



Do we train the necessary teachers and
take care of their persistence in the
profession?



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Audit report

“Do we train the necessary teachers and take care of their persistence in the profession?”

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Performance audit “Have the actions taken by the responsible institutions to ensure the regeneration and persistence in teaching profession of general education institutions been effective?”

The audit was performed based on audit schedule No 2.4.1-10/2023 of the First Audit Department of the State Audit Office of Latvia of 7 March 2023.

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Dear Readers,

The State Audit Office of Latvia has completed a performance audit on the regeneration and persistence of teachers in general education institutions and has prepared an audit report on the audit findings.

In the audit, we assessed the planning of the demand for teachers and ensuring the supply and analysed what we could do to take better care of teachers' persistence in the profession.

According to the data obtained in the audit survey, the stability of the education system, predictable and consistent development of the system, professional support and provision for the performance of work duties are most necessary for educators to continue the work they have started in school. Of course, the remuneration for the work done is also of immense importance for the motivation of teachers to work in the education system.

Therefore, we have provided recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Science, which is responsible for the development, organization and implementation coordination of the national education policy. However, improvements to the persistence of teachers in the profession can only be achieved if all those responsible for the education process are involved in the implementation of the recommendations including founders of educational institutions and educational institutions.

During the audit, we had the opportunity to meet with many professionals of the education

sector, representatives of local and regional governments, to listen to their opinions and proposals on the necessary improvements in the organization and provision of the work of educators. More than three thousand students of teacher training department and teachers expressed their opinion about the work of educators in surveys. We have used these opinions in auditing when arguing the conclusions and justifying the required improvements.

We would like to thank everyone who helped us elaborate this audit report with their opinions and assessments, that is, all respondents of surveys, local and regional governments that we included in the audit sample, and all others who participated in the survey of the State Audit Office of Latvia. Thank you for your cooperation to the Ministry of Education and Science, representatives of the management of educational institutions, municipal education boards, higher education institutions, representatives of the Latvian Education and Science Employees' Union, representatives of the Latvian Student Union and other specialists in the development and administration of the education sector.

Respectfully,
Ms Inese Kalvāne
Department Director

Summary

UNESCO 2024 Global Report on Teachers, Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession, states that teachers play a vital role in providing high-quality education. However, the attractiveness of the teaching profession has declined worldwide and education systems are struggling to attract and retain teachers. Unattractive salaries, harsh working conditions and heavy workloads deter many candidates from joining or remaining in the profession.¹

In the survey of teachers of elementary education, teachers of general primary education, and teachers of general secondary education conducted by the State Audit Office of Latvia (hereinafter - the teacher survey), the most respondents indicated the following as the main reasons for wanting to change their profession:

- ✓ Continuous changes in the education system;
- ✓ Lack of teaching materials;
- ✓ Dissatisfaction with remuneration;
- ✓ Obscurity about the future (in connection with the planned reforms) a.so.

Indeed, the education sector in Latvia has experienced more than one reform in the last decade, so it is especially important that the reforms are sound, justified and unhurried by ensuring the achievement of educational development goals and promoting the persistence of teachers in the profession, and not the other way around.

Unfortunately, the managers of educational institutions have pointed out the lack of teachers in general education increasingly “loud” in recent years. It has become exceedingly difficult, even impossible for the heads of educational institutions to find required subject teachers, who are responsible for providing the educational institution with educators according to the legal framework², not to mention the possibility of choosing the best among several candidates.

To identify the causes and find solutions for the lack of teachers in general education, the State Audit Office of Latvia launched an audit “Have the actions taken by the responsible institutions to ensure the regeneration and persistence in teaching profession of general education institutions been effective?” in 2023.

Main conclusions

The shortage of teachers in the education sector of Latvia affects the quality of education and may pose a risk to the sustainability of the education system. More than 1,000 graduates of teacher training programs are trained every year, but 33% of young teachers leave the education sector within the first five years³, while 50% of teachers in general education institutions are over 50 years old, including at least 1,729 teachers who have already reached retirement age⁴. Until now, the Ministry of Education and Science has taken several actions, however, not all of them have been effective to ensure the training of required teachers for the education sector and to promote the persistence of teachers in the profession.

