school development;
- **reconceptualising hierarchical structural interactions**, within and beyond school, into peer-to-peer relationships of the “critical friend”, characterised by shared goals and ethos;
- ensuring provision of **high quality, career long, continuous professional development** for teachers from the Initial Teacher Education phase onwards;
- ensuring preparation and support of visionary, inspirational **school leaders**
- introducing effective **quality assurance** processes which support teacher development as well as providing a mechanism for appraisal;
- providing the space, time and trust to **encourage school leaders and teachers to innovate**.

If the model of school as learning organisation is accepted, then the conditions for the school to flourish must be in place. There should be acceptance of local determination of shared beliefs, values and norms for continuous and collaborative learning, which will create the structural and cultural conditions for learning, experimentation and innovation. It must be acknowledged that the model infers that effective education goes beyond academic achievement to include ethical values, the ability to self-direct learning, and well-being.

A continuum of effective teacher education should extend across the phases of ITE, induction, and then the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers and school leaders in terms of capability in pedagogy and management. However, beyond the central organisation of ITE, decentralised and devolved approaches to continuing professional development may currently often be unsystematic, lack consistency and be difficult to quality assure. Policy makers might consider how the education system as a whole should support the teacher education continuum, particularly after ITE. The urgency for action in this area is clear, in particular in countries where high numbers of teachers leave the profession prematurely. Yet an expectation of mentoring, particularly for beginning teachers, may be relatively easy to initiate. However, it cannot be assumed that all teachers will be effective mentors, and training for mentors should be a key component of any initiative in this area.

Professional development may be closely linked to career progression and working conditions. Policies on selection and recruitment, appraisal, salaries, management structure and school leadership have considerable impact on the actors involved. They should be rigorous and demanding, but they are also only likely to meet with success if they are perceived as fair and equitable. It is recognised that teacher education should be considered part of a broader policy objective to raise the attractiveness and quality of the profession. Selection, recruitment and retention, ITE, early career support, Continuing Professional Development, pedagogical feedback, and incentives all have their part to play^{xviii}.

The qualities required for leadership are many, and pose a test for recruitment and selection^{xix}. However, a more subtle challenge relates to the delegated autonomy that school leaders, and teachers in leadership roles too, may anticipate in their roles, as the degree of autonomy delegated will impact on their capacity to implement and manage innovation. Policies might be devised to promote autonomy by providing the latitude necessary to respond effectively to changing local conditions. School leaders' roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and there should be arrangements in place for the required competences to be reinforced through professional development activities.

There is general acceptance that accountability is a requirement of schools, and there is a risk that, as such, it tends to be viewed negatively. The notion of “accountable autonomy” may be helpful here, as it suggests that accountability is not just a matter of control by the authorities but that it relates to, and enhances, school leadership and professionalism at school. The use of effective quality assurance mechanisms, data and even interventions, all can make the school leader effective, and are not merely instruments of control^{xx}. They enable the school and its leader(s) to develop and enhance the quality of the education that the learners receive.

In the model of school as learning organisation, school leaders may benefit from engagement with networks – locally, nationally or even internationally. If the system allows, they may also be able to contribute in a formal capacity to these networks as appointed system leaders, sharing their expertise by offering peer-to-peer support with leaders of other schools^{xxi}.

A recurring consideration posed to policy makers is the role of effective education systems in harmonising societal aims (the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for work and life), and individual aims (personal and parental ambition and aspiration). The question applies to young learners, certainly, but thought should also be given to how that balance is struck, so that teachers and school leaders contribute to the aims of the school, and the system in which it is situated, while at the same time the independence of these professionals as learners themselves is valued and respected.

The European Commission recently (May 2017) announced new proposals to support Member States in the field of school development and teaching. A *Study on policy measures to support, develop and incentivise teacher quality* is currently being conducted for the European Commission. A Eurydice report on teachers' careers in Europe is scheduled for publication in January 2018.

3.1.3 Key aspects of governance

Key aspects of the governance of school education systems that may influence policy relating to teachers, school leaders and schools as learning organisations were identified by the Working Group in its deliberations. They include, but are not restricted to:

- the balance of autonomy and accountability;

- the relationship of schools with their external educational environment and community;
- ethos and vision (is it shared, based on trust and self-confidence?);
- cooperation and collaboration within school;
- leadership (is there distributed leadership and teacher leadership?);
- professional development of staff (are there considerations for its quality across a continuum?); and,
- the locus of ownership of policy and its implementation.

This report provides a basis for considering these elements and opportunities for system development, whilst acknowledging the diversity of system models.

Action to introduce new policy initiatives on teachers and school leaders could be at the national or regional level. However, as the concept of school as learning organisation is essentially rooted in local organisation and relationships, change might be implemented through local initiatives and pilot schemes in local networks. Assuming the success of these early trials, policies could be rolled out for wider adoption. In increasingly decentralised systems the local or municipal level may assume particular responsibilities for defining – or localising – the conditions in which schools operate (including important resource matters).

3.2 Working process

The formulation of the Guiding Principles and the accompanying examples of policy development was carried out in three ways:

Review of existing research and literature: A background paper of international sources exploring work concerning the topic was created for the Working Group's members.

Working Group meeting, Brussels: Using a blend of sub-group discussion, reporting, and full group reflection, the members explored the topic from different perspectives in working sessions at a two-day meeting. Input was received from, Working Group members sharing case studies from their countries, and guest organisation representatives³.

Peer Learning Activity: The policy challenges and principles set out in this report were developed in depth by eleven countries and four organisations attending a Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on 'Teachers and School Leaders', hosted in Leuven (Flanders, Belgium) by the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training (2-5 May 2017). The PLA focussed on system-level responses that can work towards supporting teachers and school leaders, and so impact positively on learners.

³ Marco Kools, Analyst, Policy Advice and Implementation Division, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD: Schools as learning organisations: the role of teachers and school leaders; Petra Goran, European Commission: A whole school approach to inclusion: the role of teachers and school leaders. Results from the work of the ET2020 Working Group on Schools (2014/15); Prof Marco Snoek, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences/Centre for Applied Research on Education, on Supporting teachers in innovative schools; Prof Kay Livingston (ATEE), on the Association for Teacher Education in Europe Research Project 'Factors that make for an Innovative Teacher'.

4. Principles in action

In this chapter, we expand on the Guiding Principles for policy development relating to teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations, incorporating discussion points and country examples contributed by members of the ET2020 Working Group on Schools, as well as references to other relevant policy guidance.

How to read this chapter:

Chapter 4 looks at each of the nine Guiding Principles in more detail. The nine corresponding sections in this chapter follow a common structure:

- A Guiding Principle is introduced
- A summary is given of the Working Group's reflections leading to the principle, lessons from research and previous peer learning underpinning it, including evidence on European education systems
- This overview is combined with policy examples from across Europe to illustrate possible avenues for policy-makers
- A summary of policy measures to consider concludes the section

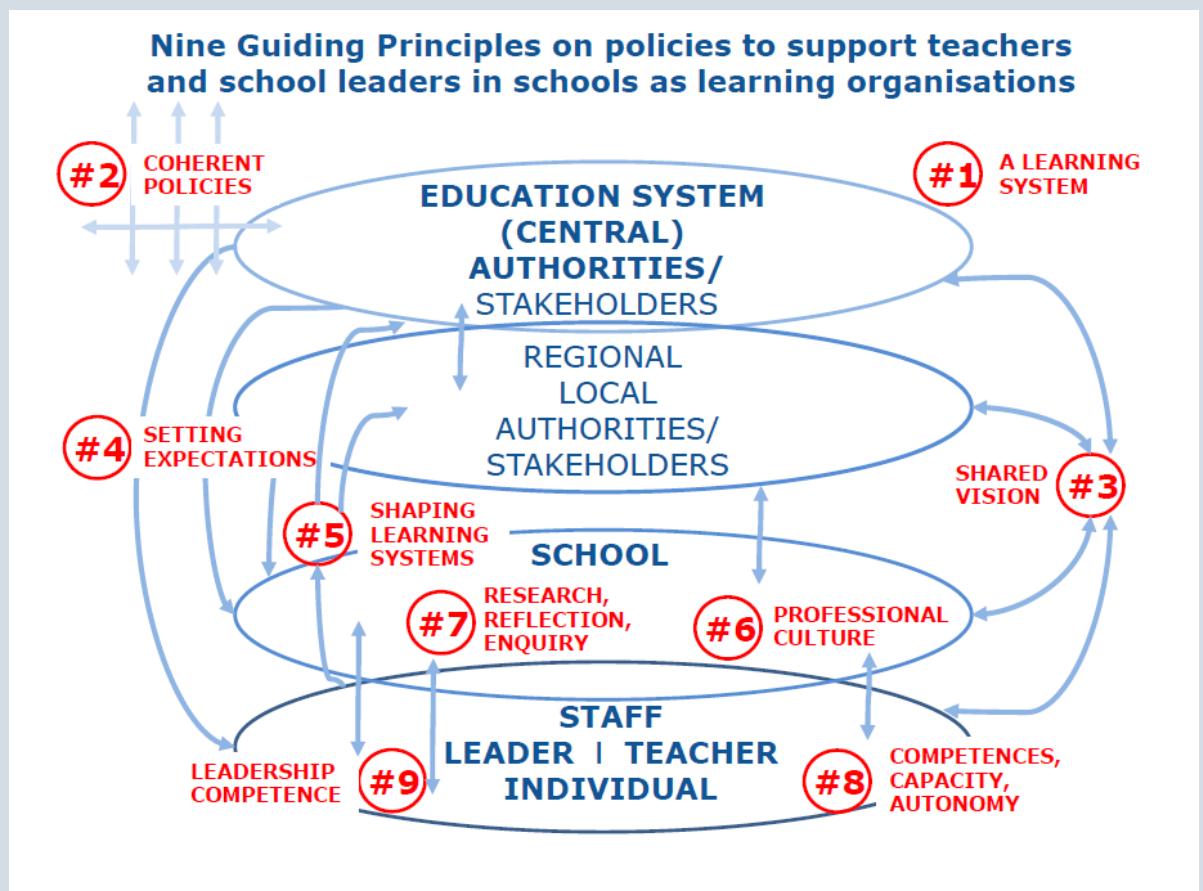


Figure 3: The nine Guiding Principles – how to read this report

4.1 Education as a learning system

Education should be an inclusive learning system with a key role for teachers and school leaders.

In school education, the learning system should function in an inclusive manner that respects diversity to ensure that no school, nor individual teacher, is isolated or is unable to participate effectively. Regular review of the system, involving national and local government as well as the schools themselves, should identify and strengthen connectors across networks, but allow sufficient time for change to take place and be embedded. The system should be open and provide opportunities to engage multiple stakeholders as part of the process, including pupils and their families, local actors and social partners.

Schools have never operated in isolation, but the world in which they are situated is changing dramatically and now demands different interactions from those accepted through the 20th century. National imperatives, such as preparing an effective workforce and responding to budgetary constraints, have had an increasing impact on how an education system is expected to operate. There have also been changes in national political philosophies, with, to varying degrees, trends towards decentralisation, devolution or “small government”. This shift has led to a concomitant increase in the influence and significance of regional and local stakeholders, as well as social partners – organisations, groupings or individuals such as employers and trade unions involved, typically at local level to mutual benefit with staff and pupils in schools.

The Working Group's focus has been on the governance of school education systems to promote higher quality through sustainable innovation and inclusion. The OECD's 2016 report *Governing Education in a Complex World*^{xxii}, provided a useful backdrop to this work.

