

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

**Policy Mapping Grid: Belgium
(Flemish Community)**



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Further information about the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) activities is available on the [TPL4I web area](#).

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Secretariat
Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office
Rue Montoyer, 21
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org



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SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

Wider policy context

The coalition agreement of the new Flemish Government (2019–2024) puts forward five major challenges to enhance excellence in education:

1. Focus on quality in education.
- 2. Address the shortage of teachers and their professional status.**
3. Provide the right support for learners in the right place.
4. Address school capacity shortages.
5. Increase study duration in higher education.

To make the **teaching profession** attractive again, the focus will be on the teaching process in the classroom and on the reduction of administrative, organisational, policy and professional consultation tasks. Staff and budget are used to facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom. Support for teachers and school leaders must be strengthened. Therefore, school advisory services must work more efficiently and effectively. The professional status of teachers must be restored; teachers must regain ownership of their job. Respect for teachers, class councils and school principals should be restored. The quality of teacher training will be monitored and adapted. Parental involvement and responsibility are necessary to create a strong education environment and study results.

In order to offer the **appropriate support to learners** in the right place, the [Decree regarding measures for learners with special educational needs](#) (known as the M-Decree) will be replaced by a 'support decree' for learners with special educational needs (SEN) and their teachers. This will be a pragmatic and realistic implementation of support for learners with SEN: special education if needed, inclusive education if possible. Special attention will be given to upgrading basic care/support in mainstream schools. This could be done by implementing models like RTI (Response to Intervention). RTI consists of continuous screening and monitoring of learners' achievements, and intensive intervention and remediation in case of learning disadvantage. The upgrading of basic care/support in mainstream schools has to take into account teachers' capacity and learners' learning progress.

The support model, which was introduced in 2017, has been evaluated. The results will be used to adjust the support mechanism to support learners and teachers quickly and efficiently. Support has to be visible in the classroom and beneficial for learners and teachers.

Special policy measures will be taken, targeted to the specific needs of gifted learners. Gifted learners will be challenged and teachers will get the necessary training to recognise them. Teachers must also receive the necessary support and tools to adapt their teaching to these learners' needs.



Wider policy context

In 2018, as a follow-up to a policy evaluation, the Flemish Parliament adopted a decree focusing on the reform and strengthening of initial teacher education programmes. The [Policy Paper Education 2019–2024](#) states that the minister will monitor the quality of teacher education closely and adjust it if needed. The minister will continue working, together with teacher education institutions, to strengthen initial teacher education, helping beginning teachers to deal with the many challenges ahead of them.

In particular, specific attention (in initial training, but also in teachers' in-service training and initial guidance) will go to:

- knowledge of Dutch;
- subject knowledge;
- stronger didactics;
- more practice-based educational research, the results of which should be visible and usable in the classroom;
- dealing with learners with behavioural and learning problems;
- dealing with giftedness;
- dealing with diversity in the classroom;
- drawing up valid tests.

Through in-service training close to the teaching practice and at the request of teachers and school leaders, the minister wants to further develop the existing system of continuing professional development (CPD) and support to schools. This will give more teachers and school leaders opportunities for professional development. Schools are given the means to do so as much as possible so that, based on dialogue between school leaders and teachers, they can devote these resources to the guidance and further training they consider necessary.



SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY

2.1 Policy vision

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.1.1 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) can access career-long professional learning opportunities regarding the principles of inclusive education</p>	<p>2.1.1.1</p> <p>In Flanders, there are two sets of competence frameworks, both consisting of the same 10 functional entities. They were introduced by law in 1996 and reviewed in 2007 and 2018. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a professional profile: a competence framework for experienced teachers, who should strive towards these competences throughout their career (Decision of the Flemish Government on the professional profile of teachers, of 5 October 2007);• basic competences: a competence framework that describes what a beginning teacher should know and be able to do. These competences must be attained at the end of initial teacher education (Decision of the Flemish Government on the basic competences of teachers, of 8 June 2018). <p>The main purpose of these competence frameworks is to provide a guideline for professional development, to enhance quality, to create a common language, and to stimulate teachers' responsibility for and awareness of their own professional development.</p> <p>2.1.1.2</p> <p>After pre-service teacher training, various advanced bachelor's programmes (bachelor-after-bachelor) and postgraduate programmes in education are available for teaching staff's further professional development and specialisation.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced bachelor's programmes: special needs education, special needs and remedial learning and school development• Postgraduate programmes: school management, school policy, information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordinator for nursery and primary education, equal educational opportunities in cities and towns, etc. <p>2.1.1.3</p> <p>Schools and teachers are responsible for their own quality of education and have a lot of autonomy to develop their own CPD policy based on their own specific needs (with the professional profile and basic competences as a guideline). Schools are required to develop an in-service training plan (CPD), after which they can call upon limited financial support for teacher in-service training. This plan can contain formal and informal professional development activities. (Decree on the quality of education, 8 May 2009, article 8)</p> <p>2.1.1.4</p> <p>The reference framework for educational quality (ROK) is an important guideline for a school's CPD policy and CPD plan. The Education Inspectorate developed the ROK in close co-operation with stakeholders and uses it when auditing schools. It contains minimum quality expectations for schools that stimulate the development of one's own (quality) policy. 'Dealing with diversity' and 'providing appropriate guidance for learners to realise equal educational opportunities' are aspects of the ROK.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.1.1.5</p> <p>The government also sets out priority topics for in-service training, in which in-service training projects can be followed for free. Many of these project-based in-service training initiatives are offered by the school advisory services or by teacher educators. The selected projects receive an annual budget from the government. (Decree on the quality of education, 8 May 2009, article 12)</p> <p>2.1.1.6</p> <p>Since 2017, a postgraduate training course for teacher educators has been organised in Flanders, which is partly funded by the Flemish Government. The main objective of this training course is to strengthen the quality of all teacher educators.</p> <p>For now, the course is limited to teacher educators associated with initial teacher education. In the near future, the target group will be widened to include mentors and teacher educators associated with CPD and induction. The training course focuses on the professional learning of teacher educators, with a link to learning of prospective teachers and of learners.</p> <p>Increasing the quality of teacher trainers is expected to enhance the quality of (initial) teacher education and, therefore, the quality of future teachers. The (in-service) training course is non-obligatory and can be started after the teacher educator's induction phase. It comprises a workload comparable to 20 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. (Decision of the Minister, August 2019, to give a project subsidy to organise a training course for teacher educators)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.1.2 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education</p>	<p>2.1.2.1</p> <p>Both the professional profile and the basic competences are structured by the same set of 10 job components/specifications. For example, the government expects that teachers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• design a powerful learning environment that takes learner heterogeneity into account;• cope with diversity in the group;• communicate with learners and parents from diverse (learning) backgrounds;• implement care broadening initiatives in consultation with the team and align them with the school's overall approach, etc. <p>Teachers must be able to use these competencies both individually and together with colleagues.</p> <p>2.1.2.2</p> <p>Teachers do not need to become specialists in (learning) disorders or disabilities. The specific knowledge is often already available in mainstream schools with the support staff from special schools, SEN co-ordinators and other learning support staff. In order to adapt teaching to support all learners, teachers need some basic competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• getting a clear picture of all learners' needs;• developing and/or choosing appropriate learning targets;• providing reasonable accommodations, such as remediation, differentiation, compensatory tools, dispensation and adapting the curriculum. <p>(Decision of the Flemish Government on the professional profile of teachers, of 5 October 2007)</p> <p>(Decision of the Flemish Government on the basic competences of teachers, of 8 June 2018)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.1.2.3</p> <p>In September 2017, a support model was introduced. In this model, staff from special education offer support for schools and teachers to include learners with SEN in the mainstream system. They have an important role to play in the professional development of teachers and school teams regarding ‘inclusive competences’.</p> <p>(Decree on nursery and primary education, article 172quinquies and article 172quinquies/1)</p> <p>(Codex Secondary Education, article 314/8 and article 314/9)</p>
2.1.3 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their pedagogical responsibility to promote the interaction, learning, participation and collaboration of all learners	–

Evaluative comments for ‘Policy vision’

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2.2 Main principles

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.1 Teachers' professional learning is defined in policy as a prerequisite for inclusive education	2.2.1.1 In the Policy Paper Education 2019–2024 , the minister recognises the importance of teacher education, in-service training and initial guidance of teachers, in providing the abilities to deal with the many challenges ahead. In particular, the minister will intensify the attention for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• professional knowledge and didactics;• knowledge of Dutch;• dealing with learners with behavioural and learning problems;• dealing with giftedness;• dealing with diversity in the classroom;• drawing up valid tests.
2.2.2 Policy states that the principles and practice of inclusive education should be part of initial teacher education	2.2.2.1 The teachers' professional profile and basic competences, as established in legislation, form the basis for all teacher education programmes. Indirectly, inclusive education is covered in this profile and these basic competences, among others, through the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers can design a powerful learning environment that takes learner heterogeneity into account.• They can cope with diversity in the group.• They can communicate with learners and parents from diverse (learning) backgrounds.