The Ministry of Education and Science is the leading state institution in the field of education, which is responsible for the development, organization and coordination of the implementation of the national policy in education. In Latvia, the governance of the education system is partially decentralized and the responsibility for the results of the education process is divided among the government, the founders of educational institutions, and educational institutions themselves.

One must conclude that the implemented governance has not provided an effective, modern and equally accessible support system for all teachers of general education, which would promote the persistence of teachers in the profession.

The State Audit Office of Latvia considers that solving the problem of the shortage of teachers effectively and promoting the persistence of teachers in the profession by providing children with high-quality education require that all those responsible for the results of the educational process such as the Ministry of Education and Science, the founders of educational institutions, and educational institutions should act to resolve several problems identified during the audit. The Ministry of Education and Science must implement its leading role in the field of general education more effectively; the founders of educational institutions must act to ensure a sustainable network of educational institutions, implement the effective distribution and use of the funding allocated by the state and the founders in educational institutions, and provide the necessary support for the qualitative implementation and improvement of the educational process. In their turn, managements of educational institutions must take care of achieving the operational qualitative goals of the educational institution.

Planning regeneration of teachers

There is no effective planning for the regeneration of teachers in the country, which would facilitate the training of educators necessary for the sector. The current planning of state-funded study places implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science is not based on high-quality and complete data on the demand for teachers⁵ but is based on a number of students who applied and were admitted to teacher training programs in previous years basically, as a result of which the training of teachers needed by educational institutions is not ensured sufficiently.

- ✓ In the field of natural sciences, physics, chemistry, geography and biology a number of teachers who reached retirement age (who were employed at educational institutions) was 498 as of 1 October 2023, while only 180 new teachers were trained in these subjects over the past six years. In mathematics, a number of teachers who have reached retirement age is 343, but only 225 new teachers have been trained. In the subject of Latvian language and literature, a number of teachers who have reached retirement age is 318, but only 228 new teachers have been trained.
- ✓ The results of the municipal survey (See Annex 5) indicate the high demand for special education teachers and social teachers in general education institutions, but a number of state-funded study places for these teaching professions has decreased by 72% in the last six years, and not even a single state-funded study place was approved for the training of social educators in 2023.

To identify other reasons why training and providing required teachers are impossible in the country, we also analysed data/information on the termination of teacher training studies and assessed whether and when students/graduates started employment in the education sector during the audit.

The data on the teacher training program for students in the national education information system show that, 12% of students drop out of their studies on average every academic year, of which 54% drop out on average, in the first year. This has a consequent impact on the number of graduates of the teacher training programs (including by teacher positions, subjects).

In their turn, the results of the assessment of student employment data show that 36% of students of teacher training programs start employment in the education sector already in the first year of studies, with an average of 0.8 workloads in rates (32 working hours). Although a person who is studying at the teacher training department has the right to work as a teacher, the Ministry of Education and Science had not drafted and proposed amendments to laws and regulations until 7 June 2024 that would determine the conditions under which a person who was only studying pedagogy could work as an educator in an educational institution.

In the assessment of the State Audit Office, it is not permissible for students of teacher training programs to teach subjects in educational institutions if there is no prior assessment of whether and what effect it has on the quality of the learning process, on the qualitative mastering of studies, thus possibly causing student overload, burnout and reducing the prestige of the teaching profession.

The Ministry of Education and Science has taken several actions (measures) to reduce the shortage of teachers in the education sector, however, not all actions taken have been well thought out and effective. Moreover, most of the activities have only started in the school year 2023/2024, which, according to the State Audit Office of Latvia, are carried out late taking into account the shortage of teachers in the sector.

For example, in project “Teaching Force”, students could obtain a teacher qualification within a year and strengthen their knowledge and skills in the second year. On the other hand,

the measure of scholarships for students of STEM, language and special education programs is rushed and ill-considered, which, in the absence of an evaluation of the impact of such a measure on the quality of education, allows even the employment of first-year students as teachers or assistant teachers.