Principle 4 (4.4 below; see also Figure 3) considers the important role for teachers and school leaders themselves to contribute to this learning system at different levels, from local school development, through school networks to the formation of education policy.

At the same time, responding to societal expectations, the development of a broad set of key competences has gained in importance (expressed through curricula and priorities for learner development), and action has been taken to support new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Inclusivity and diversity are valued, and there is recognition of the benefits of collaborative teamwork.

At national and international levels there is recognition that schools will not successfully embrace change unaided. Policy-makers have responded to the challenge of supporting teachers and school leaders in various ways^{xxiii, xxiv}. The Working group, with particular input from pan-European stakeholder organisations, proposed policies that responded specifically to the notion of supporting schools as learning organisations (Box 1).

The pace of change itself presents a challenge. Decisions can be taken quickly, and with the urgency that attends ministerial priorities. However the implementation of changes in policy direction may take time and the ramifications can be substantial. Stress and fatigue among school staff are reported in consequence^{xxv, xxvi, xxvii}. The complexity of the modern teacher's work has been recognised, and with it the importance of breaking down tendencies towards isolation in the classroom^{xxviii}.

The extent of school autonomy and decentralisation differs from country to country. But against the background of a general trend towards allocating more responsibility with schools, networks are considered to be beneficial and effective mechanisms to avoid isolation at the level of school and its constituent teachers and leaders^{xxix}. Ensuring the continuity of learner development as they go through different levels of education calls for new forms of co-operation across education systems (see also recent and forthcoming work of the WG on Schools on these themes).

Box 1: Schools within learning systems – the stakeholder perspective

EU stakeholder organisations have made recommendations on policies that support schools as learning organisations, within learning systems:

- **Learning organisations require processes that involve all partners:** pupils, teachers, school leaders, stakeholders, teacher educators, and ministries. This approach necessitates a common language, shared understanding; cooperation across all different institutions and cooperation within the school (leader, teacher, pupils, parents)
- **A culture of innovation and learning requires the development of all partnerships noted above;** work on a new mind-set concerning education and its development; a shared vision (specific to every country); openness that allows schools to develop their own principles within a guiding framework
- **Start working with change leaders** (innovative, flexible people) by identifying these change leaders; bringing them together (or working through self-organisation); making them visible; offering them support through ministries and research. Change leaders will understand the importance of engaging others through building trusting relationships
- **Consider the importance of time**, recognising that change is a long process (not necessarily limited to a legislative period) and that learning is an ongoing process; making continuity possible (e.g. when governments change); reducing stress of too much change (beyond all other obligations)
- **Take national traditions into consideration** (the current situation, the opportunities and the barriers)
- **Build an atmosphere of trust** among all partners
- **Establish a culture of informed risk-taking** on all levels, recognising that failures are occasions for learning
- **Recognise the complexity of change** (and what this means for enacting change processes in different countries), including differences in starting points for change; the speed of change; policy contexts, learning and teaching environments; support structures and resources

Source: results of a joint reflection by European stakeholder organisations representing social partners, teacher educators and independent schools on the ET2020 Working Group Schools (ATEE, ECSWE; EFEE, ETUCE), at the Leuven Peer Learning Activity, May 2017

As we have seen, the model of school as learning organisation, in which individuals and teams create a learning culture at the level of organisation-wide practices, provides a particularly inclusive approach to cooperation across education systems. The idea of a shared vision is strong, as is an ethos of team working. The goal of fostering professional learning is pre-eminent^{xxx}. The following examples from diverse administrations illustrate the adoption of system-wide approaches to educational development and progress (Box 2)

Box 2: System-wide approaches to educational development and progress

In **Austria**, the Education Ministry in 2010 launched a participatory consultation process with stakeholders to develop strategies for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the field of education. Representatives from schools and school authorities, teacher education providers and researchers met with NGO representatives, self-advocacy groups and parents' associations to develop an innovative scenario for a step-by-step realisation of "Inclusive Model Regions". The overall aim of this approach is to improve the quality of education in inclusive settings to such an extent that special schools will not be necessary in future. The process requires not only a sensitive way of respecting and dealing with the traditions of special schools but also a lot of trust-building among stakeholders who may be reluctant to change.

Due to their specific experience and motivation to bring about change school inspectors, school heads and teachers take the role of change leaders in the three Austrian regions Carinthia, Styria and the Tyrol. Recognising the complexity of systemic changes, regional action plans and multi-professional networks have been created to support the continuity of sustainable innovation. Progress can already be seen – in Carinthia more than 90 % of pupils with special needs are already attending regular (inclusive) schools. Moreover, important experiences from inclusive model regions have been legally consolidated as part of the current education reform.

In **Slovenia**, when certain changes are planned for introduction in schools across the education system, school development teams are established to manage change at school level. For example, this strategy was adopted to support the modernisation of curricula, first in Gymnasiums, then also in VET schools, and to develop schools' self-evaluation. The teams are expected to act as agents of change within their schools and are trained both in the content of the changes introduced and in change management. Change management is also a compulsory element of the obligatory initial training all school leaders (head teachers) have to go through to acquire a headship license.

Eurocities, a network of local governments in major cities in Europe, reports that school leadership and school development are matters of intense debate among large local authorities responsible for school education. To increase the sustainability of school development locally, municipal education authorities in such cities as **Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Gothenburg and Antwerp** have undertaken deliberate efforts to support and build the capacity of school teams to tackle forthcoming challenges autonomously and to do so in a cooperative, effective and sustainable way.⁴ It has been found that when schools turn to local authorities for support, determining the 'real' problem is often a first action before offering guidance and investing in tailor-made school development processes. Local authorities see an advantage in drawing on the broad, multi-disciplinary expertise of their own staff to support school teams.

⁴ Eurocities organised a Critical Friends Review on this topic in May 2017. The report is expected to be published in September.



Measures to consider include:

- **Build capacity for change management**, including the identification of change leaders at different levels of the education system (school, local, municipal/regional, system level), offering them professional development on change management, and other forms of support;
- **Set up broad and inclusive consultation processes**, to build trust and enhance support for reforms among stakeholders, and to inform policy-making;
- **Consider regional or local partnerships to stimulate school development or support the implementation of specific reforms**, e.g. model regions, local networks.

4.2 Coherence of policies

Policy-makers should aim to achieve coherence across the system, aligning different policies directly affecting teachers and school leaders and embedding them in wider school policies, to serve the ultimate objective of ensuring high quality education for all learners.

Ensuring coherence, or continuity, between different policies (e.g. on professional development, staff careers, support measures, leadership, curricula etc.) avoids tensions and contradictions and makes systems more effective. Coherent policies should also seek to create room for experiment and innovation. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including social partners, in meaningful dialogue helps achieve this coherence.

There is a range of policy areas that have a direct or indirect impact on the careers and working conditions of teachers and school leaders, and so affect schools' ability to turn themselves into work environments that fit the vision of the school as a learning organisation. The motivation of staff to become involved in school development and act as change agents seems directly related with the attractiveness of the profession, both to serving staff and to potential new teachers.

A Study for the European Commission^{xxxii} found that while making teaching more attractive as a profession is the stated objective of most European countries, only a handful have comprehensive strategies that go beyond piecemeal measures and aim to align different policies for this purpose. One example is Norway where significant central input and guidance is aimed at transforming the status, professionalism and capability of teachers (Box 3).

Box 3: A comprehensive strategies to raise teachers' competence levels

In **Norway** a strategy, "Promotion of the status and quality of teachers – joint effort for a modern school of knowledge," was launched in 2014. The objective of this comprehensive government programme is to enhance student learning through extensive efforts designed to develop and upgrade teachers' competences and increase their motivation.

The programme includes a number of measures with these goals in view:

All students should have teachers that are specialised in maths, English and Norwegian: While research points to positive impacts on learning when teachers know their subjects well, a high share of subject teachers do not have a formal specialisation. The government wants the current subject specialisation requirements for newly qualified teachers to apply to all teachers. Primary school teachers will therefore need at least 30 credits in the relevant subject in order to teach maths, English and Norwegian (at least 60 credits for secondary school teachers).

New teachers will require a 5-year Master's degree: The government has introduced a five-year Master's degree for teachers, starting in 2017. The aim is to raise the quality of Initial Teacher Education, with the result that newly qualified teachers should receive enhanced preparation for their careers.

Investment in continuing education for teachers: The government will sustain investment in continuing education in order to help all teachers obtain the qualifications they need. Almost 6 000 teachers (of approximately 92 000) are in formal education programmes in the school year 2016-2017. In total, the government will invest more than NOK 1.3 billion (EUR 140 million) in further formal education for teachers in 2017. That commitment will enable municipalities and county school owners

to plan and organise the education programmes for their teachers, to ensure that they satisfy the new qualification requirements. Teachers who already fulfil the formal requirements will also be able to develop their competences.

New career paths for teachers will be piloted. There will be a focus on building up competences in counties, municipalities and head teachers in order to create a knowledge-rich education system

Efforts will be made to build teams and strong subject-based communities within schools

A *national strategy for quality in teacher education* was launched in May 2017. The strategy includes new quality measures, including a national framework for guidance and support for newly educated and appointed teachers.

More information: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/innsikt/larerloftet/id2008159/>

The latitude for teachers and school leaders to take risks and make mistakes is important. In a system that features a large number of examinations, it becomes difficult to accept risk and innovate at either the organisational level or that of curricular management practices. However, if there is genuine alignment within the system, this problem can be alleviated to some extent. Staff should feel able to turn to each other for advice, and work in collaboration with each other in a relationship of mutual trust. European stakeholder organisations in the Working Group proposed steps that would create better policy coherence through the deeper involvement of stakeholders: the teachers themselves, the organisations representing them and the wider community (Box 4).

Box 4: Involving stakeholders to increase policy coherence

European stakeholder organisations recommended that policy-makers:

- involve relevant stakeholders in regular and open dialogue and collaboration that are not linked to negotiations (e.g. staff remuneration), to create more ownership by stakeholders and a shared vision as a basis for policy-making.
- consider the involvement of (European) stakeholder organisations for their extensive networks at national, regional and local levels (e.g. to test/receive feedback on peer learning results) and their broad expertise in school education (they are more than just interest groups). European stakeholder organisations pointed to their awareness of common challenges and cultural differences between countries.
- involve a broad range of stakeholders (beyond the groups represented at the PLA), also including student representatives, parent associations, local community representatives, industrial partners, art groups, pedagogical research at university level etc.

Joint reflection by European stakeholder organisations at the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) of the Working Group in Leuven, May 2017.

The following two examples, from Romania and the Netherlands, illustrate the importance of central leadership for the initiation of policies that then require for their success the ownership and commitment of actors at school level.

Box 5: Aligning teacher policies with broader school policies

In **Romania**, the Ministry of National Education has developed an action plan for desegregation and quality improvement in education, a public policy act that is intended to ban and eradicate any form of segregation in schools. One of the measures included in the plan is to change the law regarding school segregation, which will be enshrined in the initial education and continuous professional development of teachers, head teachers and other teaching staff. The action plan also comprises a revision of quality standards for schools on school desegregation, inclusive education and diversity. The legal basis for teacher salaries will be revised to introduce merit-based salary bonuses to teachers who record school progress of the most vulnerable groups of children in education. The Ministry is also seeking to develop broad partnerships with various educational partners for the implementation, and the monitoring of the implementation, of strategic measures included in the Action plan.

