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The support system of novice teachers. Country report. Poland.

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Foreword

In 2016 the reform of education was announced by newly appointed government and the next year it had been launched. On the September 1st 2017 middle schools, and their three-year curriculum, were erased from the system. From that moment primary school education curriculum was extended from 6 years to 8 years, and high school education curriculum was extended from 3 years to 4 years. Middle schools that had not been incorporated within already existing high and primary schools ceased functioning on the September 1st 2019. One of the reform's main outcomes was the appearance of the "double grade" issue. In 2018 it was around 474 000 students that applied for a place in secondary education system. In 2019 however, it was two groups of students - one who had started their education in 2010 (6 year lasting primary school and 3 year lasting middle school) and the other, who had started education in 2011 (after graduating from 8 year primary school of the new system). It led to a rapid growth of students' number up to over 700 000 students applying for a place in secondary education system.

It was under these circumstances when teachers in Poland organised the biggest nationwide mass strike action since year 1993. Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) demanded a pay rise of 200 EUR, increases of state budget funds in educational sector, a change in teachers' evaluation, a reform in career advancement and expected the resignation the Ministry of Education at the time, Anna Zalewska. The strike took place during the students' state exams before going to secondary school. It started on the 8th of April and was suspended on the 27th of April. The government did not meet trade unions' demand and the strike officially ended and changed into a work-to-rule protest.

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1. Overall situation of educational system in numbers

1A. SHADOW EDUCATION ISSUE

According to Polish Central Statistical Office and tentative calculations of Polish Teachers' Union the number of teachers in Poland varies from 518 746 to over 600 000. The number of qualified teachers reached 288 080 (56%), whereas the rest looked like this: the number of appointed teachers was (19%), 81 704 contract teachers (16%) and 20 241 trainee teachers (4%) in 2020. Teachers are a feminized professional group with 82% out of 363017 women in urban areas and 85% women out of 150851 in rural areas. The average age of a Polish teacher is rapidly growing and settles at 44,1.

Polish schooling system faces the issue of the shadow education. There are 4 600 000 pupils in Poland and according to calculations of various institutions 25% to 35% attend private lessons, 7.5 hours weekly. Combined with 35-hour in-school learning workload, it exceeds the length of the statutory working day for 2.5 hours. In 2016 the number of non-public educational establishments was 1244 primary and 448 high schools and increased by about 1/4th in the next 6 years. In 2022 c.a. 19 000 pupils were part of the homeschooling system (180% rise to the years before). As the example of the "two-grade" issue, 19 400 pupils graduated from Warsaw's high schools, and almost 30 000 primary education graduates applied.

2B. SURVEY SUMMARY – TEACHERS' ATTITUDE, CONCERNS AND FEELINGS

- Regarding novice teachers' feelings toward their job, 30% of the respondents felt supported, 35% were energetic and 25% were interested. On the other hand, a significant amount of 40% felt overwhelmed, whereas 25% claimed to be worried and too focused on work,
- Novice teachers chose their profession based on the following reasons: 55% expressed a desire to work with children, 45% knew about a vacancy in school of their residence and 35% wanted to work in school close to their home. None of the respondents indicated a competitive pay as a reason for choosing teaching profession,
- On the scale of 1 to 10, 45% of the surveyed teachers claimed to be happy with their job on the level of 1, 2 or 3. None of the respondents chose 10 (extremely happy),

- 70% of surveyed teachers had claimed to receiving an explanation of their position within school and 60% had received information about working hours, rules applicable within the school and tips about filing online register. Only 30% received instructions on how to manage classroom and 25% received information about how to join trade union,
- 70% agreed that they needed additional information after graduating from university in order to start working in an educational facility, 60% felt the need to broaden their knowledge to position themselves as a real teacher and 70% needed additional knowledge about positive communication with students and their parents. Only 55% were provided with a mentor,
- Almost all of the respondents (95%) felt to be very involved in work and fulfilled responsibilities with a large effort,
- A vast majority of 80% strongly disagreed that they were paid an attractive salary, 55% did not believe they were paid for all of their job duties,
- 65% of the novice teachers faced stressful working conditions,
- The vast majority of surveyed teachers agreed, that novice teachers should be provided with a mentor (80%), have access to informational materials on the teachers role, workers rights and responsibilities, as well as social dialogue and digital tools (90%),
- 100% of respondents believe that providing novice teachers with a one-time incentive payment would encourage more people to choose the profession, that salaries should be raised and made more competitive, that teachers should have their rights strengthened, and that the responsibilities of parents and students should be greater.