The State Audit Office of Latvia assesses that there is a risk that the required teachers will not be trained so that to switch gradually to one of the official languages of the Member States of the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA), or a foreign language, the learning of which is regulated by concluded intergovernmental agreements in the field of education, for learners of the second foreign language learned at the level of basic education from the school year 2026/2027.

Employment of graduates of teacher training programs

Graduates of teacher training programs want to start and actually start employment in the education sector/profession. It is evidenced by the fact that more than 81% of the graduates of teacher training programs work in the education sector one year after graduating from the program.

However, according to the assessment of the employment of graduates from 2015 to 2017 conducted by the State Audit Office, 37% of new teachers have stopped working in the education sector within five years after graduating from the educational program. In their turn, 29% of graduates have stopped working in the education sector out of the graduates from 2018 to 2020 as of 1 January 2024⁶.

The above shows that the shortage of teachers is not caused only by the lack of effective teacher training planning and the inability to train a necessary number of teachers. There are also other causes related to the support and provision of the teacher's work, the prevention of which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Centre for Education of Latvia, local and regional governments, and the management of educational institutions.

If the necessary number of teachers is not trained, and the necessary actions are not taken to facilitate the persistence of teachers in the profession, the lack of teachers will increase even more in the coming years, as a large number of teachers reach retirement age and stop working. It is evidenced by the age structure of teachers in general education institutions. From 24,209 educators,

- ✓ 12,099 or 50% are over 50 years old, including at least 1,729 teachers who have already reached retirement age;
- ✓ 2,178 or only 9% are younger than 30 years old⁷.

Every year, study places for students of teacher training programs are financed from the state budget (more than a thousand new teachers graduate from the programs each year), instruments financed by the state budget are introduced to attract students to teacher training programs, the improvement of the professional competence of teachers is financed and ESF projects are implemented (See Annex 1). However, the directors of educational institutions

fail to find and attract the necessary subject teachers and, even if they succeed, some teachers (33%⁸) leave the profession within the first five years.

To plan, organize and coordinate measures effectively to facilitate the persistence of teachers in the profession and to use both the ESF and the state budget funding effectively, in the opinion of the State Audit Office, it is critically important to obtain high-quality, complete data on the reasons why teachers terminate employment in the profession, and to carry out their evaluation. However, the audit found that such data/information was not obtained, evaluated and accumulated.

In the assessment of the State Audit Office, educational institutions would face difficulties in ensuring an educational process that meets modern requirements even more if an evaluation based on qualitative and complete data is not carried out on the reasons why teachers choose to terminate employment in the profession, and the most critical problems are not eliminated according to the results of the evaluation.

According to the results obtained in the survey of teachers carried out by the State Audit Office of Latvia (See Annex 4), “continuous reforms in education” and “lack of teaching materials” are the main reasons that caused teachers to want to leave the profession during this school year (school year 2023/2024). Without expressing an opinion on the solidity and necessity of all reforms carried out, in the opinion of the State Audit Office, decisions on changes in education are often made hastily, which forces the Ministry of Education and Science to take steps back, for example,

- ✓ Postponing the implementation of the change in the approach to evaluating the learning performance of students for a year two weeks before the beginning of the school year 2023/2024;
- ✓ Expressing changes publicly⁹ to the originally planned deadline for optimising the school network in local and regional governments and determining the transition period for the introduction of the new financing model;
- ✓ Postponing the raising of performance threshold for centralised graduation exams in the 9th grade for a year¹⁰, etc.

The continuous changes and uncertainty about the upcoming changes like whether and what they will be do not allow the management of educational institutions and teachers to prepare for them in time.

Improvement of teachers’ professional competence

Every year, in accordance with the law¹¹, funding of 1.1-1.2 million euros is allocated to the Ministry of Education and Science for the improvement of the professional competence of teachers, with an aim of ensuring the improvement of the quality of the professional activity of 8,000 educators, expanding the competences of teachers and, therefore, also the employment opportunities. The institutions responsible for the organization and coordination of the teacher competence improvement offer are the Ministry of Education and Science¹² and the National Centre for Education of Latvia¹³.