In the **Netherlands** a new inspection scheme was introduced in summer 2017. In the previous scheme, schools had to account for their quality based on a standardised list of minimum criteria. This approach created two problems: a lack of ownership by teachers and school leaders towards the criteria used, and little motivation for schools to perform above the minimum standards. In the new scheme, schools can establish their own ambitions and the goals they want to achieve, and indicate the criteria they want the inspectorate to use for the assessment of their performance against these aims. These criteria are added to the minimum criteria. Each school is given feedback on how to improve further.



Measures to consider include:

- **Consider comprehensive strategies to raise the quality in the teaching professions, including school leadership, and the attractiveness of careers at school**, covering such aspects as teacher competences, qualification requirements, a continuum of teacher education and professional development, teacher evaluation, career perspectives and working conditions;
- **Critically review policies on teachers and school leaders** in line with any major changes to curricula, assessment, school organisation and funding, quality assurance etc., and vice versa, to ensure coherence in line with central policy objectives in school education;
- **Involve stakeholder organisations in open and regular dialogue** to increase policy coherence and benefit from their experience and broad networks.

4.3 Shared vision and understanding

Shared vision and understanding, which consider national, regional and local perspectives and priorities on school policy, give direction to the work of schools as learning organisations and to the systems by which they are supported.

Developing a shared vision and understanding strengthens teachers' and school leaders' ability to develop effective learning and teaching, and to collaborate rather than compete. Ensuring opportunities for interpretation in the local context will help teachers and school leaders gain ownership of the vision and engage with the management of change. For this to happen, it is important that policies are based on an understanding of autonomy for schools and staff that is balanced with appropriate modes of accountability and support for building the capacity of staff to act locally.

Decentralisation of education systems in Europe has been accompanied by a general move towards greater autonomy for the school as a whole, and particularly for those assuming leadership roles^{xxxii}. The link between the degree of school autonomy and the potential positive impact of school leaders has been established^{xxxiii}.

In some education systems there is more centralisation, and political influence is more pronounced, than in other systems characterised by greater local autonomy. Policy actions will be different depending on the country context. Working Group members recognised these national variations, with some cultures demonstrating high levels of trust among actors, while others lacked this sense of shared endeavour. There is also a risk that autonomy is only nominal. If the view from inside the school is that autonomy has connotations of trust and empowerment then it will be embraced. However if autonomy is primarily viewed as a means of pushing responsibility (but not necessarily authority) down a hierarchy onto schools, and possibly is just a cost-saving exercise, then the shift is less likely to be successful. Consequently, how policy makers communicate and enact autonomy becomes critical. Consideration should be given to how those teachers who may start from a position of demotivation can be encouraged.

Levels of autonomy granted should be considered alongside arrangements for accountability in the system. A balance of autonomy and accountability must be established in order to promote the possibilities of teachers and school leaders taking risks and making change happen, but at the same time being responsible for the actions taken and results achieved. An example from Portugal illustrates how devolution of responsibility can be successfully achieved (Box 6):

Box 6: Developing a widely shared vision on teachers' professional development

In **Portugal**, a new policy on teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) underlines the need to combine individual and collective 'interests', with schools aiming to serve teachers' and departments' organisational needs through collective learning and self-reflection. CPD comprises small and long-term courses developed in, and by, the schools themselves and not necessarily by external trainers. It can take on characteristics of learning communities encouraging collective reflection. This policy is deeply embedded in a logic of school autonomy and empowerment, stressing the mechanisms of self-regulation and improvement.

The notion of "accountable autonomy" may be helpful. If this idea appears at first sight a contradiction, it is implicit that accountability is not simply a matter of control by the authorities but that it provides mechanisms through which a school leader's performance is enhanced. Accountability

should imply responsibility, and so the opportunity for individuals to change and improve the education system. In this way, accountability can be seen in a positive light.

The use of smart data, effective quality assurance mechanisms and tailored support, for example to develop measures for education institutions in disadvantaged areas, all can make school leadership more efficient and effective, and are not simply instruments of control^{xxxiv}. This view is consistent with the results of work undertaken by the Working Group in respect of Quality Assurance.

The model of the school as learning organisation (Figure 1) gives primacy to a shared and inclusive vision centred on enhancing the learning experiences and outcomes of all students. Although vision is only one of seven dimensions of the model, it sits at its core. The vision is the outcome of a process involving all staff, to which students, parents, the external community and other partners are invited to contribute^{xxxv}. It should be emphasised that the school must work at a local level in order to secure ownership and sharing, within the context of a national or regional framework.

Box 7: Developing a shared vision through broad platforms and partnerships

In **Finland**, the Ministry of Education and Culture in January 2016 appointed a Teacher Education Forum to support the reform of Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development. Close to one hundred forum members and experts participated in work on the Teacher Education Development Programme. In addition, nearly 2 000 experts from the education sector, students and teachers, were involved through an online think-tank. The objective of this reform programme is to introduce a systematic, coherent structure for teachers' competence development spanning their entire career. The programme aims to ensure that teachers have opportunities for competence development at any point in their professional lives. Particular attention has been paid to building up the competences of beginning teachers and to offering them support during their first years in the profession. The programme will promote competence development in teams and networks, and make mentoring a more systematic element in the induction of novice teachers. Investment in educational leadership aims at supporting schools towards becoming learning organisations. The Teacher Education Development Programme is implemented in broad co-operation through twenty innovative development projects starting in autumn 2017. It is part of the government's key project aiming to reform comprehensive school, learning environments and teachers' competence. To learn more: <http://minedu.fi/documents/1410845/4183002/Teacher+Education+Development+Programme+2016>.

In many EU Member States, school education is organised by more than one type of provider, and relevant knowledge and experience are spread across several stakeholders. **Eurocities** reports on examples for platforms, initiated and supported at local level to foster cooperation and exchange between these partners, including school boards, providers of Initial Teacher Education, research institutions, trade unions as well as organisations in the fields of youth, care and culture. For instance, in **Antwerp**, Belgium, the city involves both local and national partners (e.g. Education Ministry, public employment services) in a platform dedicated to attracting more and better candidates into teaching (<http://www.onderwijsstalent.be/>).

The model also proposes arrangements of distributed leadership. The notion of teachers' leadership of learning can be seen in this way, applying to a range of situations across and beyond their own school, in which teachers may act influentially. From the school head's perspective shared leadership within and between schools is a mechanism to ensure capacity; it is powerful but it results in leadership

practices which are more complex and so present their own management challenge (OECD 2008)^{xxxvi}. An example of the systematic development of distributed leadership is provided by Portugal (Box 8).

Box 8: Creating broad partnerships to support reform initiatives

In **Portugal**, the National Programme for School Success Promotion, implemented in 2015/2017, used distributed leadership at system level, incorporating the following steps:

1. Defining broad guidelines by a task force at central level;
2. Training for trainers;
3. Training for school leaders, including head teachers and others;
4. Identifying areas for priority action within the framework for the autonomy of each school/cluster of schools;
5. Design of strategic plans in association with the mission and purposes of each school/cluster of schools;
6. Implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and redesign of the strategic plans;
7. External evaluation.



Measures to consider include:

- **Open fora or platforms to bring together perspectives from different levels of the system** including central authorities, national stakeholder organisations; regional/local authorities and stakeholders, practitioners at school, pupils with their parents and families, local communities;
- **Balance school autonomy with measures of accountability that support school development** and help teachers and school leaders to shape schools as learning organisations; review quality assurance systems and the role of inspection in this respect;
- **When defining policies and priorities for Continuing Professional Development**, consider balancing needs at system and school levels with those of individual teachers and school leaders;

4.4 Setting expectations

Clear expectations for the engagement of teachers and school leaders, that can be set through standards, competence frameworks or curricula, helps define roles within learning organisations.

These expectations can guide the provision of appropriate support and give staff good career perspectives, whilst maintaining a freedom to take risks, develop and innovate, have ownership, and stimulate collaboration within and across areas of curriculum and school development.

As teachers pass through different stages of their careers, their progress is intricately linked with their command over a set of competences required for effective practice, linking knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.⁵ Policy makers have a major role to play in setting up the expectations for the engagement of teachers and school leaders. An increasing number of education systems are making these expectations explicit with the help of competence frameworks or professional standards, or through curricula. If these tools provide the opportunity for dialogue, rather than serving as mechanistic tick-lists, they can help promote quality in the teaching profession by increasing transparency, by helping teachers deploy and develop their professional competences and by promoting teacher agency, empowerment and responsibility.⁶

While the majority of European countries now have frameworks that define and describe a set of competences teachers should possess, or develop over their career, in practice, such frameworks vary in terms of format, level of detail, value and use to which they are put. In some countries competence frameworks extend to guidelines for Initial Teacher Education, or define competences at different steps in a teachers' career and underpin criteria for career advancement. Latvia and Poland have both made recent changes to their standards for teachers, while the Steiner Waldorf schools in the Flemish education system (Belgium) have agreed a tailored system of standards for the evaluation of their schools with the Ministry of Education and Training (Box 9):

Box 9: Setting expectations through standards: for the profession, for teacher education and for school evaluation

In **Latvia**, a new standard for the teaching profession is being developed in accordance with the new competence-based approach to the curriculum. This standard describes the necessary skills and attitudes, professional knowledge and competences of teachers according to their professional activities and responsibilities. In the development of the content of the new standard the experience and examples of neighbouring Baltic states have been taken into account.

In **Poland**, new standards of teacher education based on learning outcomes were introduced in 2012 to enhance the quality and importance of pedagogical practice and to improve the link of theory with practice. Five years later a number of serious shortcomings were identified, including the absence of

⁵ Professional competences form one of the five interrelated perspectives of the continuum of the teacher profession introduced in section 3.1.1 above.

⁶ Policy guidance developed by the ET2020 Thematic Working Group on Teacher Professional Development discusses the variety of approaches, also warning that if competence frameworks are understood and employed as tools for intensified, external control of teachers they might have unintended, disempowering effects (European Commission 2013): *Teacher Competence Development for Better Learning Outcomes*

recruitment criteria for teachers, the low quality of candidates entering ITE, outdated programmes and the low social prestige of ITE qualifications. Consequently, in April 2017, the Minister of Education set up a working group to assess the situation, prepare a concept and make recommendations for changes needed in teacher education. The group consists of representatives from the Ministry, a range of educational bodies and agencies, higher education institutions and others.

Steiner Waldorf schools in the Flemish education system (Belgium), are inspected on the basis of their own standards. The Ministry of Education and Training carries out school inspections, but important guidance services are provided by the schools' umbrella organisations (in this case *Overleg Kleine Onderwijsverstrekkers*, OKO, the organisation covering all small education providers in the system). The Steiner Waldorf schools have developed their own standards for schools, based on pupils' learning outcomes, which the Flemish authorities have recognised as equal in value to the system-wide standards. Inspection is consequently carried out against the schools' own collective standards.

The pace of change noted under the previous principles (4.1, 4.2, 4.4) in turn demands regular review and, potentially, revision of the competences required for teachers, teacher educators and education leaders, and, in consequence, "strong action to support new approaches to teaching and learning" ^{xxxvii}. These "new approaches" may, for instance, be linked to moves towards competence-based school curricula or a stronger focus on teacher collaboration. They may also require new types of teacher competences that are related to specific characteristics of the school as learning organisation. This includes, for example, innovation and risk taking, which are discussed here as part of other principles (4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.9). Enshrining these expectations in competence frameworks or standards can help make collaboration and a contribution to wider school development the norm.