2. Professional advance development

2A. PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT LEVELS

The system of professional promotion of teachers was introduced with the initiation of a major educational reform in 2000 with the assumption that practices and proposals aimed at raising the prestige and improving the material situation of teachers would be introduced in parallel with the introduction of new organizational arrangements.

The primary point of reference was to link the development of teachers' professional competences with the possibility for them to obtain successive promotion ranks linked to an independent mechanism for increasing remunerations.

Four grades of promotion have been adopted from the outset:

- trainee teacher,
- contract teacher,
- appointed teacher,
- qualified teacher.

In total, process of applying for successive promotion ranks took 12 years and included one year of internship as a contract teacher and 2 years and 9 months each for subsequent ranks (in total, actually 6 years) and two breaks – the first two years, preceding the internship as an appointee, followed by at least three years before starting the process of applying for the promotion as a qualified teacher (5 years in total).

Subsequent ranks determined the increasing requirements for candidates and at the same time raised the level of authorities deciding about the possibility of obtaining them. Thus, the grade of contract teacher was awarded by administrative decision to the head of school (or other educational institution). The degree of appointed teacher was conferred by the head of the school, and the degree of certified teacher by the pedagogical supervision authority. The salary increased with each promotion level. In the first version, the average remuneration of a trainee teacher is 82% of the base amount determined for employees of the state budget sphere on the basis of the Act on the formation of remuneration in the state budget sphere and on the amendment of some acts determined annually in the budget act¹. And further:

¹Art. 5, point 1, subpoint a and Art. 6, point 1, subpoint 2 of the Act of 23 December 1999 on Remuneration in the State-Budget Sphere and Amendments to Certain Acts (Dziennik Ustaw No. 110, item 1255, of 2000, No. 19, item 239, of 2001 No. 85, item 924, No. 100, item 1080, and No. 154, items 1784 and 1799, and of 2002 No. 74, item 676, No. 152, item 1267, No. 213, item 1802, and No. 214, item 1805)

- contract teacher - 125%,
- appointed teacher - 175%,
- qualified teacher - 225%

the abovementioned trainee teacher's salary.

Over time, after numerous changes in 2022, the remuneration structure in question is calculated in a way that is far less favorable than the base amount set for teachers each year in the Budget Act:

- a trainee teacher - 100%,
- contract teacher - 111%,
- appointed teacher - 144%,
- qualified teacher - 184%

The abovementioned system of salary calculation derives to notional amount that consists of base salary and seventeen other sidebar factors (i.e.: arduous working conditions allowance, hardship allowance, tutoring allowance, class teacher allowance etc.). Allowances do not apply for all teachers equally depends on teachers' various positions and roles fulfilled within the scope of their employment, as well as the municipality they work in. Thus, the only efficient way of rising teachers' salary and creating a more attractive working conditions is rising the base salary.

Changes in the teachers' advance system were implied on September 1st 2022. The roles of a trainee and contract teacher were unified and reshaped to the new grade of a novice teacher. As of today, the basis gross salary for three grades of teachers with a master degree and pedagogical preparation are settled at the amount of:

- 3424 PLN for novice teacher (around 700 EUR),
- 3697 PLN for appointed teacher (around 760 EUR),
- 4244 PLN for qualified teacher (around 870 EUR).

This way of structuring salaries is a motivating factor for teachers to reach higher levels of professional promotion, but this motivation ends with the attainment of the degree of qualified teacher. The teachers' salary compared to general minimum gross salary (3010 PLN, around 620 EUR) cannot be considered competitive.

