



OPTIMAL MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM - SUMMARY OF THE STATUS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

May, 2020

Continuing professional development (PD) for teachers is considered important the world over, since it is essential for teachers to be as qualified as possible in order to improve the quality of education overall. Consequently, recent educational reforms have made teachers a central factor, and their ongoing PD has played a prominent role. Thus, teachers are not only the addressees of the change, but also its most significant agents.

One recent global trend in educational reforms is the transition from a narrow, formal view of PD (e.g., continuing education programs, short courses) to a broader vision that sees it as a lengthy process integrated into the teacher's daily routine and including a wide range of informal experiences and activities in the school.

In Israel, efforts have been made to follow this global trend and introduce changes that will improve the PD of teachers and its impact on their professional level and on the Israeli education system in general. In 2018, the Experts' Committee on the Optimal Management of PD and Guidance in the Education System was convened to examine this issue. Over the past two years the committee has held learning sessions, individual meetings, and consultations with professionals; perused submitted materials, and studied the issue based on international and local scientific studies. This has led to the conclusion that despite the changes implemented in the Israeli education system in recent years, which have led to some improvements in the field of teachers' PD, **additional system-wide changes are necessary**. These are required so that teachers' PD may achieve its purpose and realize its full potential of improving teachers' professional level and status. Furthermore, to effect a significant

change in teachers' PD throughout their career, it is insufficient to address only the **pedagogical** aspects of teaching; **organizational** aspects must also be taken into account.

This document presents the committee's position regarding the principles that should underlie efforts to improve the efficacy of teachers' PD, as well as the field's practical challenges. The discrepancies between the goals and challenges of PD also dictate principles of action and concrete short- and long-term recommendations.

First we present the **latest global trends** in teachers' professional learning, based on the view that teachers and teachers' learning are important factors in the advancement of the education system. The need thus arises to construct career tracks for teachers that will improve their personal and professional wellbeing, encourage the recruitment of high-quality manpower, and raise the prestige of the teaching profession.

Next, we report on the **status and challenges** of teacher PD in Israel, including reports on the latest studies on teachers' professional learning (TPL). Professional learning programs are the means by which teachers' career-long professional development is achieved.

A **management model** is then presented that can assist in meeting the existing challenges and improving teachers' PD. It is the committee's opinion that this model will improve planning, management, and monitoring of teachers' PD at the school, regional/sectorial, and national levels, taking into account both the global needs of the education system and the needs of each individual teacher in the advancement of his or her career.

Finally, mechanisms for **monitoring and evaluating** professional learning will be proposed. These mechanisms will address the quality of learning processes and the means of promoting teachers' professionalism.

The committee's recommendations reflect six fundamental principles for improving teacher PD in Israel:

1. **Strengthen the learning culture in the school setting.** School routines that will promote such a culture and nourish collaboration between teachers in their disciplinary fields should be adopted. This will also cultivate reflection and assist in coping with pedagogical issues.
2. Establish an **autonomous professional body** to plan the career tracks of teachers and determine criteria for their progress. This will be a kind of "Teachers' Council" similar to bodies in the fields of psychology and social work. The council will determine career tracks based on explicit, pre-set criteria.
3. **Increase coordination and feedback** between all the agents involved in the management and implementation of teacher PD. This principle should be implemented on two levels. The first concerns increased coordination and feedback among units in the Ministry of Education involved in developing contents for TPL programs (by establishing a "central forum" for this purpose in the Ministry). The second level calls for increased coordination and feedback between three agents:

- the proposed "central forum" at the Education Ministry, which will be responsible for policy-making, framework design, and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation processes;
 - local bodies closer to the field – the educational district management, the local authorities, and school principals – who will be responsible for implementing and managing TPL at their regions, cities, and schools; and
 - the proposed "Teachers' Council" that will supervise and regulate teachers' career tracks.
4. **Pool resources.** The education system should strive to integrate all the resources devoted to TPL programs into one service “basket.” This will include resources now invested in different types of continuing professional education: courses, workshops, individual guidance and/or mentoring, individual and/or team learning within and outside the school, academic post-graduate studies, and more. By "teachers' professional learning" we mean pedagogic or generic content as well as professionalization in the teaching of a specific discipline.
 5. **Balance the system's needs with the individual development of each teacher.** The TPL resource basket should be utilized in a flexible manner so as to balance the needs of the education system (defined by the proposed "central forum" and implemented by the local bodies closer to the field –the district, the local authority, the school) with those of each individual teacher (their professional aspirations, abilities, and personal situation).
 6. **Increase monitoring and evaluation.** Regular and efficient monitoring of TPL should be conducted. This will include
 - setting clear learning goals;
 - regularly and methodically collecting data and monitoring the quality of the learning activities, as well as the individual professional development of each teacher; and
 - conducting research to evaluate the components of TPL programs, as a tool for understanding and improving these activities.