Policy priorities	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They implement care broadening initiatives in consultation with the team and align them with the school’s overall approach, etc.
<p>2.2.3 Policy states that beginning teachers should receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.3.1</p> <p>The right to initial guidance for teachers in the initial phase of their careers has been included in their legal status since 1 September 2019. Each teacher is entitled to initial counselling and coaching during the initial phase of their career (temporary appointment of fixed duration). This right to initial guidance is also formally included in the teacher’s job description. Successful completion of the initial guidance is also a condition for moving on to the next career phase: temporary appointment of continuous duration. The design, content and organisation of initial guidance are the responsibility of the school board or of the combined school for schools that are part of such a partnership.</p> <p>(Cao XI)</p> <p>(Decree on the legal position of some members of staff in subsidised education and subsidised student guidance centres, art. 20bis)</p> <p>(Decree on the legal position of some members of staff in community education, Art. 20bis)</p> <p>2.2.3.2</p> <p>The professional profile and basic competences, as well as the reference framework for educational quality (both of which indirectly cover the principles of inclusive education), are to be used as leading principles to design the initial guidance.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.2.4 Policy ensures that experienced teachers receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.4.1 The M-Decree, introduced in 2014, stresses the importance of strong support for schools and teachers to achieve the inclusion of learners with SEN in the mainstream system. A key measure from September 2017 mentions the ‘networks supporting teachers, school teams and pupils’. Around 300 additional full-time staff from special education offer their expertise to learners with SEN. (European Agency, Country information for Belgium – Flemish Community, Systems of support and specialist provision)</p> <p>2.2.4.2 In the 2018–2019 school year, the support model had a total budget of EUR 132,600,000 (EUR 123,100,000 or the equivalent of 2,363 full-time jobs for support staff and EUR 9,500,000 operational budget).</p>
<p>2.2.5 Policy states that specialist teachers and other professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, multilingual education teachers and other professionals who work in schools) receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.5.1 The competence counsellors, added to the school advisory services to help schools implement the M-Decree, were given an additional task at the start of the support model in September 2017: from then on, they also had to work on expertise development of the special educational staff in the support model. (Decree on nursery and primary education, article 172quinquies and article 172quinquies/1, §8) (Codex Secondary Education, article 314/8 and article 314/9, §8)</p> <p>2.2.5.2 With regard to in-service training, at the initiative of the Flemish Government (priority in-service training), every two years the minister determines one or more themes to support the implementation of education reforms.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>For the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years, the theme chosen was:</p> <p><i>The professional development of supporters for specific educational needs in mainstream nursery and primary education and secondary education and in the centres for part-time vocational secondary education.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>2.2.5.3</p> <p>Schools are required to develop an in-service training plan (Decree on the quality of education, 8 May 2009, article 8). The learner guidance centres are required to develop an education plan (Decision of the Flemish Government on the training of the staff of the learner guidance centres).</p> <p>Both are free to add elements related to knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education.</p>
<p>2.2.6 Policy states that teacher educators working in university education departments or pedagogical institutes should be trained and committed to the inclusive education agenda in their courses, as understood in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy</p>	<p>2.2.6.1</p> <p>‘There is no’ (compulsory) ‘pre-service teacher training for academic staff at universities or teaching staff at university colleges’. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Teachers and Education Staff)</p> <p>2.2.6.2</p> <p>‘There are no specific additional training courses and qualifications for teacher trainers, in addition to those required for teaching staff at Adult Education Centres, university colleges and universities’. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.2.6.3</p> <p>‘The university colleges themselves determine the further specifications that a person must have in order to be able to perform a particular function’. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education)</p> <p>2.2.6.4</p> <p>Since 2017, a postgraduate training course for teacher educators has been organised in Flanders, which is partly funded by the Flemish Government. The main objective of this training course is to strengthen the quality of all teacher educators (see 2.1.1.6).</p>

Evaluative comments for ‘Main principles’

The M-Decree provides broader and more flexible support for teachers, as [2.2.4.1](#) mentions. Although this is not labelled as professional development, the aim of providing classroom support, co-teaching and coaching implies that the additional support provides broad opportunities for professional learning.