When assessing the procedure by which the responsible institutions determine the priority directions of the professional development programs for teachers and allocate funding, the auditors of the State Audit Office conclude that teachers receive the professional development they need only partially because the responsible institutions create the professional development offer for teachers only on the basis of the priorities set in policy planning documents without identifying and determining the actual needs of professional development of teachers. Thus, the offer of competence development courses is elaborated according to needs and demand only partially. One should note that it is crucial to base the creation of the offer of professional development courses for teachers on cooperation among university researchers, teachers - course authors, teachers' associations, test makers, which would ensure the sustainability of the system. The responsible institutions do not assess the quality of the implemented courses sufficiently and the effectiveness of the courses to make the necessary improvements. As a result, teachers cannot acquire the necessary knowledge and develop the necessary skills to improve the quality of teaching.

The audit findings of the State Audit Office are further substantiated by the results obtained in the teacher survey (in the assessment of only 16% of the teachers, the available/offered range of competence development topics is completely relevant and meets the needs of a teacher), the information provided in the interviews with the management of educational institutions, as well as the conclusions presented in the study by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Educational Innovation of the University of Latvia in 2023¹⁴.

Professional support for educators

The professional support measures implemented by the responsible institutions (Ministry of Education and Science, local and regional governments, and educational institutions) for teachers lack a systemic approach, and their availability also depends on the financial capabilities of each local or regional government. In the country, a single professional support system for educators has not been established and defined, which would have a clearly defined goal, whose achievement would be evaluated and which would provide the necessary support to all teachers including new teachers by facilitating teachers' persistence in the profession, motivating teachers for growth and raising the prestige of the teaching profession in general because:

- ✓ There is insufficient methodological support in local and regional governments, there is a lack of methodological leadership at the national level, and only 20% of general education institutions employ educational methodologists, as a result of which teachers do not receive the methodological support so necessary for teaching a subject;
- ✓ Learning consultants and subject coordinators are like educator roles, that is, they are not educator positions, with no additional funding from the state budget for their salaries. Consequently, local and regional governments do not have a mutual understanding of the importance of the work of these support functions and a common approach to the use of the support they provide;

- ✓ When hiring a new teacher in educational institutions, a mentor teacher is not always assigned, who would provide the new teacher with the necessary professional support when starting work in the profession.

Although, when introducing the new learning content, it was expressed that the role of subject coordinator should become a desirable, prestigious role, an opportunity to share one's good practice, to improve professionally¹⁵ to return with a new perspective to the classroom, a deeper understanding of one's subject and learning, however, teachers have to be persuaded to take on these extra jobs in fact because the best educators already have full-time workloads as teachers and the pay for doing the responsibilities of subject coordinators is low. For example, in one of the local and regional governments included in the audit sample, subject coordinators receive only 35 euros (net) per month for their work. It does not motivate teachers to take on these additional responsibilities.

Although, in the assessment of the State Audit Office of Latvia, implementing ESF-financed projects for the development of education should be supported, however, "jumping" from one project to other project according to the outcomes of the projects does not ensure sustainable education development. The Ministry of Education and Science should take actions so that the best experiences and practices gained during the implementation of projects are strengthened and implemented even after the end of the projects by safeguarding regular and continuous availability and development of professional support for educators.

Social and emotional support

According to the legal framework¹⁶, local and regional governments may finance social guarantees (social support) for educators from their budgets, therefore, in each local or regional government, the allocation and determination of social guarantees for educators is influenced by the financial resources at the disposal of local and regional governments, as well as the amount of other expenses in the local or regional government, set priorities, etc.

When assessing the social guarantees provided by local and regional governments for educators, one must conclude that the types and amounts of this support differ among local and regional governments very much. Health insurance is one of the formats of social support, which, according to the managers of educational institutions, is crucial for educators. However, only 20 out of 43 local and regional governments provide or 47% of educators have fully paid health insurance.