In the context of the school as learning organisation there should also be consideration of the extent to which the ownership of standards and competence frameworks can be extended to schools, to the teachers themselves. It is likely that a national or regional framework will be implemented, thereby promoting a degree of consistency across the system. However, at local level, teachers, school leaders and teacher educators may be anxious to see balance and political neutrality and will observe the consultation process that informs the set of standards, and also the constitution of the expert panels who formulate them. EU policy guidance has resulted in recommendations on how ownership and purpose can be ensured.⁷

Likewise, while there is sense in establishing a set of national standards, the level at which their implementation is controlled and monitored is contentious. Logically, leadership in the school as learning organisation will have first-hand knowledge and experience of a beginning teacher, but there are obvious and real concerns over favouritism and fairness if the system becomes too decentralised.

There are similar competence frameworks and standards for school leaders, but as for teachers, between countries they vary greatly in format, purpose and level of detail. The question has been raised whether these frameworks give sufficient attention to some of the aspects that may matter most for effective leadership, including the ability to motivate staff, to lead the development of teaching practice and teacher leadership. The following examples from Slovenia and Italy (Box 10) indicate the complexity of establishing school leaders' competences.

⁷ Policy guidance developed by the ET2020 Thematic Working Group on Teacher Professional Development - see previous footnote.

Box 10: Defining and assessing school leaders' competences

In **Slovenia**, school leaders' responsibilities are defined in legislation, but there is currently no career promotion, comparable to that of teachers. The school councils evaluate school leaders' competences annually, but the criteria are mainly quantitative and serve as a basis for the annual financial reward. Guidelines for school leaders' promotion are currently being developed within a project funded through the European Social Fund ([Leading and Managing Innovative Learning Environments](#)) but wide consensus will be required if system-wide implementation is to be considered.

In **Italy**, a new system of evaluation of school leaders was introduced in 2017. In an annual exercise a team of evaluators gather evidence through an interview with the school leader and by assessing his/her obligatory individual portfolio. A final decision on the evaluation is taken by the Regional Education Office. The evaluation is made against the school's improvement objectives, established through a self-evaluation report, as well as national and regional objectives, and considers the school leader's specific contribution to achieving them. The evaluation of school heads is aimed at enhancing and improving their professionalism as part of broader policy efforts to increase the quality of the school service and in accordance with the National Evaluation System.

In its consideration of Quality Assurance in school systems the Working Group explored the balance to be struck between appraisal of teachers as a mechanism for review and performance management, alongside a formative perspective that informs the identification of a programme of appropriate Continuing Professional Development. Current policy guidance emphasises the latter view. For example, the OECD report *Synergies for Better Learning* concludes unambiguously, "Without a clear link to professional growth opportunities, the impact of teacher appraisal on teaching and learning will be relatively limited"^{xxxxviii}. Such opportunities are inextricably linked to a teacher's motivation and sense of being valued.

A recent research project by the Association for Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) looked into the qualities of innovative teachers and how to support them in schools (Box 11):

Box 11: What makes for innovative teachers: a research project by the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE)

ATEE's Research and Development Centre (RDC) on the Professional Development of Teachers, a network within the association, chaired by Professor Kay Livingston, undertook a research project which aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics and qualities of innovative teachers and how they can be supported in developing their innovative qualities.

The project involved research being undertaken by 20 ATEE researchers from 11 countries (Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden and Turkey). Interviews were carried out with teachers, school leaders and teacher educators in these countries. The results of the research found that the innovative teachers displayed active agency in what they did. They showed a willingness to take risks and to pursue ways to develop their own learning and development.

The teachers, the school leaders and the teacher educators identified the following characteristics in innovative teachers: Inspirational; Risk-taker; Courageous; Independent thinker; Adaptive; Reflective; Self-confident; Eccentricity; Boldness; Curious; Open to new ways of doing things; Inclusive; Perseverance; Eager; Analytical; Creative; Commitment.

The interviewees provided practical examples of innovative approaches the teachers took in school such as:

Engaging Learners

- Being bold in choosing materials and strategies at the level of the classroom
- Understanding each student as an autonomous individual learner
- Understanding teaching as a dialogue with learners
- Turning failure into learning opportunities
- Understanding new technologies as a valuable learning resource

Connecting to real life context of students and extending teaching beyond subject disciplines and the space of the classroom and assessment requirements

- Openness to the outside world to apply new developments in the classroom
- Willing to take risks in trying new ways of doing
- Taking personal initiative beyond the requirements of the curriculum

Adaptive Professionals

- Demonstrates openness to broad conceptualisation of knowledge
- Demonstrates an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning
- Seeking and receptive to new ways of doing things

Commitment to On-going professional Learning Teachers

- Engages actively in personal research to discover new approaches
- Shares materials and strategies actively with colleagues
- Recognises the value of collaboration and learning from others

In creating the conditions for teacher innovation in school the role of the school leader was recognised as essential. The importance of whole school commitment to innovation was identified to enable teachers to develop trusting relationships, take risks and try new and different ways of developing learning and teaching for all learners in school.



Measures to consider:

- **Create transparency on the competences required from teachers at different stages of their careers** (such as graduation from ITE, end of induction, linked to later career steps) through competence frameworks or standards;
- **Involve teachers, teacher educators and other relevant stakeholders in the development and regular review of these tools** to ensure broad buy-in, relevance and usefulness;
- Ensure that expectations as set out in competence frameworks or standards for the teaching profession are **aligned with teacher education curricula, as well as with school curricula**.

4.5 School leaders and teachers shaping learning systems

Schools leaders and teachers should be acknowledged and respected for their expertise and their contribution to developing the education system at different levels.

Through their own endeavours as learners teachers and school leaders act as role models, adding to the development of the school as a learning organisation. But they should also be supported in their efforts to increase capacity to work across networks of schools and professionals. Involving teachers and school leaders from the outset in the design of new initiatives and reforms will help improve the system and empower staff to engage in leadership, be innovative and take (as well as manage) risks.

Members regarded distributed leadership as having a significant part to play within and between schools to ensure capacity. In complex organisations such as education systems hierarchies with a long chain of command lose their effectiveness. It is essential that many actors within the system assume individual responsibilities. But beyond the organisational benefits, the use of Michael Fullan's concept of "lateral capacity"^{xxxix} has virtues in maximising the use of proficiency of school staff. Teachers will have expertise in particular fields that can be shared with others. Others will learn or develop skills and understanding in consequence, but just as important may be the enhanced self-respect accruing to the teacher who has an identified role in helping the development of his or her colleagues.

Again it should be emphasised that successful peer-mentoring will not just happen; it requires planning and support for the teacher who is to take on the role, and should go beyond social or technical support to focus unambiguously on improving learning and teaching.

Box 12: Tutor teachers in Finnish basic education

The goal of the national tutor teacher model is that all the basic education schools in Finland will have a tutor who supports and advises other teachers to introduce new curricula. The aim of tutoring is to support schools and teachers in the school reform. That support includes utilisation of innovative pedagogy and the promotion of digitalisation of teaching, using the new and wider learning environments. Tutors both instruct individual teachers and organise guidance and support for different teacher groups. Tutor teachers are networking with their counterparts in their own municipality and also regionally.

Tutor teachers started their work in spring 2017. Nearly 80% of municipalities nationwide are already involved in the first phase of the project. Tutoring will be expanded and strengthened in the years to come, increasing the number of participating municipalities. There are government subsidies available both to train the tutor teachers and to finance their work. There will also be regional co-ordination and development funds in the future, which will enable hiring regional coordinators to support municipalities in the region and further develop tutoring. Different models of tutoring will be collected and shared with all the schools in 2018.

The fulfilment that individual teachers may gain from this kind of opportunity should not be underestimated. Career diversification and the harnessing of lateral capacity can compensate for the inevitable funnelling and constriction of prospects that characterise conventional management hierarchies. If properly recognised and acknowledged, teachers may be very satisfied with the

contribution that they have been enabled to make without necessarily progressing up the management ladder. See also 4.9 for further discussion of distributed leadership.

Using teachers' potential for school development

Several education systems can point to policy developments in which specific staff expertise has been identified, recognised and encouraged (Box 13).

Box 13: Recognising special expertise and competences within school teams

In the **Slovak Republic**, a teacher career system was introduced in 2009 to raise the quality and attractiveness of the profession, putting an emphasis on continuous professional growth. The system comprises four career stages (Novice teaching staff, Independent teaching staff, Teaching staff with a first attestation and Teaching staff with a second attestation). At the different stages the system also offers opportunities for horizontal specialisation, including specific professional activities such as career counsellor, ICT coordinator or head of subject area, as well as leadership positions. The career system is currently being reviewed to build on strengths and address shortcomings. Among other proposals the government is considering stricter selection criteria for Initial Teacher Education, support for training (laboratory) schools closely linked to ITE faculties and a new incentive-based remuneration scheme for teachers.

The **Netherlands** introduced differentiated salary scales from 2009. Within primary schools this move created opportunities to appoint specialist teachers in mathematics, Dutch language and topics such as culture and the arts. These specialist teachers have several roles within a school: to develop the curriculum on that topic and to support colleagues. Within larger school boards, expert teachers from different schools collaborate across schools to develop new teaching and learning strategies using outcomes from research.

In **Slovenia**, teachers can occupy different roles, such as class tutors, heads of subjects or team leaders. Although these roles are defined either by central legislation or schools' internal acts, they are not formally recognised as career advancement, and do not lead structurally to more senior positions at the school level. However, being part of a teacher team or holding a (non-formal) position at school is part of distributed leadership practice and the promotion of teacher leadership. It serves to recognise and make use of individual teachers' talents and competences in contributing to change management and school development. Different forms of distributed leadership are currently being piloted within the project [Leading and Managing Innovative Learning Environments](#), supported through the European Social Fund.

Once mechanisms have been established to enable teachers to take on special roles besides classroom teaching, including leadership roles, they are in a position to make an enhanced contribution to school development. The following examples from Luxembourg, Spain and Albania (Box 14) indicate the power of this process.

Box 14: Supporting school development locally

In **Luxembourg**, an agency affiliated to the Education Ministry, SCRIPT (*Service de coordination de la recherche et de l'innovation pédagogiques et technologiques*), has just started offering systematic support and additional resources for local school development. As part of this support, the institute runs a network of resource teachers specialised in school development who assist and accompany

schools in drawing up development plans. At the secondary level (*lycées*) the project also encourages the establishment of school development teams. The initiative underlines local school autonomy and the adaptation of school development to local needs. To this purpose it encourages, and provides a legal framework for, broad collaboration within the school community. The offer to schools includes support in networking with other schools, a new project management system and CPD dedicated to school development.

In Spain, one of the main goals of the new Organic Law on Education is to promote the quality of educational establishments, by strengthening their autonomy and enhancing the role of management bodies. Measures envisaged include specific quality improvement programmes for schools that wish to improve their performance. These steps should be based on the understanding of the school as an organisation with shared responsibilities, and take as reference other innovative school management models that have previously proven successful in other countries of the EU. Participating schools are asked to draw up a strategic plan defining intended outcomes, strategic objectives, the management's vision and core values and a project implementation schedule.

In order to carry out this kind of programme, schools will be granted a greater degree of autonomy regarding curriculum and human resources as well as material and financial resources. The head teacher will be enabled to adapt teacher recruitment to specific requirements deriving from the implementation of the programme under the supervision of the educational administration of the Autonomous Community, which will be responsible for compliance with applicable regulations.

Schools in these programmes will be held accountable for their performance, as compared to their starting situation. Teachers involved in the programme can have their activities recognised as merits for teacher allocations as well as for professional development – provided the school receives a favourable project report.