Global Trends and the Changes Implemented in Israel

The educational reforms adopted around the world, and the resulting models in the field of TPL, though diverse, share some common characteristics in that they generally emphasize the **importance of long-term learning processes adapted to the individual needs of teachers.** These reforms see teachers as active partners in the design of TPL processes in the school and local contexts, as well as in the context of active learning, reflection, and observation of their colleagues' experiences. They also emphasize the need to cultivate teachers' generic pedagogic skills and knowledge and to improve their teaching skills in specific disciplines, thus blurring the traditional distinction between generic and disciplinary PD.

In Israel as well, there are changes in conceptions and prevailing trends in the field of TPL programs. One expression of this can be seen in the use of new terminology, such as replacing the title of the Education Ministry department responsible for PD from the

"Continuing Education Department" to the "Department for Professional Development and Guidance" (the department's title was later changed again). Practical changes have also taken place, such as the construction of a tool to be used by the school principal for the transformative evaluation of TPL programs.

Some of these changes were included in the *Ofek Hadash* and *Oz LaTmura* reforms, intended to regulate teachers' working conditions and compensation as well as issues related to TPL programs. Moreover, an attempt was made to propose a career-long PD track for each teacher based on their needs and the needs of the system, and to create a structure of ranks and roles that would provide teachers with a professional horizon.

Nevertheless, despite the good intentions, a large part of the reform efforts in the field of TPL has not borne fruit, due in part to the **multiplicity of agents** involved in teachers' professional learning. This has impaired the ability to offer a coherent and comprehensive PD plan adapted to the specific needs of schools, and has detracted from the ability to pool learning resources. In addition, the large number of different agents has impaired the ability to plan and advance the personal PD of each individual teacher by adapting the process to their professional needs and current career stage. Another detracting factor has been the **lack of career tracks** that can provide professional horizons for teachers and promote the status and prestige of the teaching profession in general. Finally, the **lack of databases, monitoring, and evaluation** of TPL programs in general, and, in particular, of the programs engaged in by individual teachers, limits the ability to establish efficient, high-quality learning resources adapted to the different needs of teachers, schools, and the education system.

Latest Research on Teachers' Professional Development

Recent years have seen growing interest in identifying the optimal attributes of teachers' PD tracks and TPL programs, i.e. those that show improved teacher learning or consequent student achievement. The literature on this subject indicates a few prominent characteristics of effective TPL programs:

- (a) a focus on disciplinary content and on the way in which students learn it;
- (b) collaboration and interaction between colleagues;
- (c) incorporation of active learning tasks;
- (d) adaptation to school cultures and policies, as well as to teachers' beliefs and values;
and
- (e) determining a sufficient number of learning hours (i.e. the length of the program).

However, despite the consensus that emerges from the literature, these characteristics appear mainly in studies with **problematic research methodologies**, thereby making it difficult to draw valid conclusions regarding effective program design. For example, many literature reviews are based on studies that examine the impact of a *specific* program on a *select* group of teachers, in comparison with a control group of teachers who took no part in any program

whatsoever. Yet the two groups differed not only in their participation, or lack thereof, in a specific program, but also in other background traits. Furthermore, the characteristics mentioned above regarding improved teacher learning and student achievement are commonsensical and consonant with classical learning theories and with the accumulated experience of practitioners. Nevertheless, in many fields we are obliged to act despite the lack of conclusive research findings, and in these situations our actions should be based on the best existing knowledge.

It should also be kept in mind that the success of TPL does not depend solely on program design and on the inclusion or exclusion of one characteristic or another; it is also influenced by **organizational structures and processes**. While the research in this context is limited, descriptive and correlational studies do indicate factors that promote the efficacy of TPL and improve the quality of the teacher's work. These factors include

- (a) a supportive professional environment, characterized by mutual trust, cooperation between colleagues, and a supportive leadership on the part of the school's management;
- (b) the existence of constructive evaluation and feedback processes; and
- (c) investment in within-school learning processes.

For example, a study that integrated data about student achievement with teachers' reports on aspects of the school environment found that teachers working in more **supportive professional environments** showed more teaching efficacy, as manifested in the achievements of their students. Although these studies do not provide clear answers to the question of how such professional environments can be established and maintained, they do indicate a need for supportive leadership on the part of school principals, alongside within-school structures and mechanisms that can foster cooperation among teachers, compensate team leaders, and provide time for planning, reflecting on teaching practices, and solving problems that arise during class.

