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# *Scarcity grinds*

An exploration of options for addressing continuing teacher shortages

*Education Council of the Netherlands*

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## Persistent teacher shortages

- Education in the Netherlands is struggling with persistent teacher shortages
- Important to recruit and retain more teachers
- However, despite all efforts, shortages persist. Therefore it is necessary to explore how to deal with this situation
- The Dutch Minister for Primary and Secondary Education asked the council to explore ways in which education can be provided in a context of the continuing shortage of teachers

## Shortages are large and stubborn

- Primary education: shortages of teachers reached almost 10,000 fte
- Secondary education: almost two-thirds of the vacancies are difficult to fill
- Estimates: shortages will not reduce but increase further after 2030

The impact of teacher shortages is felt everywhere, but is unevenly spread

- Primary education
  - 5 largest Dutch cities: 15,2%, rest of the Netherlands: 8,5%
  - Larger in areas around major cities
  - Larger in schools with a complex educational mission
  
- Secondary education
  - Shortages are 7% of the employment opportunities for teachers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam; 5,5% in The Hague
  - Largest in pre-vocational secondary education
  - Especially in specific subjects (science, German language, Dutch language)

## Shortages put pressure on education

- Teachers are the most important quality factor in education
- Shortages threaten:
  - quality of education
  - learning outcomes
  - attention to students with special needs
  - equality of opportunity
- Administrators and school leaders struggle with the shortages and legal requirements
- Decisions are driven by the need to solve the problem quickly

## Solidarity is required

- Dealing with persistent and unevenly distributed shortages is a collective mission and demands solidarity
- Teacher shortages must not be a problem exclusively for schools and school boards which are actually confronted with shortages
- Demands vision, careful judgements and choices and the intervention of central government, local authorities, school boards, school leaders and teachers working together
- Requires structurally sufficient and adequate financing from the central government

## Options for addressing teacher shortages

- Options for delivering education in a context of persistent teacher shortages in two categories:
  - Limiting the teaching offer in terms of content and time
  - Organisation of teaching at schools and the associated allocation of people and resources
- Implications for the teaching profession, continuity and quality of education and equality of opportunity
- Time and thought are needed



## Category 1: Limiting the teaching offer

- Only useful if teaching time for students is reduced
- Politics and society: limit the social expectations of education
- Government: limit the statutory mission of schools:
  - curtailing the amount of teaching time for students
  - in combination with easing the national attainment targets and standards
- Schools: make judicious choices on trimming the education offer in school

## Category 2: Organisation of teaching at schools

- Better division of work among teachers and other professionals
- Teachers work on the core of their profession: teaching and developing; other professionals also contribute
- Digital technology: no option for addressing teacher shortages:
  - no fewer teachers are needed
  - negative implications for equal opportunities in education



## Exchange

- Questions?
- Recognizable?
- Which options for addressing teacher shortages are used in your country?
- ...

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