Educators are employed in an environment where health risks are relatively high. This was also indicated by the prevalence rates of the disease in educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁷. Therefore, the State Audit Office of Latvia considers that determining and ensuring at least a clear minimum of social support for all educators would be necessary, which could be uniform, for example, health insurance policies with good coverage, vision tests and optical vision correction products, etc. According to the calculations of the State Audit Office, funding of no more than 18.2 million euros would be required to provide health insurance with the maximum allowable premium¹⁸ for all teachers of general education institutions in 2024.

The need for psychological support for educators is shown by the results of the teacher survey conducted by the State Audit Office, as 85% of respondents indicated that they often felt increased stress, while 41% of respondents indicated that they had encountered emotional violence in the workplace in the last two years.

However, one must conclude that the country does not have an emotional support system for educators, which is crucial for preserving the emotional health of educators because:

- ✓ Psychological support is partially available only to educators of educational institutions where educational psychologists are also employed (in 372 out of 584 general education institutions), moreover, educational psychologists provide support to learners as a priority;
- ✓ Supervisions are only available for a fee after the end of the project “*Pumpurs*” and not all local and regional governments can afford to finance provision of supervisions for teachers of all educational institutions;
- ✓ The majority of teachers stated in the survey that there were no psychological support measures in their local or regional government or they had no information about their existence.

Remuneration for teachers

Remuneration for teachers and its amount is one of the most crucial factors that can affect a teacher’s desire to stay in this profession. Relatively low salaries in the teaching profession can discourage highly qualified candidates from entering the profession and reduce the overall attractiveness of the profession, as indicated by UNESCO and OECD reports¹⁹. That is why establishing such a salary system for educators is essential that is clear, justified, ensures the payment of all work duties of teachers, and is competitive with the remuneration of other professions.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced a new financing model for the calculation of teacher salaries, “Student in a local or regional government”, but the State Audit Office of Latvia finds that the implemented model of financing teacher salaries does not provide a clear, transparent calculation of funding and is not based on the assessment of the work of teachers, including its nature, duties, employment conditions, and other essential criteria. During the audit, the Ministry of Education and Science did not submit detailed calculations that would justify the average amount of the target grant per student determined in the law²⁰, therefore the auditors could not gain confidence in the solidity of the calculation.

The State Audit Office of Latvia assesses that the financing model “Student in a local or regional government” has not ensured the achievement of the goals of its implementation and the elimination of problems that have not been solved for years, as:

- ✓ A number of students is one of the basic elements in the calculation of the targeted grant for teacher salary, thus the impact of this element, the number of students and its changes, on the amount of the targeted grant is not reduced²¹;

- ✓ In 2022 and 2023, local and regional governments also redistributed the targeted grant from educational institutions with a large number of students (over 600 students) to educational institutions with a small number of students (below 45 students) to maintain small educational institutions or places where their educational program was implemented, thus actually denying teachers of large educational institutions receive more compensation;
- ✓ Teachers still find out the amount of their remuneration for a new school year only a month after its beginning because the amount of the targeted grant for the salary of teachers is calculated only after September 5) (local and regional government must enter and confirm information on the number of students in educational institutions as of September 1 of the respective year in the State Education Information System by September 5 of the respective year).

The reorganization of the school network carried out by the local and regional governments between 2021 and 2023 ensures the increase in the workload and salary of educators only partially, which is set as one of the goals because the local and regional governments have actually carried out part of the winding-up of educational institutions only “on paper”, that is, educational institutions have not been wound-up in accordance with the decisions taken by local and regional governments but they have actually been transformed into places for the implementation of the educational program of another educational institution. In the assessment of the State Audit Office, such winding-up of educational institutions do not ensure the establishment of a sustainable network of educational institutions in a local or regional government due to the following reasons:

- ✓ Local and regional governments continue to maintain a network of educational institutions in their territories, thus spending the financial resources of local and regional governments for the maintenance of school buildings and targeted grants for teacher remuneration uneconomically, which is based on the costs per student calculated by the auditors of the State Audit Office. For example, the cost of one student is 5,395 euros in an educational institution whose winding-up has been carried out only “on paper”, which is 47% higher than the average in a region that is 3,655 euros;
- ✓ During the school year 2022/2023, there were still educational institutions that combine several classes with a small number of students in the implementation of the learning process, for example, only one student studies in the 6th grade, so this class is combined in all subjects with the 5th grade, which has four students. This practice does not facilitate a high-quality learning process because the number of behavioural problems of students increases, as well as the learning achievements of senior students decrease²²;
- ✓ It does not contribute to an increase in the workload of teachers employed in the respective local or regional governments to full-time and an increase in salaries.