Committee Proposals Based on the Literature

In any case, there is consensus in the literature regarding the characteristics of effective TPL programs, and these are in line with current learning theories and the clinical experience of practitioners. Therefore, the committee concludes that these characteristics should be applied to teachers' learning in Israel. The committee also recommends introducing long-term PD processes into teaching practice, including the construction of a within-school supportive environment, the promotion of cooperation between teachers, and team reflection on teaching practices and pedagogical issues.

In this context, **the committee proposes** considering a number of aspects:

- There is no single career-long PD design that can address all the issues involved in teachers' professional learning. Different disciplines, different teachers, and different contexts will almost certainly require different learning schemes.

- The efficacy of TPL programs depends, among other things, on the kind of change required: certain aspects of teaching are more amenable to change than others; certain components of change are easier to measure than others.
- A crucial role in teachers' professional development is played by the expert guiding/leading the learning framework (e.g., course, workshop, program). The type of expertise required must be carefully defined, particularly in contexts of within-school TPL.
- Some of the most promising TPL processes, such as guidance or individual mentoring, are difficult to implement on a large scale.
- Optimally, structured processes (such as continuing education programs, courses, and workshops) should be combined with TPL in the teachers' room and within-school practical experience and reflection. Initiatives for within-school or other kinds of local processes should accompany formal workshops or continuing education programs.

It is important to keep in mind a fact that is often taken for granted: the mere *identification* of characteristics is not beneficial in and of itself. The efficacy of a TPL program depends on its manner of implementation and management by the relevant authorities: the Ministry of Education, district management, PISGA centers for the development of teaching staff, the local authority's education department, and school principals. Furthermore, the characteristics of TPL programs that are considered optimal, alongside the importance of a supportive environment – in particular, the need for mutual trust and for mechanisms encouraging cooperation – indicate the need for a change in the current management of PD in Israel. More concretely, the optimal management of PD and TPL programs should include the following features:

- A balance between the needs and broad policy considerations of the system and those at the local, regional, and school levels. To this end, the Ministry should draw up a rational policy and delegate authority to local agents that can adapt and implement that policy to field conditions.
- The development of structured career tracks with explicit criteria for promotion, alongside the design of an individual career track for each teacher.
- The pooling and the rational, flexible use of the entire array of TPL resources: courses, individual guidance hours, team learning, advanced academic studies, etc. Flexibility will promote coherence in teachers' learning processes and will shape the career of each teacher on the basis of policy requirements, local needs, and the teacher's personal preferences.
- The creation of within-school mechanisms and tools encouraging cooperation and a learning atmosphere in the school.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of teachers' career-long PD that will assess both the quality of each TPL resource and the personal progress of each teacher.

Meeting Existing Challenges and Promoting High-Quality PD: A Management Model

Who should manage PD

The management of PD requires coordination and feedback between the central administrative units in the Ministry of Education and between these units and local bodies close to the schools and teachers. The local bodies will be responsible for the actual implementation of TPL programs based on policies designed by the central administration, while aiming to balance the needs of the system, local needs, school needs, and the individual professional needs and advancement of the teacher.

Currently, numerous units at the Ministry of Education are involved in PD. The two major ones are "Department A for the PD of Teaching Staff" at the Teaching Staff Administration, and the Ministry's "Guidance Department" (prior to 2014, these two departments were included under one organizational umbrella). There are also various central units at the Ministry of Education, district managements, and local authorities that plan and operate TPL programs.

The multiplicity of agents involved in teachers' PD raises a number of issues:

- (a) Given the fact that almost all the central units at the Ministry of Education employ PD as a tool for incorporating new programs in the system and for advancing their own goals, the roles of the two Ministry of Education departments responsible for this endeavor are put into question, specifically, are they experts in PD, or is their role limited only to the supply of resources needed to operate this costly tool by other Ministry units?
- (b) At the local level, PISGA centers are a primary agent for providing PD services (i.e., TPL programs) in their respective regions. However, their role is not uniform and consistent, but rather depends on local conditions and on the communities and schools they serve.
- (c) The status of teacher training colleges as important centers of PD has declined.
- (d) The districts and some local authorities are actively involved in TPL programs and in teachers' PD tracks.