In Albania, the initiative “School as a Community Centre - a friendly school for everyone” aims to build strong partnerships between schools, families and local communities. Supported by a range of international organisations, including the Council of Europe and UNICEF, it currently involves 225 schools across the country.

Schools' activities are assessed against standards issued by the central education authorities. School leaders and teachers play a central role in these transformation processes, leading, managing and supporting the work as part of a wider team that also involves representatives of parents, pupils, local government and other partners. Teachers' tasks can involve project work, local or international, the organisation of meetings and consultations with parents and pupils, and cultural activities. The initiative includes professional development activities for the teachers involved, both locally and within the region.

Both an external assessment by the UNDP and the internal monitoring of the initiative by the Ministry have pointed out the important role of the teachers in the process and underlined the importance of supporting them through professional development. The external assessment also identified that teachers considered their involvement in the scheme to be an overload. Following its suggestion the Ministry introduced additional financial incentives for the teachers involved.

Beyond teachers' own school, their specialisation and expertise can be shared to wider benefit. Typically this input may be affected through networks. These links may be local in their organisation, or national, as the following two examples from Germany illustrate (Box 15).

Box 15: Spreading competence and experience across school networks

Each school in the network of **Waldorf Steiner schools** in Germany is expected to ensure high quality induction of beginning teachers. This includes mentoring through an experienced colleague, involvement in collegial support groups and tailored professional development. Mentors for each school engage in regional exchange groups with their peers. Regional groups are facilitated by teachers who in turn collaborate with peers in exchanges at national level facilitated by the German association of Waldorf schools.

In **Germany**, the most prestigious school award, the *Deutscher Schulpreis* (German School Award) has led to the creation of a network that bring together all schools that have received the award over recent years. The *Deutsche Schulakademie* (German School Academy) offers schools that have received the award the opportunity to exchange experiences. A separate award for excellent and innovative schooling in the non-academic tracks of Germany's school system, the *Starke Schule* (Strong school) award, links up 200 of its award winning schools during 4 years for networking, professional development and the sharing of good practice.

Part of the role of school leaders is to facilitate the sharing process, matching expert practitioners with colleagues, either within their school or beyond into the networks in which they belong.

Leaders working to improve the system

Considerable expertise resides in school leaders and teachers. Education systems (for example in Finland, Belgium-Flanders, Austria and UK/England) are now identifying “system leaders”, who usually have been successful in their own schools and are in a position to support other local schools, or, indeed, become involved in an even wider network. The involvement of system leaders could be to support a school identified as weak, but equally, and more positively, the leader may be offering peer-to-peer support for other school leaders on developmental priorities or providing needs-based support for colleagues new in post^{x1}. These arrangements will be forward-looking and have a particular value through introducing fresh ideas and avoiding schools becoming isolated or introspective. The four examples below reflect the diversity of opportunities that could be implemented (Box 16).

Box 16: Opportunities for teachers and school leaders to contribute to system development

In **Northern Ireland (UK)**, education practitioners with a post of responsibility in their own school can contribute to enhancing and supporting the inspection process by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) by becoming an Associate Assessor.

Associate Assessors are appointed through public advertisement and interview, and must successfully complete induction training. Their initial period of tenure is three years and they will normally join at least two inspections or inspection activities each year.

By working with Associate Assessors, the inspectorate aims to enable others to share in the process of inspection; provide the opportunity for current practitioners to experience, and to contribute to the inspection process; bring a current practitioner's perspective to the inspection process and to its continuous improvement; develop the concept of self-evaluation and enable the assessors to have a deeper understanding of how the process of self-evaluation helps their own organisations.

In the **Netherlands**, the government supports the bottom-up initiative of a cross-school network of innovative teachers through funding and the invitation to provide input on teacher policies. The aim of the national network *Leraren met lef* is to connect innovative teachers, who feel isolated at their school for lack of a learning culture, with like-minded colleagues from other schools. Financial support is given to the network to organise national events and masterclasses (e.g. on sharing leadership at school). The network emphasises teacher agency and representatives were invited to contribute their ideas in the process of the development of the governments *Teacher Agenda 2013-2020* initiative. More information: www.lerarenmetlef.nl.

In **Norway**, the government is introducing plans to improve retention of good teachers in the classroom. New career pathways have been piloted in a limited number of municipalities since autumn 2015. The aim is to give teachers opportunities for taking on new challenges and develop themselves and their schools professionally, while they continue teaching. It is expected that the teachers themselves take part in analysing results, initiate professional development for the organisation and give guidance to colleagues. It has recently been decided to expand the pilots until 2019.

In **Latvia**, a range of projects addressing teacher education and competences is supported through the European Social Fund and ensure support for the implementation of education reforms. This includes projects on the implementation of competence-based approaches to curricula; prevention and intervention measures to reduce early school leaving; support to the development of students' individual competences; career guidance.



Measures to consider include:

- Create opportunities for school staff to diversify careers by **taking on additional roles to classroom teaching/school leadership, at school** (coordinating or leadership roles; support to colleagues, including mentoring, professional development, involvement in school development, (international) project work, extracurricular activities, co-operation with external partners);
- Create opportunities for school staff to **become involved in developing the education system** (school evaluation; policy dialogue; policy development etc.)
- Create opportunities for/encourage/support school staff to engage in **school-to-school networks to share expertise and teaching resources, spread innovation or support school development**

4.6 Professional culture

Education systems can help schools develop professional working and learning cultures that motivate teachers and school leaders.

Fostering a desire and providing capacity in schools to learn and improve together will help teachers and school leaders better adapt to changing needs of learners and society. Motivation can be influenced by internal and external factors and should be taken into account when considering the recruitment and retention of staff. Collaboration, distributed leadership and networking offer significant potential for a professional culture that supports working and learning at school.

The school as a learning organisation is rooted in a shared ethos and culture around learning and improving collectively (see Figure 1). The school is characterised by its promotion of team learning and collaboration, which is seen as a defining direction in transforming practice. A range of dispositions among members of staff must be developed, and allowed to flourish:

PROMOTING TEAM LEARNING AND COLLABORATION AMONG ALL STAFF

- Staff learn how to work together as a team
- Collaborative working and collective learning – face-to-face and through ICTs – are focused and enhance learning experiences and outcomes of students and/or staff practice
- Staff feel comfortable turning to each other for consultation and advice
- Trust and mutual respect are core values
- Staff reflect together on how to make their own learning more powerful
- The school allocates time and other resources for collaborative working and collective learning

*Source: OECD/UNICEF (2016): *What makes a school a learning organisation? A guide for policy-makers, school leaders and teachers*, p4^{xli}*

Few would dispute that these aims are laudable, but in practice they may represent a considerable cultural shift within an education system, one that is likely to disrupt existing practice and vested interests. Self-confidence and some humility are required from individual teachers if they are genuinely to “feel comfortable turning to each other for consultation and advice.” If teachers are anxious about their work, or feel threatened and unable to speak openly about how the school might improve, they are unlikely to contribute effectively to its enhancement. The role of the outer ring – the community – of the school as learning organisation is critical in nurturing the trust and mutual respect that underpins the model. Policy-makers at national and local levels have a major responsibility to support the advance of a positive shared ethos.

Depending on the degree of autonomy schools have in relation to hiring staff, the process of developing a collaborative culture can begin as early as the recruitment process, incorporating tasks that explore the inclination of candidates to subscribe to a school’s philosophy. The assessment of candidates’ responses to questions about competences (see 4.8) may provide useful indicators. The role of retention, to maintain the involvement and commitment of a valued colleague once they have joined the staff team, is important, too. The school as learning organisation will respect the beliefs and positions held by its members. Mentoring may play a valuable role in enhancing the individual teacher’s sense of self-worth, especially for newcomers (see 3.1.2, 4.4 and 4.5). In Ireland, the

importance of a “bridge”, providing structure at the formal entry point into the profession, has been established for newly qualified teachers (Box 17).

Box 17: Building a bridge into the profession for beginning teachers

In **Ireland**, *Droichead* (Irish for 'bridge') is an integrated induction framework for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). It has been designed to reflect the importance of the induction phase on the teacher's lifelong learning journey. It marks the point where the new teacher is formally welcomed into the profession of teaching having completed the Initial Teacher Education phase. *Droichead* includes both school-based and additional professional learning activities to meet the needs of teachers as they begin their career. The main objective of the *Droichead* process is to support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career. The current model was launched in September 2016 and is planned to be the professional induction programme for all NQTs by the school year 2020/2021. Schools will have an interim period to transition into this model.

The first step in the *Droichead* process is to establish a Professional Support Team (PST). This is a team of experienced and fully registered teachers who work collaboratively to support the novice teachers during the *Droichead* process and who support his or her entry into both the school and the profession. A National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) *Droichead* Associate provides follow-up support and professional development to the support team, newly qualified teachers and the school staff. It is important that there is a whole-school approach to *Droichead* as each staff member will support beginning teachers in different ways; from a tea or coffee and informal chat in the staff room, to co-planning and sharing resources and ideas to a more structured approach involving observation and feedback.

Droichead is a non-evaluative professional induction framework, which is markedly different from the traditional forms of post-qualification professional practice which applied in schools at primary (probation) and post-primary (post-qualification employment) levels in the past. To learn more: <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Droichead/>

In **Malta**, all newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and teachers who return back to their profession after a long spell (career break), go through induction and mentoring. The induction course is jointly organised by the central education authority (the Directorate) and the teachers' College (local network of schools). It is followed by two years of mentoring through senior teachers and Heads of Departments with a focus on classroom practice and aspects related to teachers' tasks.

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, within a four-step career system, beginning teachers have the status of "teacher-trainee". They work with a mentor to develop their competences. In 2016, a working group with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for Development of Education, the state educational sector, the non-governmental sector, the teaching profession and school leaders, developed a range of guidelines and templates for the work of teachers and their mentors.

The importance of teacher education is already recognised at supranational level. The Council of the EU summarised its position in 2014, stating:

"Teacher education should be seen as an integral part of the broader policy objective to raise the attractiveness and quality of the profession. This requires adequate selection, recruitment

and retention policies, effective initial teacher education, early career support, career-long professional learning and development, pedagogical feedback and incentives for teachers."^{xlvi}

Ministers also invited the Commission to “Build communities of teachers, in particular prospective and recently recruited teachers, by making use of existing European platforms for teachers such as eTwinning, with a view to further developing collaboration among peers on teaching practices across the EU” and “to support cooperation with partners, networks and organisations which can offer experience and know-how on designing effective teacher education programmes, in particular initial education programmes”^{xlvi}. Examples below (Box 18) from the Netherlands, Slovenia and Croatia describe the benefits of building communities among school staff:

Box 18: Promoting a culture of team learning and collaboration among all staff

In the Netherlands, an increasing number of schools have introduced collaborative strategies for team teaching and team learning. Two prominent examples are *Stichting Leerkraft*, and initiatives around Lesson Study.

Stichting Leerkraft (Teacher force) focuses on the collaborative work of teachers. Teachers meet regularly to prepare lessons, to observe each other's lessons and to discuss the outcomes of pupil learning. An increasing number of schools (now almost 500) have integrated this way of working in their weekly schedule.

An increasing number of schools practice *Lesson Study*, a learning process for teachers in which they collaboratively:

- define a concrete learning objective for pupils,
- design a lesson that will help pupils to gain the intended learning outcome,
- observe pupils during a lesson taught by one of the teachers,
- evaluate to what extent the design helped the pupils to gain the intended learning outcomes and
- draw conclusions on the lesson design and the underlying assumptions.

This process can be repeated with a redesigned lesson. Often schools carry out Lesson Study in close collaboration with teacher education institutes.