2B. PROFESSIONAL PROMOTION AS CONFIRMATION OF SPECIFIC PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS

The process of professional promotion of teachers assumed their permanent increase of professional competencies. The image of the expected results was enshrined in a specially developed act of implementation. In each version, and there have been several over the course of 20 years' discussion, both the tasks and the requirements for attaining the next rank were specified in detail. In the first of these², it was established that a trainee teacher seeking promotion to the grade of contract teacher during the traineeship period should in particular:

- 1) learn about the organisation, tasks and functioning of the school, including:
 - (a) how the school's records are kept,
 - (b) provisions for ensuring safe and hygienic learning and working conditions,
- 2) participate as an observer in classes conducted by the internship supervisor or other teachers, at least two classes per month, and discuss the observed classes with the supervisor,
- 3) conduct classes with students, in the presence of the internship supervisor or the school principal, at least one class per month and discuss them with the person in whose presence the class was conducted,
- 4) participate in intra-school forms of professional development for teachers
 - taking into account the specific nature of the type and type of school in which the trainee is serving.

In turn, a contract teacher seeking promotion to the rank of appointed teacher during the period of internship should in particular:

- 1) Participate in the work of school organs connected with the realisation of educational, upbringing, caring or other tasks resulting from the statute and the needs of the school,
- 2) improve their knowledge and professional skills on their own or through participation in various forms of continuing professional development,
- 3) learn regulations concerning the educational system, taking into account the specificity of the type and kind of school in which he/she serves his/her internship.

²Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 3 August 2000 on the attainment of professional promotion by teachers (Dz. U. No. 70, item 825 and of 2002 No. 82, item 744)

Finally, an appointed teacher seeking promotion to the rank of qualified teacher during his/her in-service training should:

- 1) take measures to improve their workshop and working methods,
- 2) Participate in the performance of tasks going beyond their official duties,
- 3) independently or through participation in various forms of in-service training, deepen their knowledge and skills serving their own development and improving the level of work in the school in which they are employed

- taking into account the specific nature of the type and type of school in which the trainee is serving.

The structure of the requirements included a specific concept of teachers' development assuming that in the first phase they will get to know their workplace, build relationships, gain awareness of their responsibility, but also of the various possibilities of action. The second stage involves work on the development of teachers' professional skills, deepening their substantive and practical competences, linking them to the workplace and its tasks and functions. The expectations of teachers applying for the highest level of promotion concerned their preparation to play leadership roles in the school as a mentor, supervisor, advisor or co-creator of curricular and organisational solutions. Here the teacher himself chose the option which suited him best, but it should always be connected with work for the school or other teachers.

2C. PROCEDURES AND INDICATORS IN PROFESSIONAL PROMOTION

The cycle of application for subsequent ranks (with minor exceptions) assumed that a typical course of a teacher's professional development path should not last longer than 12 years of professional work. In fact, according to the law defining the process of applying for subsequent promotion ranks, it assumed that a teacher's professional promotion rank:

- a trainee achieves upon employment in a school or other educational establishment listed in the relevant Act;³
- contract teacher is a trainee who has completed a nine-month traineeship, during which he or she has implemented a development plan approved by the school head, obtained a

³Article 1(1) of the Charter of Teachers

positive assessment and passed the so-called qualification procedure at his or her home institution;

- of appointed teacher shall be awarded to a teacher who has successfully completed an internship of 2 years and 9 months and obtained a positive assessment in an examination procedure before a committee organised by the leading authority;
- a certified teacher shall be awarded to a teacher who has successfully completed an in-service training of 2 years and 9 months and obtained a positive assessment in the qualification procedure before a commission organised by the authority responsible for pedagogical supervision.

A trainee teacher is promoted to the rank of contract teacher as a result of the qualification procedure organized by the management of the home institution with the participation of representatives of the leading authority and the pedagogical supervision authority, as well as the traineeship supervisor and a representative of the trade union selected by the teacher. The commission familiarizes itself with the evaluation of professional achievements and the report on the implementation of the professional development plan, and conducts an interview during which the teacher presents his/her professional achievements and knowledge and skills, answering commission members' questions concerning the requirements necessary to obtain the grade of contract teacher. The requirements necessary to obtain the contract teacher rank include:

- ability to conduct classes in a manner ensuring proper implementation of the statutory tasks of the school in which the teacher served his/her internship,
- knowledge of the pupils' environment, their problems and ability to cooperate with the pupils' environment,
- ability to discuss own or observed activities,
- knowledge of the organisation and functioning of the school in which the teacher has served his/her traineeship.