Although the distribution of activities among different agents diversifies the means and contents of PD – which in itself is a favorable outcome – this multiplicity is unplanned, unmanaged, and creates the following major difficulties:

- (a) Lack of clarity regarding the goals of teachers' PD, i.e., to what degree is its aim the incorporation of new programs and contents developed by the Ministry of Education, compared to the development of teachers' professional skills and knowledge;
- (b) Unnecessary competition between agents involved in PD over teachers' limited time resources;
- (c) Difficulty in consolidating a structured long-term PD process for each teacher (in contrast to the current mixture of short-term, discontinuous processes);

- (d) Limited analysis of the successes and challenges of specific TPL programs, in order to optimize learning outcomes;
- (e) Insufficient responsiveness to the needs, wishes, and professional advancement of the teachers themselves.

These challenges are especially significant in light of the conclusions of studies on PD reviewed above, to reiterate:

- (a) the importance of creating a supportive environment and optimal conditions within the school;
- (b) the need to combine formal PD processes with ongoing within-school learning processes;
- (c) the importance of not only planning an effective learning program, but also implementing and adapting it to local needs and constraints; and
- (d) the fact that some of the most promising types of PD, such as individual guidance and mentoring, require local planning and are difficult to implement on a system-wide basis.

Distribution of responsibilities

The committee recommends better clarifying the distribution of responsibilities and roles among the various agents, as well as promoting a uniform, coherent policy to coordinate the primary goals of the central units at the Education Ministry with the local agents responsible for implementing TPL programs in the schools. This policy should include adequate coordination, monitoring, feedback and evaluation mechanisms.

Integrated governance

The committee recommends an integrated governance arrangement whereby a public authority invites stakeholders to take part in decision-making discussions. This arrangement is intended to promote mutual trust and the social capital required for joint action and an effective partnership in shaping and implementing optimal policies.

The integrated governance framework rests on two assumptions. First, that policy implementation by the official body closest to the field will produce the best and most suitable results for the citizen. Second, that local bodies need the support and guidance of the central authority. If the central authority (where policy is formulated) and the field (where it is implemented) are too far apart, the central authority has no control over its policy's execution. Therefore, it must find ways of involving local partners in the processes of policy-making, convincing them to endorse its choices and motivating them in the implementation stages.

However, countering these assumptions is the fear that delegating authority to local partners will increase inequality between well-established local authorities and disempowered ones. Another concern is that resources will be wasted due to the duplication of functions and contents at each local site.

The following general outline aims to balance these principles and concerns.

Possible General Outline for Managing and Organizing PD

The organizational structure includes three parts:

- (a) **A central system** that will shape the overall policy for teachers' PD, support its realization by providing tools and knowledge, and ensure the establishment of a structure for programs monitoring and accountability.
- (b) **Regional/local agents** that will be responsible for implementing and adapting the general policy to the local/sectorial needs and constraints. These agents will address the planning and management of PD/TPL in schools, as well as the personal career track of each teacher, in a more coordinated and efficient way.
The committee proposes the following bodies as potential regional/district agents: local authorities, PISGA centers, a cluster of local authorities, or representatives of the district in the region – all in accordance with the specific circumstances of each region or population sector.
- (c) **An autonomous professional council** to be responsible for defining teachers' career tracks and approving the advancement of each teacher along the professional track he or she chooses. Teacher promotion will be approved according to the requirements delineated by the professional council, teacher performance, and recommendations of the school principal and the representative of the local authority or district.

Central System and Regional/Local Agents (Including Districts and Schools)

The committee proposes a core structure of four components. Note that the following components are only one possible alternative; other components may be put forward:

1. The **central administration** will focus on **formulating a general policy, providing resources, and monitoring PD/TPL**. To this end, the committee recommends establishing a "**central forum**" for PD at the Ministry of Education. This forum will include representatives from the Teacher Staff Administration, the Guidance Department, and other departments in the Education Ministry currently involved in PD, and will be responsible for developing a general policy to address, among other things, the following aspects:
 - (a) Defining clear goals for PD and detailing resources to be allocated for their achievement
 - (b) Formulating threshold requirements of TPL programs and their scope. For example, is participation in such programs obligatory? If so, how frequently should teachers participate? What should be the ratio between disciplinary and generic PD?
 - (c) Defining the connection between contents of TPL programs and teachers' promotion along their career tracks
 - (d) Setting criteria regarding types of within-school and external TPL

- (e) Determining budgeting methods, including regulations regarding pooling resources into one "basket." This will allow the school principal to construct a program that matches the school's needs, and will allow each teacher to plan his or her personal long-term learning process (together with the school principal, and taking into account the requirements of the central administration). One possible budgeting method might be to distribute PD vouchers: teachers can choose whether to use them to take part in courses, receive personal or group guidance, or participate in any other type of professional learning.
- (f) Determining how to report, monitor, and evaluate TPL programs and methods.