In Slovenia, many policy initiatives encourage team learning and collaboration, both at school level and among schools. The initiatives typically establish teams of teachers and offer them training on running activities with their own colleagues at school. Among those involved are the Networks of Learning Schools coordinated by the National School for Leadership in Education (NSLE). Based on concepts of school improvement, collaborative culture and networking, each network consists of six to eight schools. Schools and NSLE jointly select topics. School development teams meet regularly, and receive training on both the contents (e.g. cooperation with parents, classroom management, prevention of bullying, etc.) and the process of managing change. This process is designed to enable them to act as change agents in their schools.

In Croatia, a major reform aims at making all schools digitally mature (e-Schools) by investing in infrastructure and digital competence development. This work is supported through virtual communities of practice linking and supporting teachers across the schools where this policy is piloted. Teachers are encouraged to communicate and collaborate by sharing examples of good practice in the use of ICT in education. Support to the community includes virtual meetings, webinars and face-to-face school visits.



Measures to consider include:

- **Encourage and support collaboration among staff for teaching** (e.g. team teaching; sharing of teaching resources) **and staff learning** (collaborative CPD, classroom observations; mentoring);
- **Consider cross-school networks and digital platforms** to support (a culture of) collaboration in the teaching profession;
- **Support a culture of collaboration by avoiding situations that could encourage counterproductive competition between individuals**, for instance by underlining collective/team elements in staff assessment/evaluation, objective setting, incentives and recognition;
- **Strengthen recruitment and retention of qualified staff**, where possible by giving schools the possibility to take school ethos or professional culture into account when recruiting new staff;
- **Encourage links between schools and providers of teacher education** to support a culture of continued learning among school staff;
- **Support systematic induction of beginning teachers, and teachers new to a school.**

4.7 Research, reflective practice and enquiry

Policies should support a culture of research, reflective practice and enquiry-based learning at school.

Practice-oriented research and enquiry should be embedded along the continuum of school leaders' and teachers' professional development, including Initial Teacher Education. This will stimulate teachers' motivation and competence to engage in research with the purpose of informing and enabling action across the system. Researchers in schools, universities and other organisations should have opportunities to disseminate their work and exchange information and ideas.

The school as learning organisation recognises the importance of a continuous process of learning for all members of its community, particularly teachers as well as their students. *Establishing a culture of inquiry, exploration and innovation* is one of the key dimensions of the concept, linked to the opportunities for staff to innovate, take risks and experiment in a spirit of inquiry and open-mindedness that leads to better learning.

ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF INQUIRY, EXPLORATION AND INNOVATION

- Staff want and dare to experiment and innovate in their practice
- The school supports and recognises staff for taking initiative and risks
- Staff engage in forms of inquiry to investigate and extend their practice
- Inquiry is used to establish and maintain a rhythm of learning, change and innovation
- Staff have open minds towards doing things differently
- Problems and mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning
- Students are actively engaged in inquiry

Source: OECD/UNICEF (2016),: *What makes a school a learning organisation? A guide for policy-makers, school leaders and teachers*, p5.^{xliv}

However, this shift can present new challenges to staff in schools, and to the education system itself, to ensure that high quality professional development still takes place, no longer provided nor necessarily closely monitored by the educational superstructure. The risk that decentralisation of teaching and learning may allow intellectual inertia and stasis to assert themselves can be avoided if policy supports schools' efforts to make research, reflective practice and enquiry-based learning part of their everyday practice. The key is that the quest for evidence should be scientific and systematic.

In such an environment teachers will work to shape their hypotheses. They have the permission and latitude to experiment, singly and together, and with colleagues in other schools, and to manage how their explorations progress. There may be a tendency towards action research, usually without the use of control groups but using approaches that are repeated with modification after analysis and reflection. Several countries have already formalised practice to encourage teacher-led research projects (Box 19):

Box 19: Teacher-led research projects

In **Bulgaria**, the 2016 educational law package introduced new national educational standards that set a new framework and outline expectations for schools as learning organisations. Among other things, the new framework envisages support for teachers and school leaders to act as researchers and innovators.

In the **Netherlands**, with financial support from the government, the Onderwijscoöperatie - the national body for the teaching profession - in 2015 launched the Teacher Development Fund (*LerarenOntwikkelFonds*) to support bottom-up innovative ideas. The funding programme helps teachers put innovative ideas into practice through small-scale school-based projects, without the constraints of the financial implications or the priorities of the school where they are employed. Project grants are accompanied by a support programme in which teachers are supported by a coach, both on the content of their innovation project and on issues concerning implementation and finding grass root support within their school.

To learn more: <http://lerarenontwikkelfonds.onderwijscoöperatie.nl/>

These efforts clearly should not take place in a methodological vacuum. Co-operation and partnerships with researchers in higher education institutions help teacher-researchers to ensure that investigations are carried out with academic rigour (and also within appropriate ethical boundaries). Projects may be organised among co-enquirers in schools, universities and other organisations. This breadth of participation is likely to provide various outlets at national, regional and local level for knowledge sharing and transfer, for example through engagement in projects, then presentations and dissemination, thereby feeding into the wider education system and in return receiving further stimulus for research. Collaborative culture is then seen to work at the local level and on a larger scale, and there is a sense of collective ownership of the outcomes.

The OECD's TALIS survey found a positive correlation between teachers' professional development based on research, observation and exchange and their use of active teaching practices: "Teachers who report participating in professional development activities involving individual and collaborative research, observation visits to other schools, or a network of teachers are also more likely to use active teaching practices, such as small group work, projects requiring more than a week for students to complete and information and computer technology (ICT)." ^{xlv}

Members of the Working Group considered that professional development embracing practice-oriented enquiry should be embedded from the ITE phase onwards. This expectation is realistic, especially where trends towards Master's level work are becoming a significant element of ITE.

Previously the Working Group has identified appropriate support structures as one of the five perspectives to consider in policies for a 'continuum of the teaching profession'. This '*instrumental perspective*' will include different elements depending on the phase concerned (future teacher/beginning teacher/serving teacher), but it was stressed that "in all three phases, sources for learning come from *experience* (teaching and teaching practice), from *peers and other key stakeholders and providers* (in communities of practice and classroom observation) and from *theory*. Learning from theory is often limited in the teaching period after ITE. Theoretical ideas and research findings can help to build reflective teaching and this practice needs supporting. Career-long instruments, such as teacher portfolios, can help to strengthen the continuum of teaching." ^{xlvii} An

instance of the use of professional portfolios is provided by Italy, below (Box 20), one of three examples of the encouragement of reflective practice.

Box 20: Supporting reflective practice

In **Italy**, a professional portfolio for teachers will provide documentary evidence of their professional development, working directly on the on-line platform hosted in the portal of the Ministry of Education and Research. The portfolio will help teachers reflect on their practice and their way of designing and implementing teaching, enabling each to identify and illustrate the fields of activity and professional skills through which to provide the greatest contribution to the school institution in which they work.

In **Steiner Waldorf schools** collective child study is a deeply embedded method of learner assessment and curriculum development that supports teachers' in their reflective practice. The method is commonly practised at faculty meetings and often involves teachers, therapists, school doctors, and occasionally parents, to draw up an individual education plan comprising diagnosis, therapy and further monitoring.

In the **Netherlands**, a bursary system for teachers to participate in Master's programmes (*Lerarenbeurs*) aims to contribute to a profession with a stronger focus on professional development, attitudes of inquiry and the use of research in schools. The scheme gives every teacher the opportunity to apply for a study grant for Master's (or a second Bachelor's) qualification. The grant covers the study fee for the duration of the programme (two or three years) and replacement costs for one day a week. Since its launch in 2008, 40 000 teachers have participated.

Research showed that the in-service Master's programmes contribute to a stronger inquiring attitude of teachers. Thanks to the research conducted for the Master's theses, at the school, an increasing number of action research activities take place in schools. Some of the teachers get the opportunity to remain involved in action research and inquiry projects within their schools after finishing their Master's programme. But their number is still limited as school leaders encounter difficulties in finding time and money for this activity within their budgets.

The Working Group report also recommended that, "to achieve a creative and reflective teaching workforce, policies and actions should encourage student teachers and teachers to use and engage in new research in their learning and practice. While ITE lays the foundations for this, policy actions should foster innovative cultures in schools and ensure they have links with universities and other organisations that support research-informed development of teaching practices." The group also recommended the promotion of action research as a way of finding valid solutions to challenges in classroom practice. *"This should be promoted by stakeholders as a means to strengthen collaborative learning environments within and between schools and with providers of ITE."*

In a majority of European countries, central guidelines indicate that Initial Teacher Education programmes should develop future teachers' knowledge and skills relating to educational research.⁸ These recommendations apply to programmes at both Bachelor's and Master's level. In countries where there are no central guidelines, in practice, providers may still include these elements in their programmes.

⁸ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/151EN.pdf



Measures to consider include:

- **Encourage the principle of using a teacher portfolios** as a way of supporting reflective practice and professional development; the portfolios can be introduced through Initial Teacher Education, and be part of the induction process or a tool to support serving teachers in their Continuing Professional Development and self-assessment;
- **Support teachers in gaining research qualifications and conducting research**, for instance by recognising and encouraging research as part of professional development; through grants for research projects or qualifications (e.g. PhD);
- **Support reflective practice** to develop learner-centred teaching and assessment strategies;
- **Reward and stimulate innovation in teaching, and school practice more generally**, for instance through grants, awards;
- **Create partnerships between schools and higher education institutions**, focused on research, feedback loops between theory and practice (involving both teacher education providers and faculties of educational science);
- Ensure **ITE programmes**, especially at Master's level, put sufficient focus on enquiry-based learning, reflective practice, innovation and research;
- Instigate and develop training for **peer-mentoring**.

4.8 Professional competences, capacity and autonomy

Teachers and school leaders should be supported in their professional development, autonomy and growth in a continuum spanning all phases of their careers.

Teachers and school leaders should be trusted, supported and empowered as professionals who can be agents of change contributing to school development and who have the capacity to take responsibility and be accountable for the impact of their actions. In collaborative learning environments their competences and capacities, as well as their autonomy and accountability should be considered not just individually but also collectively, as part of professional teams.

Teaching is a highly complex task. It requires a broad set of competences, the ability to apply them flexibly in a wide range of situations, and the readiness to develop them continuously. Many countries recognise that for competences to be effective, teachers first need high quality preparation and then a high degree of professional autonomy both in their practice and professional development. Similarly, the professional development and autonomy of school leaders is increasingly a matter of policy attention. This autonomy is increasingly accompanied with accountability, including school evaluation, individual appraisal and considerations of (external) student assessment.

A continuum of teachers' professional development

A considerable body of research documents the formal mechanisms that support teachers in their professional development. Schemas are likely to elaborate on phases of Initial Teacher Education, Induction and then Continuing Professional Development. There is a risk that these phases fragment and so become disconnected from each other^{xlvi}. Supported by more thoughtful policy and coordination, phases will provide a framework that continues to nurture teachers as their career develops. The phases thereby form a continuum of teacher education or professional development^{xlviii},⁹. An identifiable continuum is important for teachers, as it reinforces the sense that there is pattern and structure to their careers, and that their professional development serves them individually as well as responding to the priorities for the school.

An approach to the creation of a continuum of professional development through a central Teaching Council is provided by Ireland (Box 21).