However, in spite of the new provision of support leading to learning opportunities for teachers, there is a need for attitudes and skills professional development among all teachers. The country information prepared for the Agency states:

Schools have the freedom to describe their own vision on education, assessment, care and tailor-made education in their pedagogical project. This autonomy means there is a very heterogeneous assessment picture in Flanders. In other words, a school chooses the weight of pupil orientation and inclusive ideas in the curricula. This therefore still allows a large amount of freedom for schools in their choice of differentiated education. How learners are assessed and how goals and assessment procedures are differentiated from the standardised curricula and school work plan for individual learners depends on the goodwill and expertise in this area of the school. Clearly, it is necessary to strive towards mainstream education that can offer differentiated learning targets and the implementation of dispensation/compensation or facilitated learning routes. This requires the development of attitudes and skills in all teachers.
(European Agency, [Country information for Belgium – Flemish Community, Systems of support and specialist provision](#))



2.2.6.3 There are no **compulsory** initial or in-service courses for teacher educators. However:

- A postgraduate in-service training course was developed in 2017. This is a non-compulsory initiative (see [2.1.1.6](#)).
- In 2012, universities and university colleges developed a profile of teacher educators and collaboratively organised professional development courses for teacher educators based on the profile, which was renewed in 2015. This profile is included as a topic in the postgraduate training course for teacher educators. It emphasises, among other competences, reflection and engagement for social transitions in education (Mets, B. and Van den Hauwe, J., 2015. *Ontwikkelingsprofiel Vlaamse Lerarenopleiders* [Development Profile for Flemish Teacher Educators]. Antwerpen: VELOV).

2.2.2.1 Research states that inclusive education principles are not always a reality. This is particularly the case when learners have an intellectual disability or a behavioural disorder. Many teachers and schools find it difficult to include these learners in the mainstream system. ([Dynamics behind the implementation of the M-Decree: A case study](#); [M-Decree and care in mainstream education](#))

2.2.5.1 The number of competence counsellors has been reduced since September 2018. At that time, it was decided that part of the resources originally earmarked for competence counsellors would be re-allocated to co-ordinating the support model.



SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY

3.1 Goals

Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.1 Policy states that all teachers should have qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda	<p>3.1.1.1</p> <p><i>In order to be able to function fully as a starting teacher, each graduate must have the relevant basic skills (description of knowledge, skills and attitudes). These basic skills enable the teacher to progress towards the professional profile (description of the teacher's knowledge, skills and attitudes in the course of his or her professional activities). It is the teacher training programmes themselves that are responsible for testing these basic skills and for choosing the most appropriate methodology.</i></p> <p><i>Both types of teacher training lead to a single professional title: the teacher's diploma. The diploma is supplemented by a diploma supplement. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p> <p>3.1.1.2</p> <p>For (pre-)primary and lower-secondary school teacher education, teacher education programmes are 'integrated teacher training': these 'integrate subject matter and pedagogical-didactical components throughout the programme'. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.1.2 Policy states competence areas for inclusive education for all teachers working at different levels of education (e.g. professional development of all teachers to facilitate their involvement in co-teaching, planning together, developing differentiated materials collaboratively, etc.)</p>	<p>3.1.2.1</p> <p><i>The training programmes of all teacher training courses lead to the established basic skills. ... 10 functional entities are further translated into skills. Elements such as diversity, pupils with specific educational needs and school administration are taken into account here.</i></p> <p><i>Teacher training courses are free in the development of the curricula as long as they enable each student to reach the basic skills.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.2.2</p> <p>The Decision of the Flemish Government on the basic competences of teachers, of 8 June 2018 reiterates teachers' minimum skills and competencies: '1.9 The teacher can co-operate to organise inclusive education for all learners in the framework of the school's care and equal opportunities policies'.</p>
<p>3.1.3 Policy states that all teachers' professional learning opportunities consider teacher competences for inclusive education</p>	<p>3.1.3.1</p> <p>CPD is left to the initiative of teachers and schools. However, to support the implementation of education reforms, every two years the minister determines one or two themes for in-service training at the initiative of the Flemish Government (priority in-service training). For the 2015–2016, 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 school years, 'Support of schools and competence development of school staff with regard to the implementation of the M-Decree' (in framework of implementation of chapter VI art VI.1 §2.4) was the theme of this in-service training.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.1.4 There is a formal strategy for promoting dialogue between ministries, regional/local authorities/municipalities and teacher educators to agree on the requirements of teachers' professional development opportunities for inclusion</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>3.1.5 There is a mechanism to ensure that all professional learning opportunities available to teachers are aligned with national- and local-level policy goals for an understanding of inclusive education</p>	<p>3.1.5.1</p> <p><i>Continuous professional development is left to the initiative of teachers and schools. However, schools are required to draw up an in-service training plan after which they can draw on limited financial support for the in-service training of teachers. Each year, the government also sets out priority topics for in-service training, in which in-service training projects can be followed free of charge.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Teachers and Education Staff)</p>
<p>3.1.6 There are strategies to ensure that local-level professional opportunities for teachers are flexible/adaptable to local school contexts and school development plans for inclusive education</p>	<p>3.1.6.1</p> <p>'During their career, teachers (teams) are guided in their professional development by the school advisory services'. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Conditions of Service for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.6.2</p> <p>Within the school advisory services, there is a specific group of staff whose main task is to enhance and develop the competences of teachers and school team to support inclusion within the school. (M-Decree, 21 March 2014, chapter VI - competentiebegeleiders)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.7 There is a medium- and long-term review strategy for teachers' professional learning opportunities to ensure they meet system requirements for an inclusive education system	–