The **district** will

- (a) adjust general policy to regional/sectorial needs and support the schools, local authorities, and PISGA centers in promoting PD and TPL programs;
- (b) play an important role in monitoring TPL programs, and be responsible for collecting data on these programs and transferring it to the central administration; and
- (c) support local authorities lacking sufficient resources and capacities to manage TPL programs by themselves.

In addition, and as detailed below, a specific position-holder in the district will be responsible for individual teachers' PD and will monitor the TPL and progress of each teacher along his or her career track.

2. A **local forum for integrated management** will be established for the management and coordination of PD in each region/city/sector and will include representatives of the local authority, district management, and schools. Each forum will be headed by either
 - (a) the director of the local authority's education department,
 - (b) an agreed representative of a cluster of local authorities,
 - (c) the director of the PISGA center, or
 - (d) some other local agent.

In accordance with general policy, the local forum will

- (a) determine the framework (contents and budget) for TPL programs at each school and the general work-plan for the region/sector;
 - (b) assist school principals in managing TPL at the school level and in planning individual learning programs for each teacher; and
 - (c) serve as the body balancing the requirements of the central administration, the needs of the school and the community, and the needs and wishes of the individual teacher.
 - (d) As a coordinating body, the Forum for Integrated Management will play a central role in identifying schools that require support, and connecting between local needs and the existing options at the district and national levels.
3. **Schools** will be responsible for planning and implementing TPL for teachers, educational teams, and the school as a whole. The holder of a specially tailored position, such as a pedagogic coordinator or a vice principal – together with the local forum for integrated management – will assist school principals in constructing a multi-year plan for TPL programs at their school. This plan will be based on the general policy and adjusted by

the district and local forum based on the school's and teachers' needs. To properly plan and manage the individual TPL and career promotion of each teacher, school principals and teachers will have access to a digital data system (currently being developed) containing a "personal professional learning file" for each teacher. The file will include the requirements of the central administration, the history of the teacher's PD/TPL, and other parameters; will serve as a central tool for planning the teacher's TPL and career track; and will facilitate monitoring teachers' actual learning and progress.

All types of TPL programs will be included in one **basket**, and the principal and teachers will be able to use these resources flexibly to plan the teacher's professional growth by integrating different types of learning in the teacher's personal PD plan. The flexible and sensible use of resources will allow the principal to ensure a coherent integration between different PD methods and the pedagogical theories implemented in the school. Indeed, current agreements stipulate that a personal PD plan drawn up by the school principal and adjusted to each teacher's needs should already be in place. However, these guidelines are not currently implemented.

The Complementary Aspect of PD – Teachers' Professional Growth and Career Progress

Teachers are not only the consumers of TPL programs; they are also professionals who aspire to advance their career in ways that suit their personal needs and goals. Therefore, the development of a teacher's professional career is seen as a goal in and of itself. This is part of the general global transformation of teaching into an autonomous profession whose members carry responsibility, authority, and the autonomy deriving from their expertise, alongside the ability to climb the career ladder and to attain higher positions and compensation according to the quality of their work. Such prospects can attract higher-quality candidates to join the teaching profession and reduce teacher burnout and dropout.

Leading education systems worldwide understand that encouraging teachers' professional growth empowers the educational environment in general. Such systems boast of

- (a) High interest in joining the teaching profession;
- (b) school structures that grant autonomy to teachers and allow them to take responsibility according to their fields of expertise and interest;
- (c) clear criteria for teacher evaluation and promotion along a career track;
- (d) appropriate investment of resources (financial compensation, time, learning opportunities) to advance teachers; and
- (e) explicit encouragement and support for teachers' professional growth.

Education systems around the world deal with these needs differently. Some (e.g. in Singapore and Shanghai) construct specific career tracks for teachers, though these tracks may differ in their character and type. Other countries do not use a predefined career track, addressing teachers' needs using other means. In Finland, for example, there is no predefined

career track; however, the teaching profession enjoys high status, not least because candidates are required to fulfill high academic standards and teachers are granted significant autonomy and trust.

When comparing the teaching profession with other professions bearing similar features (e.g., social work, psychology), the latter clearly include well-defined tracks for professional promotion and specialization. Psychologists, for example, undergo primary training followed by specialized training, after which they must take a specialization test in order to register in the Psychologists' Registry. They can then advance to the level of psychology supervisor, and, indeed, most professionals follow this track. The social work profession also has a regulated process of specialization. In both, a consulting council is responsible for approving promotion along the career track. The consulting council is an autonomous professional body, the members of which are relevant stakeholders and include the psychologists or social workers themselves, representatives from the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Social Welfare, and other agents. This mechanism accords with the fact that these professions are clinical liberal professions, in which the professionals themselves are full partners in the shaping of professional policy.