Box 21: The Irish Teaching Council

In **Ireland**, a Teaching Council acts as the professional standards body for the teaching profession. The Council seeks to set and uphold high professional standards for teaching and teachers. Established in 2006, the Council has 37 members, 22 of whom are registered teachers. The Teaching Council ensures standards are upheld in the teaching profession by:

- setting the requirements for entry into teaching;
- maintaining a register of teachers who meet the Council registration requirements;
- establishing and monitoring standards for all phases of teacher education;

⁹ See introduction, Figure 2. For a detailed discussion on policies to support a continuum of the teaching profession see the final report of the ET2020 Working Group on Schools in European Commission (2015), *Shaping Career-long Perspectives on Teaching. A Guide on Policies to Improve Initial Teacher Education*.

- developing and promoting a code of professional conduct; and
- investigating complaints regarding the fitness to teach of registered teachers.

Emphasising the local perspective in which schools operate may require some modification to conventional models of professional development in its different phases.

Initial Teacher Education

A few education systems, such as England (UK), are moving towards school-centred or school-led Initial Teacher Education. Such decentralised arrangements are conceptually closer aligned with the school as learning organisation, but are associated with risks in ensuring high and consistent quality when apprenticeship models of teacher training dominate.

The majority of countries, where ITE is firmly rooted in higher education, are making efforts to reinforce school practice within ITE programmes and to strengthen partnerships between ITE providers such as universities or colleges of teacher education on the one hand and schools on the other. These partnerships can manifest themselves, for instance, in networks of practice schools. These approaches are consistent with the bottom-up concept of the school as a learning organisation, by linking theory with practice and by involving experienced practitioners as teacher educators (see examples in Box 22).

Box 22: School-university partnerships

In the **Netherlands**, the Ministry of Education is stimulating and supporting close partnerships between universities and schools. The aim of these partnerships is to improve student teachers' workplace learning and to create shared responsibility for teacher education curricula.

Since 2005, the Ministry has supported these partnerships through specific subsidies to schools, and quality criteria have been developed that are now part of accreditation criteria for teacher education programmes. Within the partner schools, school based teacher educators have been trained, increasing both expertise on and awareness of teacher learning within the partner schools. In the partner schools, the support of newly qualified teachers through induction programmes and the continuum of teacher development have also been strengthened.

In 2017, there are 92 schools involved in these partnerships with universities. The national representations of school boards of primary education, secondary education and the universities have jointly created a national support centre where experiences and outcomes of evaluations and research are shared through publications and networking conferences (www.steunpuntopleidingsscholen.nl).

In **Italy**, a legislative decree regarding Initial Teacher Education for secondary level teachers was approved in April 2017. These teachers will be required to pass an open competition in order to enrol in a one-year university specialisation course which will be followed by a two-year traineeship period during which they will gradually take on roles related to the teaching profession while reflecting on their practice through university tutoring. At the end of the three years, if they pass the assessment they are employed permanently. In this way theory is linked with practice and effective partnerships between universities and schools are established.

Induction for beginning teachers

Induction, where it is available to teachers, is mostly school-based. It may combine an introduction to the profession with that to the working methods and culture at a particular school. Besides raising the quality of teaching and helping new teachers through potentially difficult beginnings, induction programmes can also support professionalism in schools. This process will work best if newcomers are integrated into a culture that is open to new ideas and inspiration (induction, not assimilation!) and allows beginning teachers to be agents of change too. Recommendations for induction systems have been prepared on the basis of European peer learning activities (Box 23).

Box 23: Policy handbook on induction programmes for beginning teachers

Policy guidance developed at EU level has suggested that any induction system should meet beginning teachers' needs for three basic kinds of support: personal, social and professional. In the policy handbook entitled '*Developing coherent and system-wide induction programmes for beginning teachers: a handbook for policymakers*', a structure is proposed based on four interlocking sub-systems: mentoring, expert inputs, peer support and self-reflection.¹⁰

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): accessible, needs based, collaborative

For schools to develop as learning organisations all teachers, not just the newcomers to the profession, need to have the opportunity, and be ready, to engage in the professional development they need. Defining professional development as a duty and ring-fencing these activities within the teachers' contracted working hours can help increase the uptake of CPD. Some countries support teachers in pursuing additional studies or qualifications (Box 24).

Box 24: Supporting teacher's professional development through diverse approaches

Norway has a strategy for credit bearing continuing education for teachers, first launched in 2009. Its aim is to increase the teacher's professional and didactic competence, in order to strengthen students' learning. This arrangement is a joint effort for which partners meet regularly to discuss the ongoing work and to adjust and give priorities. National education authorities distribute financial means, and are responsible for reporting, evaluation and coordination. The universities and university colleges develop practice-oriented educational programmes. The employee and employer associations inform and motivate their members to participate.

Teachers apply to participate after consulting with the school leader. The school owner/provider approves the application and has the final decision about participation. Teachers are released from some of their ordinary duties, but keep their salary during the training. National authorities finance 60 per cent of the cost of a substitute teacher for most subjects. School owners cover 15 per cent of the costs for substitute teachers. Teachers contribute by using some private time to study.

An additional grant scheme was introduced in 2015. Teachers apply for a grant to enrol in studies. The teachers study in their private time. The scheme can thereby give both teachers and schools more freedom to organise participation as it suits them best, also reducing the need for substitute teachers. The government is still evaluating the scheme, but preliminary findings suggest that teachers find it

¹⁰ European Commission (2010), *Developing coherent and system-wide induction programmes for beginning teachers: a handbook for policymakers*, SWD (2010) 538 final. The document is based on the work of the Peer Learning Cluster 'Teacher and Trainers', a Commission expert group with representatives from European countries: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/handbook0410_en.pdf [available in English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish]

challenging to combine studies with a full time job. There has been an increased focus on the collective aspects of continuing education. To enhance student learning schools have to function as professional organisations. More information (Norwegian): <https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/etter-og-videreutdanning/larere/>

In **Latvia**, teachers and school leaders are required to undergo at least 36 hours of professional development every 3 years. Courses are offered in the form of “A” and “B” programmes, and since 2014 there has been state support for the participation in such programmes.

The shorter, A programme courses, are designed to cover specific needs (e.g. pedagogical knowledge, use of new technologies) and are offered and implemented by various state and non-state providers, in co-ordination with the local government and often also with the teachers’ methodological associations.

The B programme courses are designed to broaden teachers’ specialisations through longer professional development programmes, provided by universities, leading to qualifications in a second subject or education level. From 2017, additional support from state funding for implementation of teacher education courses is provided for gymnasiums and special education institutions to share the professional experience.

In order to support new pathways into teaching, the government in 2014 amended the regulations on teacher education and professional qualification requirements, giving professionals and graduates of other higher education programmes the opportunity to join the teaching profession through a competitive programme called “Mission Possible”.

In **Malta**, teachers can receive scholarships for further studies at Masters and PhD level. Within the past decade a number of initiatives (e.g. STEPS, Master IT, Endeavours) funded through EU funds, have encouraged teachers to continue to widen and deepen their theoretical perspectives by undertaking higher studies at Masters and PhD level, either at local accredited institutions or abroad. The response was positive, and many have successfully graduated either at Masters or PhD level thanks to this support. To make it easier for those who opt to continue with their higher studies, all teaching grades are now entitled to a sabbatical of one year to finish their studies.

Ensuring there are relevant and accessible opportunities available is a further consideration. The approach adopted requires a clear analysis of demands and the setting of priorities for professional development to avoid the mismatches witnessed in some countries.¹¹ Box 25 provides examples from Sweden, Flanders and the Czech Republic of how the aims of CPD have been successfully identified.

In many countries schools and teachers are required to define their learning needs in development plans that link individual goals with those of the school and, possibly, the education system (e.g. to accompany major curricular reforms). It is important that by recognising teachers’ interests and by building on their existing strengths, a deficit model can be avoided.

Box 25: CPD programmes to tackle national priority themes

In **Sweden**, *Matematiklyftet* ("Boost for Mathematics") is a large-scale CPD programme seeking to help mathematics teachers develop their practice, focusing on pedagogical content knowledge. The initiative combines collaborative learning among colleagues with support from an external tutor (advisor) and web-based material. Over the course of one year, teachers participate during their

¹¹ The TALIS survey identified a mismatch between the topics teachers identified as their most urgent needs for professional development and the topics of the CPD in which they are engaged.

working hours in cycles of activities, including individual study, discussions with colleagues and practical application in the classroom. The initiative is part of the national school development programmes, delivered by the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), alongside other professional development programmes on reading literacy, digital education and special needs education. Boost for Mathematics makes available state grants to stimulate participation in the training of supervisors and CPD for teachers, all building on collaborative learning. Designed to reach all schools in Sweden, and with a funding volume of €75m, the programme has seen the participation of more than 35 000 teachers (i.e. 8 out of 10 math teachers in Sweden) during 2012-2016. In addition, almost 1 700 tutors have been educated through the initiative, and close to 3 000 school leaders have taken part in a training.

In **Flanders** (Belgium), every two years, the central government authorities decide on a number of themes for CPD projects that are needed to support the implementation of educational reforms. The training projects selected are then offered to schools free of charge. Intended initially for a small team of a school's teaching staff, courses last one year (with the possibility of an extension for one year to involve additional support from their pedagogical counselling service). Following this phase, participants are expected to transfer their newly gained expertise to their local school context, sharing with colleagues at their school.

In the **Czech Republic**, a project supported through the European Social Fund aims to support teachers in developing reading literacy, mathematical literacy and digital literacy and computational thinking (basic literacies) across curricula. The project covers both pre-schools and basic schools, and encourages reflective and collaborative practice. It also aims to foster a mutual view of quality in education across the school board and other relevant stakeholders.

The essential objective of CPD must be to create a lasting impact on student learning through improved teaching practice. This process requires sustained and targeted investment. By definition, learning organisations take great care that the positive impact of staff learning extends beyond the individual teacher and ultimately benefits the entire school and its development. Setting these priorities makes the case for collegial, school-based CPD, if not to replace then at least to complement traditional formats such as training courses or seminars away from school. Digital technologies and open education offer new opportunities for collaborative learning, professional learning communities or networks. The examples that follow illustrate the adoption of school-based CPD, which in Greece is seen as having economic benefits as well as a positive impact on pedagogy (Box 26).

Box 26: Developing school-based approaches to professional development:

In **Greece**, CPD has been seriously affected by the economic crisis. Fiscal consolidation has diminished the budget for professional development of both teachers and school leaders. Previous major government initiatives on CPD had been discontinued due to the lack of funding. Now, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Institute of Education Policy are developing plans for a new CPD system that is sustainable, cost-effective and state-of-the-art, and that combines top-down and bottom-up initiatives for teachers' and school leaders' development and improvement. The aims are to establish a new culture of professional development that will also support the democratic organisation of schools ("school units"). One feature of the new system will be to promote the immediate use of teachers' new knowledge and skills in the education process. CPD will be offered using blended learning methods and by organising teachers into communities of learning and practice, mentored and supported by certified teacher educators. It will use common principles and procedures for the development of the training material, organisation, delivery and certification of training. It will

be using a CPD platform/learning management system that will ensure optimum use of digital resources, interoperability of existing platforms and repositories, and visibility and choice of training opportunities.

In **Flanders (Belgium)**, schools and teaching staff are supported by pedagogical counselling services, which are set up by the educational umbrella organisations and funded by the Government. A decree sets out the tasks of Pedagogical counselling services, some of which specifically aim to support schools in becoming professional learning organisations, among other means by:

- promoting the establishment of networks and providing support to these networks;
- supporting and training managerial staff;
- supporting the professional competence of members of staff at school and cross-school level by focussing on beginning staff and staff charged with specific tasks in particular;
- reinforcing the policy powers of schools;
- supporting quality assurance within schools

In **Cyprus**, teachers and school leaders have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the educational goals determined by the state and the educational authorities. Recent policies have aimed at further enhancing the pedagogical and administrative autonomy of schools; the Education Ministry has asked every school to set its own annual priorities for improvement according to its own annual action plan. This arrangement includes the annual planning of teachers' professional development.