Evaluative comments for 'Goals'

3.1.1 A reform of initial teacher education programmes started on 1 September 2019, with two teacher education providers instead of three: university colleges offer several teacher education programmes at graduate (International Standard Classification of Education – ISCED 5) and/or bachelor (ISCED 6) level for (pre-)primary and (lower-)secondary education, while universities provide teacher education programmes at master's level (ISCED 7) for (lower- and upper-)secondary education. Teacher qualifications will be called 'educational graduates', 'educational bachelors' and 'educational masters' in the future. Adult education will no longer offer teacher education programmes. Their former programmes will be integrated into university colleges. All teacher education programmes have at least 60 ECTS (in addition to a prior qualification) or 180 ECTS as a teacher qualification for (pre-)primary or secondary education on its own. Universities provide a teacher education master's programme as an equal master's option immediately after a (subject) bachelor's degree, encouraging the teaching profession among university students.



3.2 Continuum of support

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.2.1 There is a strategy to ensure a continuum of diverse professional learning opportunities for inclusive education – for pre-service, beginning and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators and support teachers – across all levels where teachers work</p>	<p>3.2.1.1</p> <p><i>After the pre-service teacher training courses, various advanced bachelor's programmes¹ in education (including special educational needs education (SEN), special needs and remedial learning, school development) are available for further professional development and specialization of teaching staff.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Teachers and Education Staff)</p> <p>3.2.1.2</p> <p>A teacher is entitled to initial counselling and coaching during the initial phase of their career (temporary appointment of fixed duration). The teacher's job description formally includes this right to initial guidance. The school board is responsible for the design, content and organisation of initial guidance.</p> <p>3.2.1.3</p> <p>CPD is left to the initiative of teachers and schools. However, schools are required to draw up an in-service training plan, after which they can call upon limited financial support for the in-service training of teachers (all teachers, including ones appointed on a temporary basis). Each year, the government also sets out priority topics for in-service training, in which in-service training projects can be followed for free. CPD is also ensured through joint transversal projects by the government, the teacher education providers and the school advisory services, e.g. the 'kleine kinderen grote kansen' ('small children, big opportunities') project.</p>

¹ 'Advanced bachelor's programmes' refers to 'bachelor-after-bachelor' degree programmes in the Flemish higher education system. These are only for students who already have (at least) a bachelor's degree. Bachelor-after-bachelor programmes offer a professional specialisation at the same bachelor's level (ISCED 6).



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>3.2.1.4</p> <p><i>Professional development is part of the professional continuum that starts with the training and ends when you leave the job. It includes all the initiatives that ensure that teachers grow in their professional expertise to optimize the quality of education ...</i></p> <p><i>In the first place, there are the common “traditional” activities of professional development (e.g. participation in workshops and colloquia outside the school, participation in pedagogical seminars).</i></p> <p><i>There is also learning within and outside the school. Examples of such professional development activities include mentorship and coaching, cooperation within the school and mutual class and school attendance. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p>
<p>3.2.2 There are strategies for developing leadership competences (e.g. school leadership or learning support leadership roles) for inclusive education in all relevant professional learning opportunities</p>	<p>3.2.2.1</p> <p>The minister of education plans to facilitate the development of a competence profile for school leaders. Based on this profile, possible selection criteria and policies for school leaders’ professional development and evaluation will be drawn up. This competence profile forms the basis for the further development of a school leadership course. (Policy Paper Education 2019–2024, OD 2.2, p. 49)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/higher education institutions to develop strategic plans for teachers' professional learning in inclusive education	3.2.3.1 Schools can request school advisory services for guidance in their development as professional learning organisations. (Decree on the quality of education, 8 May 2009, article 15, §1) Within the school advisory services, there are specialised staff members to support the implementation of inclusive education. (M-Decree, 21 March 2014, chapter VI – competentiebegeleiders)
3.2.4 There are strategies to support effective collaboration and joint work between schools and higher education institutions/universities	3.2.4.1 For (pre-)primary and lower-secondary education integrated teacher education, the 'university colleges organize this practical component as pre-service training in collaboration with the schools, centres or institutions'. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)