The teaching profession in Israel, however, does not include well-defined tracks for promotion, this despite the fact that as part of the salary reforms of the past decade, attempts were made to design career tracks for teachers. For example, the *Ofek Hadash* agreement created ranks that are reflected in teachers' salaries and were supposed to be accompanied by TPL programs that match the teacher's career stage. However, the agreement lacks essential components necessary for professional growth. Thus, although the *Ofek Hadash* ranks were associated with a salary increase, they were not accompanied by an expansion in teachers' spheres of responsibility and autonomy. Furthermore, and apparently due to operational difficulties, some of these features were later abandoned (for example, requirements to participate in particular learning programs based on one's rank) or not implemented. The teaching career in Israel thereby remains today as it has been – limited in its options for promotion and in its professional horizons. This situation, alongside the relatively low interest in the profession, high dropout rates in the first years of teaching, and the profession's lack of prestige, indicate the need for change.

The committee believes that creating well-defined career tracks will significantly advance the Israeli education system in general and promote PD in particular. The following four **recommendations** are made:

1. Determine career tracks and their corresponding ranks and predefine accompanying compensation. In addition, set quality-based criteria for promotion in each track, including how these criteria should be evaluated. Invest sufficient time and resources in determining the tracks and their characteristics; this should be done by an autonomous body (see below) and with the participation of the teachers organizations.
2. Establish an autonomous body (a "Teachers' Council") similar to the Council of Psychologists, the Social Workers' Council, or the Scientific Council of the Medical Association. This body will include representatives of the teaching profession (e.g., representatives of teachers' organizations), representatives from the Education Ministry's

central units, scholars in the educational field, and other relevant agents. The Teachers' Council will be responsible for regulating career tracks, including all the issues detailed in Point 1.

3. The teacher and the school principal will be responsible for planning the detailed career track of each teacher, with input from local agents (the local authority or district).
4. Similar to the powers held by the Council of Psychologists and the Social Workers' Council, the Teachers' Council will be authorized to approve teacher promotion along the teacher's chosen professional track. This decision will comply with requirements set by the Council, the teacher's personal file, and the recommendations of local agents (school principal, representative of the local authority or district).

Establishing Efficient Monitoring and Evaluation

A reliable monitoring and evaluation system is needed to observe each teacher's PD and progress along the chosen career track and to determine whether and when a teacher deserves professional promotion, and whether he or she has fulfilled the promotion criteria. However, it is also necessary to monitor the quality of TPL programs and methods offered to teachers, including the expertise level of the professionals leading these programs (lecturers in continuing education programs, mentors in individual guidance or mentoring programs, leaders in within-school learning groups).

Currently, monitoring capabilities with regard to PD and TPL programs are minimal. Moreover, the Ministry of Education lacks sufficient data on the quality of TPL activities, because:

- The Ministry's central database is managed by an external company and includes limited and mostly administrative information, which does not allow assessment of effectiveness or identification of problems and weaknesses of specific TPL programs.
- Pedagogical monitoring of teachers' PD is also performed by an external company, is very limited in scope, and lacks detailed monitoring criteria.
- The monitoring of teachers, instructors, mentors, and guides leading TPL programs is very limited. For example, the threshold requirements for registering as a lecturer with the Ministry of Education are minimal and there is no scrutiny of the lecturer's effectiveness.
- The ability to monitor guides employed by the Education Ministry is restricted.
- The existing database on the professional learning and advancement of individual teachers lacks detail, so that in effect, these aspects are not monitored.

It should be noted that the Ministry has drawn up various plans for improving the situation, such as introducing a more advanced system for managing TPL (though the system, again, applies only to formal continuing education programs that grant a compensation unit) or regulations for teachers who choose to take leader positions. These plans certainly constitute a step in the right direction, but at present they are only in development stages.

Committee Recommendations

The committee believes that monitoring, administrative control, and evaluation should be implemented for the following:

- the various TPL programs and methods offered to teachers
- collection of data on the professional level and expertise of teachers, instructors, mentors, and leaders of TPL programs
- the quality of the contents (skills, knowledge) delivered in these programs.

Understandably, the establishment of such a monitoring and evaluation structure is organizationally challenging and requires significant resources both in the preliminary stage and for routine maintenance. Thus, the committee recommends the following:

- Implementation of monitoring and evaluation should be divided between the local bodies mentioned above (the local forum for integrated management) and the central administration, which has an overall view of the education system as a whole
- The local forum (responsible for management and implementation) should collect relevant data and transfer it to the district
- The district will process the information and send its conclusions and suggestions to the central PD forum to evaluate policy implementation and determine future policy changes based on the evidence collected.