The results of the winding-up and reorganization of educational institutions analysed and evaluated in the audit show clearly that the reorganization of the network of educational institutions ensured the following for educators only when it had actually been carried out:

- ✓ An increase in the workload and salary of teachers, for instance, workload of 40% of the teachers of wound-up educational institutions increased and salaries of 47% of the teachers increased in Saldus Region;
- ✓ An increase in the number of students in other educational institutions and, accordingly, also in grades, for example, the number of students increased by 23% in Ezere Elementary School in Saldus Region.

In addition, it creates a saving of financial resources for a local or regional government, which can be channelled to increase the salaries of teachers, for example, Saldus Region saved 329,003 euros in 2023, which was directed to cover the increase in the salary rate of teachers.

To encourage local and regional governments to optimize the network of educational institutions and provide financial resources for the increase of teacher salaries, the Ministry of Education and Science elaborated and indicated the indicators of an effective general education institution in an informative report on the change of the financing model of teacher salaries by inviting local and regional governments to take them into account when assessing the network of educational institutions in 2021. However, we found out during the audit that when deciding on the preservation or reorganization of networks of educational institutions, the majority of local and regional governments did not assess all the indicators of effective general education institutions. For example, none of the local and regional governments included in the audit sample assessed maintenance costs per student, a numerical ratio of students/teachers, and other criteria. According to the auditors, local and regional governments should carry out such an assessment to make a fact-based decision on the establishment of a sustainable network of educational institutions.

Coordinating the decisions made by the local and regional governments on the reorganization and/or winding-up of educational institutions with the Ministry of Education and Science is not effective because the Ministry of Education and Science harmonizes all decisions including those that determine the winding-up of an educational institution only “on paper”, and regardless of whether an assessment has been made in accordance with all indicators of an effective general education institution. In the assessment of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry does not have the legal framework to revoke or change the decisions already taken by local and regional governments in connection with the reorganization or winding-up of educational institutions.

Balancing the workload of teachers

Latvia is one of the OECD countries where teachers devote most of their working time directly to conducting lessons, 63% at the secondary school, compared to the OECD, where on average teachers at the secondary school devote only 44% of their working time to conducting lessons²³.

While taking the first steps in balancing the workload of teachers, it was determined²⁴ that the workload of teachers of general primary education and general secondary education was up to 65% per week for conducting lessons and not less than 35% of the total workload per week for other duties starting from 1 September 2023.

However, in the assessment of the auditors of the State Audit Office of Latvia, the distribution of teacher workload stipulated in the legal framework²⁵ is actually not ensured because:

- ✓ In the educational institutions of the local and regional governments included in the audit sample, the proportion of teachers who have been provided with the appropriate workload distribution has increased only slightly, for example, from 14% to 24% in the educational institutions of Rēzekne City, from 28% to 42% in the educational institutions of Jēkabpils Region, from 24% to 34% in the educational institutions of Saldus Region; and from 15% to 22% in the educational institutions of Dobele Region;
- ✓ Balancing the workload is impossible due to the lack of teachers and insufficient funding (targeted grant for teacher salaries) to ensure workload balancing, which the management of several educational institutions also pointed out. Due to the insufficiently allocated funding, teachers do not want to reduce the workload for conducting lessons, as then a fixed salary rate will also have to be reduced to pay for the vacant teaching hours;
- ✓ The workload of teachers of different subjects and their amount are quite different, it is also affected by a number of students in a class; therefore, this distribution of workload is not equally effective for balancing the workload of teachers of all subjects.