Evaluative comments for 'Continuum of support'

- 3.2.2.1 A new advanced bachelor's programme (bachelor-after-bachelor programme) in [multilingual education](#) was accredited. It offers qualified teachers an additional specialisation in inclusion, particularly with regard to linguistic diversity.



SECTION 4: CAPACITY BUILDING, FUNDING AND MONITORING OF TPL4I POLICY

4.1 Capacity building

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.1.1 There are strategies to increase the capacity of all schools/higher education institutions to support all teachers to engage in professional learning activities on inclusive education</p>	<p>4.1.1.1 All schools/institutions must draw up a professional training plan:</p> <p><i>The in-service training plan contains, in a coherent manner, all training efforts aimed at developing, broadening or deepening the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the institution’s staff and guidance initiatives aimed at organizational development. A school is obliged to draw up a plan every year. The in-service training plan is approved either by the local committee or, if there is no local committee, by the general staff meeting. The legislation defines in-service training broadly as long as it can be demonstrated that the funded initiatives contribute to the professional development of the teacher.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>4.1.1.2 In-service training at the initiative of the Flemish Government (priority in-service training):</p> <p><i>Every two years, the minister will determine one or more themes to support the implementation of education reforms. Any organization which considers itself capable of doing so may submit a project proposal. The selected projects are offered to schools free of charge and across the board.</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p data-bbox="831 309 2029 571"><i>In the school year 2017-2018, the choice was made for an extension of the theme from school years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, i.e. the M-decree. For the school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, the theme chosen is “The professional development of supporters for specific educational needs in mainstream nursery and primary education and secondary education and in the centres for part-time vocational secondary education”. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p> <p data-bbox="763 603 853 627">4.1.1.3</p> <p data-bbox="763 655 1413 679">‘Semi- or on-regulated grants and other initiatives’</p> <p data-bbox="763 708 2018 855">‘... the government also organizes free seminars on all kinds of topics (e.g. M-Decree Study Day, Study Day on Languages in cooperation with the other communities) aimed at education professionals’. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p data-bbox="763 884 853 908">4.1.1.4</p> <p data-bbox="831 936 2018 1198"><i>The continuing professional development of higher education teaching staff is left to the institutions. ... Every year, the universities and university colleges negotiate the planned training initiatives with the staff representatives within the local representative body and report on the results of the training initiatives of the previous financial year. (art. III.34, para. 6, Codex Higher Education). (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education)</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>4.1.1.5</p> <p>From 1 September 2019 onwards, the strategy and the development of the initial guidance must be included in the school's annual professional training plan. (Decree on the quality of education, 8 May 2009, article 8)</p> <p>The school is obliged to develop and act upon an efficient and systematic professional development policy with special attention to beginning teachers and team members. The individual team members' needs and the school's goals are key. The school develops professional dialogue and reflection on learning and teaching and offers the necessary support. Internal and external sharing of expertise is stimulated. The school encourages the implementation of initiatives regarding CPD and follows up on the effects. Beginning team members receive proper and suitable counselling.</p> <p>The quality of this cycle is guaranteed and incorporated in the ROK reference framework for educational quality of the inspection. ROK uses development scales (<i>ontwikkelschalen</i>) as tools to evaluate school performance.</p>
4.1.2 There is a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between all teachers/leaders/other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality learning opportunities for all	–



Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.3 There is guidance on how teachers working in mainstream school settings/higher education institutions can understand and enact inclusive education	4.1.3.1 In September 2017, a support model was introduced. In this model, staff from special education schools support schools and teachers to achieve the inclusion of learners with SEN in the mainstream system. In the 2018–2019 school year, the support model represented a total budget of EUR 132,600,000 (EUR 123,100,000 or the equivalent of 2,363 full-time jobs for support staff and EUR 9,500,000 operational budget). Higher education also receives a budget to ensure inclusive education. However, the higher education system's structure and financing model do not allow the Flemish Government to intervene in the way higher education is organised.
4.1.4 There are guidelines that support all teachers to collaborate to support all learners	–
4.1.5 There are guidelines on how methods of quality assessment, school evaluation, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to planning/identifying priority areas of professional learning activities for inclusive education	–