The process of applying for the professional promotion of a nominated teacher is the examination procedure, which takes place before a commission appointed by the leading authority and consisting of both representatives of the home institution (a representative of the headmasters and the school supervisor of the teacher), the leading authority and the authority responsible for pedagogical supervision over the institution of the teacher's employment. The work of the commission should also, if possible, include experts with professional specialization

corresponding to the type and type of school in which the teacher is employed and the professional specialization of the teacher applying for professional promotion. At the teacher's request, the committee could also be enlarged by a representative of a trade union selected by the teacher.

The requirements for the rank of a nominated teacher include:

- the ability to organize and improve their work, analyze and document it, and evaluate the effectiveness as well as make appropriate adjustments to it;
- ability to take account of the local environment and contemporary social problems in their work,
- participating in the implementation of school-wide, educational upbringing and caring tasks or other tasks resulting from the statute and the specificity of the type and type of school,
- the ability to use computer and information technology in their work,
- knowledge of psychology, pedagogy and didactics, as well as general educational problems, social welfare or juvenile justice, in the context of the specific duties carried out by the teacher,
- knowledge of and ability to use provisions concerning the educational system, social welfare or juvenile proceedings in the field of operation of the school in which the teacher served their traineeship.

The process of obtaining the grade of the certified teacher is the responsibility of the local government structures responsible for the functioning of education (school superintendents' offices), with the commission structure similar to that organized for teachers applying for the grade of the appointed teacher. However, the process itself was not an examination but a qualifying one and included an interview about the candidate's experience and achievements developed into a portfolio required by law.

The requirements for the degree of a qualified teacher include:

- Developing and implementing projects and programs to improve their work and the quality of school work, including the use and improvement of skills in applying computer and information technology,
- ability to share their knowledge and experience with other school staff,
- to carry out at least four of the following tasks:

- the development and implementation of a program of educational, educational, caring or other activities relevant to education, social welfare or the treatment of minors,
- to prepare at least two publications, papers or other materials related to their work and to publish, present or otherwise make them known; in the case of teachers in art schools, this task shall also be regarded as fulfilling an active artistic activity,
- conducting open classes, in particular for in-service and contract teachers, or undertaking in-service training activities,
- active and systematic cooperation with local government structures or other organisations working in the field of education, social welfare or juvenile justice,
- performing the tasks of an examiner of a district examination board, an expert of a qualification or examination board for teachers applying for professional promotion, an expert on curricula, textbooks, teaching aids, pre-school education programmes,
- obtaining additional professional qualifications making it possible to broaden the scope of education, upbringing, caring or other activities connected with the tasks of the school,
- Performing other tasks for the benefit of education independently or in cooperation with a team, or achieving significant achievements in professional work,
- ability to recognise and solve educational, educational or other problems, considering the specificity of the type and type of school in which the teacher is employed.

The challenges for diploma candidates have been modified the most overtime to be limited in the current version in 2022 to tasks including:

- ability to use student-activating methods at work as well as multimedia and IT tools conducive to the learning process;
- Ability to share knowledge and experience with other teachers, including through conducting open classes, in particular for trainee and contract teachers, teaching in-service training or other courses for teachers;
- to widen the scope of the school's activities, in particular as regards its teaching, educational or caring tasks;
- to carry out at least two of the following tasks:
 - development and implementation of a programme, innovation or another teaching, educational, caring or other scholarly activity related to the specific nature of the school, in particular for pupils with special educational needs,

- Performing the tasks of internship supervisor, supervisor of pedagogical practice, teacher-methodical advisor, chairperson of the team of teachers, coordinator of voluntary work, project coordinator, social curator, an examiner of the District Examination Board, textbook expert,
- acquiring a basic command of a foreign language and, in the case of foreign language teachers, a basic knowledge of a second foreign language,
- authored work on education or child development published in a professional journal or other compact publication.