Evaluating Impact

Beside these organizational aspects, additional questions arise regarding the scope and nature of the required evaluation – in particular, ***what exactly should be measured, and how?*** The research literature extensively addresses the issue of evaluating the **features** of PD/TPL programs, but less attention is paid to the identification and measurement of the impact of PD on teachers. This is apparently due to the many difficulties involved – although this kind of evaluation is vital.

Scientifically, the best way to examine the impact of PD on teachers is by conducting well-controlled experiments that can isolate specific effects on teachers' expertise. This kind of experiment is difficult to conduct since it is incompatible with large-scale, system-wide programs. In addition, the complexity of the school environment makes it difficult to isolate relevant variables that can influence the effectiveness of a TPL program or method, and schools usually lack the expertise necessary to conduct evaluation studies. Despite these difficulties, the committee believes that the Ministry should aspire to conduct such studies, and to this end, partnership with academic bodies should be encouraged.

Alongside stringent evaluation studies, there is a wide range of techniques for collecting relevant information on TPL programs. These include interviews with teachers, surveys and

questionnaires, classroom observations, and so on. In many cases, teachers' general satisfaction with a program is used as an evaluation tool, despite the difficulties posed by this type of measurement. The committee believes teachers' assessments of the programs should not be underestimated, yet it is important to formulate content-related questions focused on the specific program and the learning output that a program was designed to attain, rather than questions related to general satisfaction.

Monitoring Teachers' Progress

The progress of individual teachers along their career track is another facet requiring monitoring and evaluation. This is difficult to measure since it requires standards for evaluating teachers' professional abilities – standards that are currently lacking. In fact, teachers today are unable to demonstrate their professional abilities for the purpose of career promotion.

The link between PD and evaluation is bi-directional. On the one hand, learning and professionalization are adequate criteria for evaluating teachers, as is also stated in the "Evaluation Measurements Map" presented below. On the other hand, and more importantly, evaluation makes it possible to identify each teacher's needs and challenges, and, accordingly, create opportunities for coping with these issues by designing a personalized PD plan, thereby improving teacher's expertise and professionalization. Furthermore, through the tool of teacher evaluation, teachers with high abilities who can fulfill leadership roles can be identified and recruited, thereby improving PD processes.

Evaluating teaching staff appears as a requirement in the *Ofek Hadash* and *Oz LaTmura* agreements. For example, *Ofek Hadash* stipulates that promotion requires transformative evaluation by school principals. To conduct this kind of evaluation, the "Measurements Map" for evaluating teachers was developed. The map includes four higher-order components:

- commitment to students and the school;
- expertise and knowledge in the discipline;
- management of teaching and education practices; and
- learning and professionalization throughout the teacher's career.

Efforts have also been made to develop behavioral descriptions of each of these four higher-order components. Nevertheless, the measurements map is a general tool and lacks quality-based standards and criteria for conducting evaluations according to the type of role a teacher is currently fulfilling.

The committee therefore recommends that alongside the continued development of the "Measurements Map," a system of standards and grades be created for the various positions and career stages. The creation of such a system is complex and poses significant challenges. The committee therefore recommends that the system be developed together with the regulations mentioned above (types of career tracks and types of positions these tracks should include). Also, as stated above, teachers should participate in the process of developing

policy in this area, and a system should be established by the consulting autonomous body – i.e. the Teachers' Council – which will be made up of different stakeholders.

Existing tools, if properly implemented, can also be used to effectively monitor the individual learning processes of teachers and their professional progress. For example, monitoring can be done at the district level, wherein each district will include a team of professional development coordinators who will participate in the local Forum for Integrated Management, with each coordinator monitoring a group of teachers in the district. Their work in the district and their role in the local forum will make these coordinators knowledgeable in both the goals of the Education Ministry and in local needs. On this basis, they will perform regular monitoring of the professional progress of each teacher in the district and will take part in shaping his or her PD. The coordinators will have a major role in ensuring that a proper balance is reached between the needs of the system and the school, on the one hand, and the needs and professional aspirations of the teacher, on the other.

In Conclusion

The main conclusion of the Experts' Committee on the Optimal Management of PD and Guidance in the Education System, after comprehensively studying and examining this subject over the course of two years, is that **addressing pedagogical aspects is not enough to bring about significant change in the field of teachers' career-long PD**. Indeed, more fundamental issues must be confronted.

Among practitioners there seems to be a rather broad consensus regarding the desired future directions for PD, and these are in line with contemporary professional discourse in Israel and worldwide. However, the desired change is difficult to accomplish due to complex systemic and organizational challenges. In this summary we have presented principles that can guide the management and planning of PD and meet the challenges involved in implementing them.