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.1.6 There are strategies to support schools/higher education institutions to build strong leadership teams that are aware of the inclusive education agenda</p>	<p>4.1.6.1</p> <p>Further training organised in university colleges offers specialised programmes that allow teachers to take up leadership roles in their local school. These include various advanced bachelor's (bachelor-after-bachelor) programmes in education:</p> <p><i>... including special educational needs education (SEN), special needs and remedial learning, school development, etc. In addition, various postgraduate programmes are also offered in higher education, including teacher training: school management, school policy, ICT coordinator for nursery and primary education, equal educational opportunities in cities and town, etc.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>
<p>4.1.7 There are incentives stated in policy for all teachers to engage in professional learning activities for inclusive education</p>	<p>4.1.7.1</p> <p>See 4.1.1.2. In-service training at the initiative of the Flemish Government (priority in-service training): 'The selected projects are offered to schools free of charge and across the board'. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>4.1.7.2</p> <p>In principle, both the school management and all school staff have access to in-service training funding.</p> <p><i>It must, however, be possible to demonstrate that the in-service training is useful for the staff member's tasks. Schools can reimburse transport costs and registration fees for teachers and also decide whether teachers can be exempted from the scope of their teaching for the purpose of in-service training.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>4.1.7.3</p> <p>Some diplomas from advanced bachelor’s programmes and in-service training programmes give school staff, under certain conditions, the right to a wage supplement.</p> <p>This is, for example, the case for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the advanced bachelor’s programme in special education; • the advanced bachelor’s programme in special needs and remedial learning.
<p>4.1.8 There are strategies stated in policy to develop the role of specialist teachers as a resource for mainstream schools</p>	<p>4.1.8.1</p> <p>See 4.1.1.2. In-service training at the initiative of the Flemish Government (priority in-service training): For the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years, the theme chosen was:</p> <p><i>The professional development of supporters for specific educational needs in mainstream nursery and primary education and secondary education and in the centres for part-time vocational secondary education.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>This theme particularly addresses specialised teachers moving to learning support networks for mainstream education.</p> <p>4.1.8.2</p> <p>The support model, introduced in September 2017, activates staff from special education to support schools and teachers in the mainstream system to achieve the inclusion of learners with SEN.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.9 There are strategies to promote professional learning for inclusion in teachers' common competence areas (e.g. experienced teachers and specialist teachers are expected to engage in professional learning activities that promote inclusive education pedagogies, such as co-teaching)	4.1.9.1 The teachers' professional profile is established in legislation. It consists of 10 functional entities, which are further translated into skills. These take into account elements such as diversity and learners with specific educational needs. (Teachers' minimum skills and competencies in the Decision of the Flemish Government on the basic competences of teachers, of 8 June 2018)
4.1.10 There are competences for professional learning in inclusive education for all teachers	–

Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'

Strategies for in-service professional development rely on the free choice of schools and teachers, and the priorities chosen in each school. Tailor-made professional development is encouraged.



4.2 Funding

Policy priorities	Findings
4.2.1 There are financial incentives to encourage all schools/higher education institutions to develop policy and action plans for teachers' professional learning for inclusion	<p>4.2.1.1</p> <p><i>The decree of 8 May 2009 on the quality of education contains the channels laid down by decree through which professional development is financed. More specifically, the decree contains the in-service training for the institutions, the in-service training on the initiative of the Government of Flanders and the in-service training on the initiative of the school advisory services.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the government subsidizes other projects (which can be of short or long duration) by means of a semi or non-regulated subsidy and also organizes study days for all kinds of education professionals. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p> <p>4.2.1.2</p> <p><i>The school advisory services are also important providers of professional development. They work in a demand-driven and supply-driven way. The network-based educational guidance services of Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen, GO!, OVSG, FOPEM, POV, VONAC/VOOP, Federatie van Steinerscholen Vlaanderen and IPCO ... receive separate budgets each year for the organization of in-service training and guidance activities for their own staff and for the staff of the institutions they supervise. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p data-bbox="757 308 853 336">4.2.1.3</p> <p data-bbox="824 363 1982 592"><i>Continuous professional development is left to the initiative of teachers and schools. However, schools are required to draw up an in-service training plan after which they can draw on limited financial support for the in-service training of teachers. Each year, the government also sets out priority topics for in-service training, in which in-service training projects can be followed free of charge.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Teachers and Education Staff)</p> <p data-bbox="757 616 853 644">4.2.1.4</p> <p data-bbox="757 671 1982 778">‘Many in-service training initiatives are offered by the network-based educational guidance services, which receive an annual budget from the government’. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Teachers and Education Staff)</p> <p data-bbox="757 802 853 831">4.2.1.5</p> <p data-bbox="824 858 2027 1241"><i>In accordance with the arrangements in collective agreements I and II for higher education, a training fund has been set up to provide institutions with additional resources for training initiatives for staff members. From the 2015 budget year onwards, there will no longer be a separate training fund but each year funds will be added to the operating envelope of the university colleges and universities for the education and training of staff. Every year, the universities and university colleges negotiate the planned training initiatives with the staff representatives within the local representative body and report on the results of the training initiatives of the previous financial year. (art. III.34, para. 6, Codex Higher Education).</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.2.2 There are mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure on teachers' professional learning that informs cost-effectiveness issues	4.2.2.1 Systematic data collection is not feasible, since schools can freely decide how and for whom to organise CPD. This CPD has to be compatible with the school's professional development policy and will be evaluated by inspection within the ROK framework.
4.2.3 There are flexible resourcing mechanisms that foster teachers' professional learning at school level	–