2D. PORTFOLIO AS A COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF DESIRED SKILLS

An interesting challenge posed to the participants in the process applying for the next promotion level was the development of a portfolio covering all activities related to the implementation of the internship. In the early years, this collection comprised a thick binder and sometimes two binders of documents intended to demonstrate all the teacher's activities, especially those involving activities required by the regulation. The procedure of collecting, confirming and compiling the documents was very time-consuming and the results took up a lot of space in units organizing qualification or examination proceedings. Over time, a solution was found to reduce this portfolio to a minimum of documents, reducing the set to confirmations or statements formally confirming the employment status and qualifications of the candidate and the development plan and related report. The key point for assessing the quality of the documents provided was the link between the objectives set out in the development plan and the requirements formulated in the relevant implementing act, followed by a description of its implementation and the degree of achieved results contained in the report. As a result, it is no longer the documentation, its collection and authentication that is crucial, but the awareness of the assumed process of teacher development and the ability to link the results obtained to the professional needs of the teacher himself/herself and the satisfaction of the development areas of the organization in which he/she is employed.

3. Professional advancement as part of school development

3A. THE TEACHER AS THE CREATOR OF HIS/HER OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATH INSCRIBED IN THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL

From the beginning of the introduction of solutions concerning professional advancement, the person mainly responsible for the use of principles and opportunities introduced by these solutions was the teacher himself. It was particularly noticeable in the first years of functioning of the proposed solutions, when a number of key legal solutions concerning the work of schools and teachers were changed several times in connection with the implementation of the system reform of education. It was a great challenge for teachers to create their own development plan, to implement it consistently and, finally, to collect relevant documents confirming the purpose and shape of activities undertaken by candidates for the next promotion level during their traineeship.

With time, both teachers and representatives of the administration (school, local government and government) realised that the main purpose of promotion was not so much to accumulate adequate documentation, but to develop the teacher professionally. Teachers formulated more and more precise goals in line with the real needs of their careers. Particularly in the case of contract and appointed teachers, these goals related to the broadening of their work, including the possibility of presenting it or using it in their work for other teachers. The professional development plan for individual teachers was increasingly becoming a professional development project for specific members of the school community, which not only brought about the expected developmental effects for teachers (enshrined in the relevant sections of the promotion ordinance), but also strengthened their position in the school community and contributed to the development of the institution employing them.

3B. THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN NURTURING THE TEACHER THROUGH PROMOTION

From the very beginning, the regulations gave school principals special responsibility for the process of applying for the next promotion levels of teachers employed in the schools they

managed. In each case, it was the head office that was legally obliged to approve the teachers' professional development plan. This meant verification of these both in the context of formal legal requirements and in relation to the real needs of individual schools, which, thanks to the activities carried out in accordance with the approved plan, could broaden the scope of their proposals and strengthen the attractiveness of their activities.

The headmasters were also responsible for selecting and working with their charges, the so-called tutor teachers - persons performing tutoring functions, formally assigned to trainee and contract teachers for the duration of their traineeship. The proper selection of these persons guaranteed full effectiveness and benefits related both to the development of teachers' professional competences and to the school operation in its broadest sense. On the other hand, headmasters or school directors themselves played the role of informal supervisors of teachers applying for the highest promotion level - the level which in terms of objectives referred to enhancing the attractiveness and raising the quality of schools and teachers employed in them.

In addition, head offices played an important role in the examination or qualification proceedings of teachers completing their promotion path. At each stage they acted as committee members and, in the case of in-service teachers, they organised and managed the qualification procedure themselves.

3C. THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR IN MENTORING A TEACHER THROUGH PROMOTION

A good idea to strengthen the process of professional promotion of teachers was the statutory assignment of so-called mentor teachers to persons completing their internships. The offer to trainee teachers turned out to be particularly valuable as the trainees usually had their first contact with professional work at school and having a competent mentor enabled them to learn the secrets of the workshop and practically verify the basics of preparation for the teaching profession acquired during studies. Mandatory open classes conducted for the trainee by the mentor, but also observed by the mentor and conducted by the trainee were particularly important here.