The State Audit Office of Latvia draws attention to the fact that the teacher workload distribution 65/35 does not correspond to the distribution of teacher workload defined in the project “Competence-based approach to curriculum” for the introduction of the new curriculum and approach on 1 September 2020. The distribution of teacher workload for the successful implementation of the new curriculum is 50% for teaching lessons and 50% for performing other duties provided for in the project. According to the statement in the annex to the annotation to the Cabinet Order of 18 April 2023²⁶, the Ministry of Education and Science plans to introduce a 60/40 or 50/50 (annual) workload distribution for educators only from 1 September 2025.

To succeed in providing a workload distribution 50/50, one requires:

- ✓ Take the necessary actions to prevent the shortage of teachers so that it would be possible for the heads of educational institutions to find and hire additional necessary teaching staff (measures for planning the regeneration of teachers should be carried out in accordance with the demand and forecast of teachers, the reasons why teachers stop working in the profession should be identified and evaluated, and appropriate actions should be taken to solve the problems, provide necessary professional competence development, professional support, etc.);
- ✓ Calculate and provide the necessary funding to educational institutions for the payment of additional hours that arise as a result of workload balancing.

In addition, one should note that as a result of insufficient supervision by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Education Quality State Service, as well as due to the lack of legal framework on the procedure for determining the salary of teachers, the amount of salary

and the size of the workload of teachers in cases where a teacher is employed in several educational institutions or in correspondence and distance learning educational institutions, teachers have a tariff and paid workload up to 196 hours per week including 148 of those are contact hours (there are only 40 working hours in one calendar week), the salary is 7,108 euros per month.

In the assessment of the auditors of the State Audit Office of Latvia, the aforementioned situation indicates a significant risk that the learning process in all educational institutions where a teacher is employed is not provided in accordance with the requirements of laws and regulations, the quality of teaching may suffer and the state budget funding is not used efficiently and economically.

Key recommendations

To solve the problem of shortage of teachers in the education sector successfully, the Ministry of Education and Science was given the following recommendations:

1. Establish an effective system for planning and ensuring the regeneration of teachers; create a sustainable professional support system in cooperation with local and regional governments that safeguards:
 - ✓ It would be possible for every teacher to receive the necessary improvement of professional competence for the development of the necessary skills;
 - ✓ The availability of professional support for all educators;
2. Establish a salary system for teachers that provides teachers with a competitive salary, 28% for primary education teachers and 39% for secondary education teachers above the average salary in the public sector²⁷;
3. Perform the necessary actions and set requirements within the scope of their competence so that the founders of educational institutions and educational institutions provide the establishment of a sustainable network of educational institutions in general education within the scope of their competence;
4. Take the necessary actions and set requirements within the scope of their competence so that the founders of educational institutions and educational institutions ensure the balancing of the workload of teachers within the scope of their competence by reaching the average level determined in OECD countries²⁸:
 - ✓ In the class group from the 1st to 6th grade, workload distribution of 51% for teaching lessons and 49% for other duties;
 - ✓ In the class group from the 7th to 9th grade, workload distribution of 46% for teaching lessons and 54% for other duties;
 - ✓ In the class group from the 10th to 12th grade, workload distribution of 44% for teaching lessons and 56% for other duties.