Evaluative comments for 'Funding'

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4.3 Monitoring

Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.1 There is a comprehensive accountability framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of teachers' professional learning for inclusion activities	4.3.1.1 <i>In the case of in-service training, the principle of the free market applies. The institutions may have recourse to an in-service organization of their choice for the periodic in-service training of their staff. There are various organizations (non-profit organizations, university colleges, universities, etc.) that offer in-service training. On their own initiative, they can register as an in-service training organization in the following areas database on KlasCement. Through this platform, the organizations have the opportunity to announce specific in-service training</i>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p><i>(supply-driven operation) but they can also indicate in general which topics teachers and school leaders can approach them for the purpose of developing a tailor-made initiative for them (demand-driven operation). The government does not award a quality label to these organizations and their offerings but the teachers and school leaders do have access to the “viewing guide” in search of professional development in order to be able to make a choice that is appropriate for them. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Belgium – Flemish Community, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p> <p>4.3.1.2</p> <p>The individual school (primary and secondary education) is responsible for proving its quality. This requires that it monitors staff’s professional development.</p> <p>This quality will be monitored and evaluated with the ROK framework of school inspection.</p> <p>Since inclusion is part of this evaluation, schools should ensure that training on inclusion topics is part of teachers’ CPD in case of a lack of knowledge.</p> <p>For higher education, there is an obligation to provide quality education (chapter 8 Codex Higher Education) that includes support for learners with SEN (Article II.276.§3). The government provides a budget to implement this (chapter 7 Codex Higher Education). However, there are no formal requirements for CPD for teachers in higher education. The quality of higher education is guaranteed by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). The NVAO is a quality assurance agency that expertly and independently safeguards the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders. It fosters the quality culture pursued within higher education institutions in the Netherlands and Flanders. It accredits existing and new programmes and assesses the quality assurance of higher education institutions.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.2 Monitoring mechanisms ensure that inequalities in access to professional learning opportunities at regional or organisational levels are addressed	–
4.3.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/teacher education departments/higher education institutions to have ownership of review and improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning	4.3.3.1 Article II.109 of the Codex Higher Education explicitly specifies that teacher education must guarantee further development along the professional continuum and the development of future teachers' reflective abilities. They have to offer CPD opportunities by a team of highly qualified teachers. Those teachers must teaching experience themselves to be able to bridge the gaps between teacher education, the school advisory services and other providers of CPD services. They also have to support – together with the school advisory services – the in-service training of beginning teachers under the responsibility of the school that employs the latter.
4.3.4 There are mechanisms to share and analyse data to inform improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning at national and local level	–



Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.5 There is data available on whether teachers are engaged in professional learning that is relevant to the level of education they teach	–
4.3.6 There are mechanisms to ensure that teachers’ professional learning contributes to improving inclusive education practice at school level/the level of a teacher education department or higher education institution	–

Evaluative comments for ‘Monitoring’

The education system in Flanders is, in line with the concept of freedom of education, very decentralised. Generic minimum requirements are set at government level, but the way these goals and requirements are reached is the school’s responsibility. They are of course subject to school inspections, but have to guarantee the quality of the education they provide. The monitoring of specific aspects of good education, such as inclusive education or a teacher’s level of CPD, are part of the quality circle each school has to guarantee. If the school inspection does not find a learner support policy, the school’s recognition may be withdrawn because such a policy is a requirement for school recognition.