However, the relationship between tutor and contract teacher was quite a challenge. Not all tutors appointed by school managements had adequate tutor training, and - after three and during the following three years of contract teachers' work - their expectations in terms of professional development support were as high as some tutors imagined. Nevertheless, good relationships

and a well-designed support zone were always beneficial. For this to happen, good communication and partnership between contract teacher and mentor were necessary.

4. Forms of support for professional promotion - courses, legal advice, the role of ZNP

The lack of experience and appropriate expectations concerning the objectives and process of applying for subsequent levels of professional promotion caused, especially in the first years, a lot of confusion and stress among teachers. The legal requirements concerning the formal basis for application for subsequent promotion levels, especially in the context of qualifications, were a considerable challenge. The relevant regulation on teachers' professional qualifications, which changed several times, was not always a sufficient basis for confirming the formal grounds for applying for a promotion. In such cases, the support and sometimes intervention of lawyers employed by the union was invaluable. The union also strengthened the position of teachers applying for promotion by organizing numerous courses and trainings, which were to a large extent carried out by the relevant union structures (pedagogical and social services centres), as well as by providing access to periodic materials published in the ZNP magazine "Głos Nauczycielski".

Representatives of the union, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, at the request of those concerned, also took part in qualification and examination proceedings. Their work on committees was often preceded by talks, assistance and support given to teachers preparing for these events.

5. Problems with the implementation of professional promotion

The implementation of solutions concerning professional promotion of teachers from the very beginning was accompanied by the same problem - it focused mainly on financial and partly formal strengthening of functioning in the system, while neglecting the real benefits resulting from the development of competencies and their usefulness in expanding and creating a more attractive offer of educational institutions. To a large extent, the blame for this state of affairs lies

with the legislator and its unreflective enforcers - school managements and representatives of the administration. As a result of this attitude, in most cases, the effectiveness of the process of applying for subsequent promotion levels was determined not by the commitment and actual development of the teacher, but by the documentation provided by him/her. Also of great importance in this respect is the considerable indifference of school principals to the possibilities inherent in the process and effects of individual teachers' seniority. This can be seen in the formal treatment of the provisions of the development plans and the lack of interest in the course of the internship during one or three years of the teacher's work. The qualification and examination procedure is also a considerable challenge. Again, these are mainly focused on formal analysis and lack the qualitative attributes that allow teachers to fully present their achievements (if they have achieved them as a result of the internship, of course). Finally, there is the issue of the financial value of the internship. Successive legislative changes have flattened the pay gap between teachers on different promotion levels making it less and less attractive.

6. Changes in the formula of professional promotion (successive amendments, their number, most important changes, justification of the changes)

The first legal acts concerning professional promotion appeared in the first year of the 21st century and were introduced on 18 February 2000 by the Act on the amendment of the Teachers' Charter and some other acts. The same year saw the publication of the act implementing the statutory provisions - the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 3 August 2000 on the attainment of professional promotion by teachers (Journal of Laws No. 70, item 825), which constituted the first regulation on the above matter. The content of the above-mentioned legal acts assumed that in order to obtain the next level of professional promotion it is necessary to complete an internship, as specified in the Act, which ends with a positive evaluation of the teacher's professional performance and obtaining the sanction of the competent authority on the basis of an examination, interview or analysis of professional performance. In the first year, some appointed teachers were granted the professional advancement of an appointed teacher *ex officio*. There was also a special procedure for obtaining the degree of professional promotion of a teacher for academic teachers with a specified length of service and academic degree. From the beginning, it was assumed that the degree of professional promotion is conferred by an administrative decision. Subsequent years brought further modifications and changes in the law.

One of the key issues related to the course of the internship was the evaluation of the teacher's professional performance, which was carried out after the internship and after consulting the parents' representation.