Our three primary recommendations are:

- (a) Effect an organizational change that will allow the Ministry of Education to prepare a coherent general policy on the subject of PD and create local forums to implement this policy;
- (b) Establish a Teachers' Council to develop career tracks for teachers and detailed standards and criteria for promotion along these tracks;
- (c) Improve the monitoring and evaluation of TPL programs and the progress of teachers along their career track.

Note that these recommendations are of a general nature. In some case, the committee has proposed concrete models as examples; of course, other models are possible.

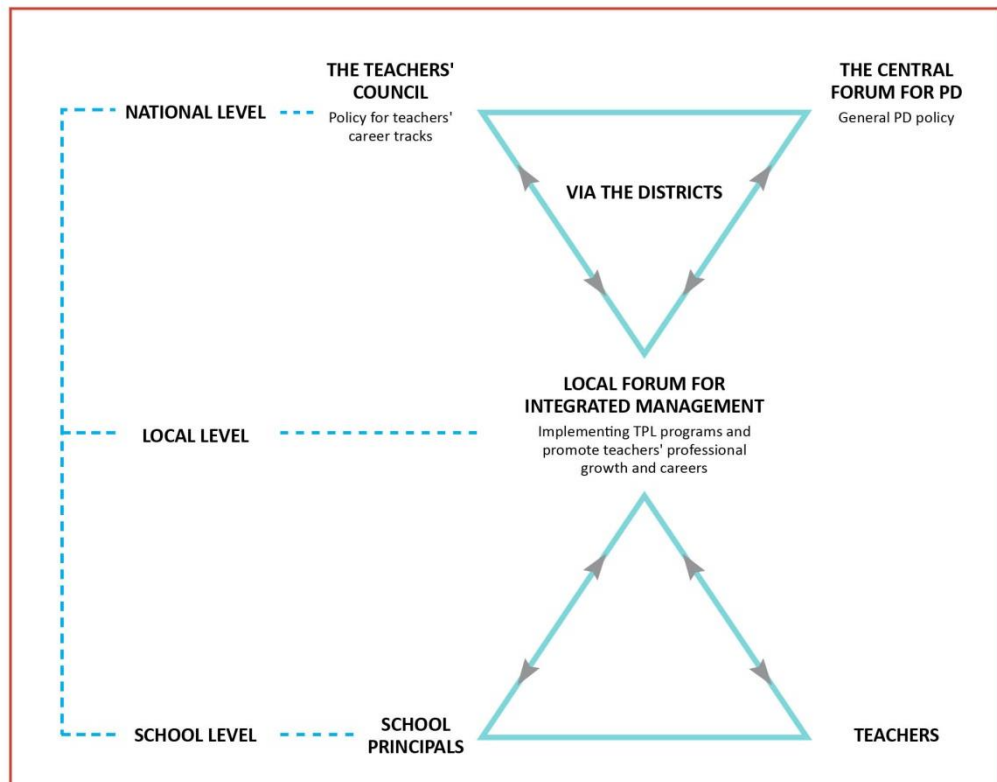
Below is a reiteration and summary of the committee's six principal recommendations (detailed in the introduction to this document):

1. Strengthen the within-school PD/TPL environment;
2. Establish an autonomous professional body to be responsible for teachers' career tracks;
3. Increase coordination and feedback between the various bodies involved in TPL programs;
4. Pool TPL resources;
5. Balance the system's needs with the individual development of each teacher;
6. Increase monitoring and evaluation of TPL activities and the professional growth of each teacher.

In organizational terms, these principles can be illustrated in a diagram showing two converging triangles (see diagram 1) that expresses the relationships between the local Forum for Integrated Management, the central forum for PD, the Teachers' Council, the schools, and the teachers. The upper triangle flows down from the national level to the local Forums for Integrated Management, via the districts, while the lower triangle flows upwards from the school principals and teachers in a specific region to the local Forum for Integrated Management relevant to that region. The meeting point between the triangles is the **local Forum for Integrated Management**.

At the national level, the central forum for PD at the Education Ministry will set general PD policy alongside the Teachers' Council, which will plan policy for teachers' career tracks. These bodies will collaborate with the local Forums for Integrated Management via the districts. The local forums will be responsible for managing, implementing, and monitoring TPL programs and methods, and for planning teachers' career tracks and evaluating their progress along the track. To fulfill their role, the local forums will maintain direct contact with school principals and teachers (represented in the diagram in the lower triangle) in order to implement TPL programs and promote teachers' professional growth and careers.

Diagram 1



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