References

- ¹ UNESCO 2024 Global Report on Teachers, Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387400>, viewed on 7 April 2024.
- ² Paragraph 2, Part Two of Section 11 of the Law on General Education.
- ³ Data analysis by the State Audit Office of Latvia on the employment of graduates of the teacher training program five years after graduation from 2015 to 2018.
- ⁴ State Education Information System (SEIS) report “Summary of personal tariffing in an educational institution as of 1 October 2023 (Common)”, retrieved on 16 November 2023.
- ⁵ Demand for teachers – the number of teachers needed in educational institutions, broken down by teacher positions, study levels and subjects.
- ⁶ Data analysis by the State Audit Office of Latvia on the employment of graduates of the teacher training program from 2015 to 2020.
- ⁷ Data source: (SEIS) report “Summary of personal tariffing in an educational institution as of 1 October 2023 (Common)”.
- ⁸ Data analysis by the State Audit Office of Latvia on the employment of graduates of the teacher training program five years after graduation from 2015 to 2018.
- ⁹ However, the school reform will be implemented gradually; local and regional governments will be allowed to choose a model of financing teachers, available at: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/02.02.2024-skolu-reformu-tomer-ieviesis-pakapeniski-pasvaldibam-laus-izveleties-pedagogu-finansesanas-modeli.a541424/>, viewed on 9 April 2024.
- ¹⁰ Paragraph 1 of Cabinet Regulation No 221 of 9 April 2024 amending Cabinet Regulation No 747 “Rules on National Primary Education Standard and Primary Education Curricula Samples” of 27 November 2018.
- ¹¹ The Law on the State Budget for 2023 and the Budget Framework for 2023, 2024 and 2025; the Law on the State Budget for 2022 (valid until 31 December 2022); the Law on the State Budget for 2021 (valid until 31 December 2021); the Law on the State Budget for 2020 (valid until 31 December 2020).
- ¹² Paragraphs 6 and 14, Section 15 of the Education Law.
- ¹³ Paragraphs 2.9 and 3.16 of Cabinet Regulation No 682 “Regulations of the National Centre for Education of Latvia” of 30 June 2009.
- ¹⁴ The study by the University of Latvia “How can the education system support a teacher so that students can master education that meets the requirements of the 21st century?” in 2023, available at: https://www.siic.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/projekti/siic/LU_Izglitibas_Sistemas_Atbalsts_Skolotajiem.pdf, viewed on 6 July 2023.
- ¹⁵ Roles for the implementation of the improved curriculum at school, available at: <https://www.skola2030.lv/lv/jaunumi/blogs/lomas-skola-pilnveidota-macibu-satura-istenosana>, viewed on 9 April 2024.
- ¹⁶ Part Three, Section 60 of the Education Law.
- ¹⁷ In schools, security measures will be stricter and lessons will be held remotely in several local and regional governments, available at: <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/skolas-drosibas-pasakumi-bus-stingraki-un-vairakas-pasvaldibas-macibas-notiks-attalinati>, viewed on 11 April 2024.
- ¹⁸ Part Five, Section 8 of the Law on Personal Income Tax.
- ¹⁹ UNESCO 2024 Global Report on Teachers, Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession, OECD study “Education at Glance 2022” data sample of Latvia, available at: <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/media/17651/download>, viewed on 19 April 2024.
- ²⁰ Cabinet Regulation No 376 “Procedure for calculating and distributing the state budget target grant for the salary of teachers in municipal general education institutions and general secondary education institutions of state universities” of 21 June 2022.
- ²¹ Cabinet Order No 992 on the Conceptual Report on Proposals for the Improvement of the Model of Financing Teacher Salaries” of 21 December 2021.
- ²² Informative Report on the Prerequisites for Ensuring High-quality General Secondary Education. Available at: <https://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40489636>.
- ²³ OECD study “Education at Glance 2022”, available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2022_3197152b-en, viewed on 21 April 2024.
- ²⁴ Paragraph 32.1 of Cabinet Regulation No 445 “Rules for Teacher Salaries” of 5 July 2016.
- ²⁵ Paragraph 32.1 of Cabinet Regulation No 445 “Rules for Teacher Salaries” of 5 July 2016.

²⁶ The report (annotation) of the ex-ante assessment of the draft law “On the schedule of the increase of the minimum wage rate for educators for the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2025”, available at: <https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/annotation/59956519-50af-4809-b6c1-fe48c369990c>, viewed on 13 April 2024.

²⁷ Guidelines for the Development of Education 2021-2027 (approved by Cabinet Order No 436 on Guidelines for the Development of Education 2021-2027 on 22 June 2021).

²⁸ OECD “Education at Glance 2022” Organisation of teachers’ working time (2021), Organisation of teachers’ teaching time (2021). Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/organisation-of-teachers-teaching-time-2021_279391e8-en, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/organisation-of-teachers-working-time-2021_1d9f3d43-en, viewed on 10 May 2024.