In twenty years, the law on promotion has undergone several changes. The law has been amended four times, the regulation six times and four different versions have been created. The changes were usually of a cosmetic nature and related to practical issues identified in the course of the proceedings and concerning the entitlement of selected groups to a faster promotion path (due to seniority, achievements, academic rank, function), the course of a traineeship (mainly connected with interruptions due to absenteeism, but also concerning cases of traineeship after a negative assessment of achievements) or qualifications (the consequences of changes in the relevant regulation came into play). The reason for most of the changes was the adaptation of procedures to changes taking place in education, amendments to the law or, from 2015, the consequences caused by the changes referred to as educational reform.

7. Other forms of support for young teachers - installation allowance, teacher housing etc. - past and present

Teachers starting work, especially in the first years, could count on special treatment. Unfortunately, this was linked to the fact that they received much lower remuneration at the beginning of their employment, which resulted from the fact that they represented the lowest level of professional promotion - that of trainee teacher in the first year of work, and for the next five years that of contract teacher. For the first seven years of their work a young teacher cannot also apply for health leave. In addition, the length-of-service allowance of 1% of basic salary for each year of service is paid on a monthly basis beginning with the fourth year of service.

Young teachers, like other teachers, are eligible for a number of allowances related to the specifics of their workplace. One of them is a special rural allowance - a teacher employed in a village or town of up to 5,000 inhabitants is entitled to a separate allowance of 10% of basic salary. Another one is the so-called thirteen (13) hour allowance - teachers are entitled to additional annual remuneration according to the rules and in the amount specified in the Act of 12 December 1997 on additional annual remuneration for employees in the budgetary sphere and the so-called fourteen (14) hour allowance - according to the Teachers' Charter local governments must summarise each year how much they have spent on remunerating teachers at

each level of professional advancement. If one of the groups does not reach the sum provided for by the regulations, the local government has to pay a one-off supplementary allowance to teachers at that level. And finally, the profits attributed only to young teachers. Until 2018, a teacher who has obtained the contract teacher rank within two years from the date of his/her first professional work in his/her life at a school and possesses the qualifications required to occupy a given position, receives at the school indicated as his/her primary place of employment, upon his/her request, a one-time development allowance in the amount of two months of the basic salary received. From 2019 onwards, each trainee teacher in training for the rank of contract teacher shall receive a one-off start-up allowance of PLN 1000. This allowance is paid by 30 September of the year in which the teacher started the internship.

8. SWOT analysis

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <p>Polish Teachers' Union is a well organized structure with prospects to organize nationwide strikes and protests. As the situation worsens, support for teachers' demands gradually increases.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Unsuccessful negotiations with the government reduce the attractiveness of the teaching profession and pose a serious problem for a systemic approach to repairing Polish education.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>The general election to be held in 2023 represents an opportunity for a change of government and for the new ruling team to open up to the prospect of negotiating with teachers from scratch.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <p>The general low level of unionization and Poland's poor economic situation may push the situation in education to the background of public debate.</p>

9. Recommendations

- The uppermost issue the Polish education has faced throughout the years is the noncompetitive teachers' remuneration. A significant increase in basic salary, linking it to national average wage and simplifying the system for calculating the average teacher salary is a necessity. The proposal presented by the trade unions of a 20% increase is justified.
- Top-down establishment of the position, responsibilities and financial allowances of being a tutor is key to addressing the sense of confusion among novice teachers.
- Financial support orientating from the central budget for courses and training programmes oriented towards enhancing teachers' professional qualifications seems to be

a good solution and an important element in making the teaching profession more attractive.

- Statutory provision of adequate funding for teacher materials such as textbooks and worksheets, leading to their widespread availability within schools, can be an important part of a strategy to relieve the burden of teachers.
- Addressing the problem of an ageing workforce and very low participation of young workers is essential. A broad campaign focused on attracting young people to the profession, combined with the introduction of appropriate measures to make the teaching profession more attractive, must take place.
- Setting an upper limit of up to 20 pupils per class will help to raise the quality of classroom hours and also improve teacher-pupil-parent-relations.
- The implementation of a peer evaluation system for young teachers can lead to a significant improvement in the quality of work and boost the well-being of teachers.