Measures to consider include:

- Support a continuum of teacher education through **dialogue and partnerships between providers/teacher educators, school leaders, school owners/authorities** representing all phases of teacher education
- **Clarify the definition of CPD for school staff**, with a preference for a broad, open and inclusive concept that is operational at the same time (including formal, informal and non-formal forms of professional learning)
- **Consider making CPD an obligation/explicit duty**, and allocating working time to it
- **Align priorities with real needs at different levels** (teachers' individual learning needs, school level needs, system level needs) and **review systems of priority setting** if needed (at which level, by whom)
- **Encourage professional development cultures at school**: this may include reviewing decision-making on priorities and funding allocation; the use of CPD plans by schools/individual teachers; links to teacher appraisal
- **Support self-regulation of the profession** (e.g. through a teaching council or consultation processes)

4.9 Leadership competence

Systems should provide opportunities for school leaders and teachers to develop leadership competences that support their strategic thinking, planning and implementation.

Teachers and school leaders should be inspiring and be able to set priorities for self and others. They should be able, and enabled, to identify their own needs and opportunities for professional development, and to lead others in reflective practice as part of the process of change.

What is required of school leadership?

Members of the Working Group took the view that school leadership should be much more than management. The head, or principal, should be someone with vision for the school, who has both the competence and the charisma to support its staff. Accordingly, he or she should combine attributes of leader, manager, entrepreneur, and coach. The head should be involved in leading teaching and learning; fostering leadership capacity within the school; managing organisation; and leading school development. It was considered important for leaders to listen, and to have dialogue with teachers and other stakeholders. There should be space and time for the leader to initiate and supervise innovation and carefully judged risk-taking.

Defining and describing leadership roles

It was also considered important to define the role of school leader at national level, and describe it. A quality or competence framework might be helpful for this purpose (see also 3.7). Members accepted that some desirable abilities – such as empathy, self-control open-mindedness and some social skills, including communication – are not easy to measure. Nevertheless these qualities may be important for success. Greece has already adjusted its approach to the selection of school leaders in recognition of these abilities (Box 27).

Box 27: Assessment of candidates for school leadership posts

In **Greece**, recent changes to the selection of school leaders see the introduction of interviews to test the candidates' 'personality and general background and their contribution to the education process'. This aspect of candidates' suitability was previously assessed by secret ballot of the assembly of school teachers. Interviews will be conducted by Regional Service Councils of Primary/Secondary Education and will take into consideration the opinion of the teachers' assembly as expressed through responses to a structured questionnaire provided by the Ministry.

Supporting school leaders

The role of school leader should be appreciated, and supported, in reciprocal relationships with staff, the educational system as a whole, parents and the local community and other stakeholders. There should be arrangements in place to ensure the developmental needs of school leaders are met. There have been moves in some jurisdictions to appoint school leaders from outside the education system, such that they have, already, management and leadership skills. It may remain more common for school leaders to have developed an understanding of how schools work through their own background in teaching. However, even for the latter route to leadership, it is worth keeping in mind

that, in preparing teachers for the start of their career, ITE does not usually allocate much time to consideration of leadership. Consequently, it is probable that any move to school leadership will require tailored input and guidance to overcome deficits as the individual moves on to the next stage in his or her career in education.

Box 28: Norway's national strategy towards leadership education

In **Norway**, the Ministry of Education and Research founded a national leadership education in 2009. The national programme is organised by the Directorate of Education and Training, and is provided by six higher education institutions. Every year approximately 500 principals and other school leaders participate in the programme, which is funded by the national government.

The Ministry had given the Directorate the task of defining the requirements and expectations regarding an education provision for school leaders in lower and upper secondary schools, whilst conducting a tender for a national education provision. It was pointed out that input should be related to practice, and that it could be part of a more extensive Master's programme within education or school management. The programme, provided through a series of workshops, should correspond to 30 credits within the university/university college system, and have duration of eighteen months to two years.

In terms of content, the various programme providers had a certain amount of autonomy in how the programme could be organised. However, it was a requirement that the input was related to 1) students' learning results and learning environment; 2) management and administration; 3) cooperation and organizational development; and 4) development and change, and that these should be reflected in the provisions. Increased confidence in the leadership role was a central aim of the scheme.

The participants experienced high pedagogic and didactical quality in the provision, and they rated the relevance of the programme as very good. When asked whether their initial expectations of the programme had been met, a large majority agreed. Another finding was that the capacity of the participants to change and develop as leaders had been strengthened as a result of the programme. The participants reported that they were more capable of undertaking a number of key leadership tasks after completing the programme, although the increase reported was relatively small. When asked whether the culture for learning in their own school had changed as a result of the programme, the participants reported a significant, though small, positive change.

Link to evaluation:

https://www.udir.no/contentassets/d973e55c8ab04dfd82eb0f91878f4de4/lede_final_report.pdf

Other countries have set up a national support body to raise the quality in school leadership across the system, in the form of a leadership academy (Austria) and a centre for school leadership (Ireland) (Box 29).

Box 29: National support bodies for school leadership in Austria and Ireland

In **Austria**, the Leadership Academy is the national forum for continuing education at an executive level in schools. It offers innovation training for head teachers as well as for education management personnel from all types of educational institution. The Academy is based on an understanding of leadership that focuses on dialogue and providing excellent education and personal formation (Leadership for Learning). Leadership is regarded as the capacity to promote the quality of education

on offer and to show initiative, creativity, courage, conviction, persuasiveness and confidence in the capacity for innovation already present in the system. The Leadership Academy (LEA) holds four three-day fora each year. At every forum, participants reach a new milestone on the way to membership of the Academy. Successful graduation and admission to membership of the Academy is decided on during the certification process at the fourth forum. The LEA course includes: Plenum meetings with motivational impulse lectures (full assembly); Workshops in collegial coaching groups; reflection on innovation and development of project ideas (groups of six); Learning partnership sessions for the exchange of ideas and collegial brainstorming; Workshops in regional groups (Federal State) for regional net-working and for the presentation and exchange of ideas. The Academy began in November 2004 with 300 participants. The fourteenth generation starts in October 2017 and contributes to the creation of a large-scale LEA Membership Network, which links all the educational institutions in Austria. So far almost 3,000 professional educators have participated in the Leadership Academy. To learn more: <https://www.leadershipacademy.at/>

In **Ireland**, a Centre for School Leadership (CSL) has been established on a partnership basis between the Department of Education and Skills and the associations representing the country's school leaders in primary and secondary education. This move aims to facilitate the development of a coherent continuum of professional development for school leaders. It is the shared objective that the Centre will become a centre of excellence for school leadership and the lead provider of supports. The CSL's responsibility will extend across the continuum of leadership development commencing with pre-appointment training through to induction of newly appointed principals to Continuous Professional Development throughout the leader's career. The Centre will also advise the Department on policy in this area. During the initial phase, the Centre will have a particular focus on the needs of newly appointed principals and experienced principals experiencing professional difficulty and/or challenging situations. To learn more: <http://www.cslireland.ie>

Some countries recognise that just like teachers, beginning school leaders may experience a 'culture shock' when first confronted with the complexity and challenges of their new position. Examples from Estonia and Slovenia show how mentoring programmes can support novice school leaders (Box 30).

Box 30: Mentoring programmes for novice school leaders

In 2014, **Estonia** started a national professional training programme, designed to create a pool of mentors whose expertise is channelled to support newly appointed school leaders. The objective of the programme is twofold: to provide high-quality mentoring support to these school leaders and to promote internal mentoring systems at the mentors' own schools. There is a public competitive process to apply for the mentoring position. Applicants must have at least five years' experience and demonstrate very high motivation. The training for mentors is carried out by a private company in cooperation with Innove, a non-profit foundation governed by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Training for mentors includes communication, needs analysis, coaching and feedback skills.

There is a special development programme to support the new principals during their first two years in the new position. It consists of eight two-day seminars, visits to schools, in Estonia and abroad, and meetings with experts and practitioners.

Mentoring is a major component of the programme. All participants are assigned a mentor who has graduated from the national mentoring programme. Mentors and mentees are matched according to the mentees needs. They are both prepared for the cooperation and jointly determine an individualised agenda. The mentor is supposed to act as a critical friend to the principal and uses coaching skills.

Mentor and mentee meet at least once a month and have additional sessions via e-mail, phone etc. Mentors' expenses are covered and work remunerated.

At least once a year mentors in the national pool meet to discuss their experiences and receive additional training. During the first two years, the programme has offered mentors to 32 principals. The feedback shows that the relationship has been mutually beneficial.

In **Slovenia**, there is a specialised one-year mentoring programme for newly appointed school leaders. The National School for Leadership in Education (NSLE) coordinates the programme, and an experienced mentor accompanies each newly appointed school principal. The programme is a combination of face-to-face meetings and workshops where all participants and their mentors meet.

Distributed leadership

Effective school leadership cannot be limited to one individual or a small management team. Distributed leadership has proven beneficial for schools as places of learning and places of work for staff. The school as a learning organisation is based on the idea that "leadership is the essential ingredient that binds all of the separate parts of the learning organisation together". It is also closely linked with the idea that leadership roles should be distributed across a wider team of professionals, and also including learners.

MODELLING AND GROWING LEARNING LEADERSHIP

- School leaders model learning leadership, distribute leadership and help grow other leaders, including students
- School leaders are proactive and creative change agents
- School leaders develop the culture, structures and conditions to facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration and knowledge exchange
- School leaders ensure that the organisation's actions are consistent with its vision, goals and values
- School leaders ensure the school is characterised by a 'rhythm' of learning, change and innovation
- School leaders promote and participate in strong collaboration with other schools, parents, the community, higher education institutions and other partners
- School leaders ensure an integrated approach to responding to students' learning and other needs

Source: OECD (2016): *What makes a school a learning organisation? A guide for policy-makers, school leaders and teachers.* ^{xlix}

Box 31: Initiatives to strengthen teacher leadership

Since 2008, teachers in the **Netherlands** have been able to enrol on a Master's programme focusing on learning and innovation. This programme specifically aims to develop competences for teacher leadership in schools.

The support programme of the Dutch Teacher Development Fund (see the policy example in section 4.7) explicitly aims at strengthening teachers' leadership competences through coaching and peer networks. The support programme aims to increase teachers' agency in implementing change within their schools and engaging their colleagues and school leader in this process.

A review of policies across Europe found that while school leadership was shared to some extent in the majority of countries, this mostly concerned formal leadership teams and rarely involved innovative approaches¹¹.

For distributed leadership to work in practice teachers' leadership competences come into focus, in which case there is a strong argument for input on school leadership contributing to CPD programmes for all teachers. Under arrangements for distributed leadership, CPD on this theme would have relevance across all staff. The European Policy Network on School Leadership provides useful resources and tools in this area, including a toolkit for policy-makers and practitioners.¹²



Measures to consider include:

- **Create transparency on the competences required from school leaders**, for instance through competence frameworks or standards
- **Ensure transparency and common understanding on the leadership competences of teachers** (at different stages of their career)
- **Review teacher education**, including ITE programmes and CPD available to ensure it addresses leadership competences
- **Promote forms of distributive leadership with broad involvement of staff at school**

¹² <http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/>

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