10. Legislation on these issues (excerpt)

- Act of 26 January 1982 - Teacher's Charter (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1762 and of 2022, item 935 and 1116)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 3 August 2000 on the attainment of professional promotion by teachers (Dz. U. No. 70, item 825 and of 2002 No. 82, item 744);
- The Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 1 December 2004 on the attainment of professional promotion by teachers (Dz. No. 260, item. 2593, of 2007. No. 214, item. 1580 and of 2010. No. 235, item 1543)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 1 March 2013 on the attainment of professional promotion grades by teachers (Journal of Laws, item 393)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 26 July 2018 on the attainment of professional promotion degrees by teachers (Dz. U. of 2020, item 2200)

Guides

From the very beginning of the launch of the professional advancement path for teachers, specially prepared materials were a special kind of support. Among the most important were a set of proposals prepared within the most important teacher training institution, which was the Central Teacher Training Centre in Warsaw. It is here that a group of specialists dealing with the development and strengthening of teachers' professional competences developed a series of manuals aimed at providing necessary information and practical solutions, which would enable teachers to pass through the promotion procedure in a safe yet effective manner. The first of these is:

- Professional promotion of teachers. Handout. Part I. Trainee teacher; Part II. Contract teacher; Part III. Appointed teacher; Part IV. Internship supervisor; Part V. School headmaster. Warsaw: CODN Publishing House, 2000

- As can be seen from the titles, it is divided into key parts that bring together the description of the procedure, the necessary documentation and the specific requirements covered by the statutory provisions addressed to each group of promoted teachers. In addition, two parts were prepared for seniority supervisors and school headmasters. These representatives of the teaching community were also burdened with specific, but not fully specified requirements, which they could learn at least in part by reading the guide addressed to them.

Subsequent handbooks that appeared in the following years concerned the first experiences and the emerging new requirements that were perceived during the implementation of the first activities in connection with the practice of implementation of traineeship, as well as entry to the first qualification and examination proceedings. They concerned the extension of the role of the teacher supervisor and the group of specialists obligatorily participating in the process of determining the level of work done by candidates for subsequent levels of professional promotion of teachers, namely, experts.

- Królikowski Jacek : Opiekun nauczyciela : teoria - refleksja - praktyka. Warsaw, CODN Publishing House, 2002
- Expert of the qualification and examination board: a handbook edited by Małgorzata Pomianowska. - Warsaw : CODN Publishing House, 2003

The publishing market, especially in the first years of the implementation of the process of professional promotion of teachers was flooded with a number of proposals, which to a large extent were limited to the analysis and description of the law or the presentation of various

original solutions, showing how the issues of promotion and the accompanying challenges were perceived by the authors of these studies.

Against this background, books prepared by specialists from the Polish Teachers' Union stand out in a positive way. Already in the second year of work on planning professional development, the course of internship, collecting documentation and organization of qualification or examination proceedings, mainly members of the union received a number of studies characterized not only by practical reference to the provisions of law, but also providing useful and facilitating the promotion process for all interested. The most important of these studies are:

- Stachańczyk H.: Awans zawodowy nauczycielila: dokumentowanie powinności i wymagania. Katowice, ZNP OUPiS 2001
- Stachańczyk H.: Jak przygotowania dokumentacje do postępowania egzaminacyjnego i kwalifikacyjnego. Katowice, ZNP OUPiS 2001
- Obidniak D., Pfeiffer A.: Rozwój zawodowy nauczycielila: opis i analizowanie problemów edukacyjne. Katowice, ZNP OUPiS 2001
- Karpiński Sergiusz: Awans zawodowy nauczycielila stażysty: poradnik dyrektor. Katowice, ZNP OUPiS 2001

These guides on the one hand showed in detail the expectations, sources, possibilities and methods of collecting and compiling documentation necessary in the process of formal presentation before examination or qualification boards. Particularly attractive turned out to be a guide on the development of the so-called case study, which is a challenge for many appointed teachers. Very practical was also the guide for headmasters, who were responsible for the plan and course of the traineeship, the appointment of a mentor and the organization of or participation in qualification and examination boards.