



**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being
2022**



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Research questions.....	3
International and European Policy Context	3
The concepts of professional learning community, teachers' professional learning and well-being	5
Research design, methods, and material	6
Findings of seven chosen examples	7
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education: international evidence from the Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS)	7
Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis.....	8
Education and training monitor 2021.....	9
Teachers' well-being during times of change and disruption.....	10
What if teachers learn in the classroom?	11
Self-efficacy, job satisfaction and teacher well-being in the K-12 educational system	12
Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000-2019 ..	13
Review and Conclusions.....	14
Answers for the research questions.....	14
Recommendations based on the conclusions	22
References.....	24

Authors: Mika Risku, Marja Pietiläinen and Emilia Svili, Finland in collaboration with the ETUCE



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

INTRODUCTION

The EEPN-network consists of the European School Head Association ESHA, European Trade Union Committee for Education ETUCE, European Federation for Education Employers EFEE, European Education Research Association EERA, Network of Education Policy Centers NEPC, and the Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Jyväskylä together with the national representatives of over 20 European nations. Based on the data collected by the EEPN network, four analyses were conducted to establish a foundation for policy recommendations in the whole school approach as proposed by the European Commission.

Under the umbrella of the whole school approach, desk research 4 and its policy recommendations focus on teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being, thus extending the topic provided by the European Commission. Furthermore, following the whole school approach we grounded topic 4 researching professional learning and well-being from the perspective of system theory. This conceives educational organisations as open systems in interaction both with their external and internal operational environments (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Snyder et al., 2000; Weick, 2001).

Research questions

The main research questions to better address the topic were:

- What defines professional learning and well-being?
- What is the status of professional learning and well-being?
- How does the educational system support professional learning and well-being?
- How do educational organizations support professional learning and well-being?
- How should professional learning and well-being be supported sustainably?

All EEPN partners were invited to consult local/national policy makers and working life organizations to provide the widest possible base for research.

Supported by the EEPN network we integrated the research and the policy recommendation process with existing social programmes and their research and goals, particularly within the European Union.

The partner responsible for topic 4 was the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Its researcher team included both seasoned experience and both present and future research projects on the topic.

INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN POLICY CONTEXT

We present the international and European policy context in collaboration with the ETUCE. We are grateful for the examples, for their descriptions, and for the perspectives presented to us by the ETUCE. These both assisted and confirmed our theoretical construction of the study. In addition, they provided an explicit picture of the well-being of teachers and school leaders to be a priority in the European and national political agenda as well as a concern of education trade unions. Furthermore, the received information also connected teachers' and school leaders' professional well-being in several ways with teachers' and school leaders' professional learning, and with students' learning and well-being.

The Council of European Union (2020) conclusions on 'European teachers and trainers for the future' recognises the importance of ensuring the well-being of teachers, underlining that *"The wellbeing of teachers and trainers influences their job satisfaction and enthusiasm for their work, and has an impact on the attractiveness of their profession, and subsequently on their retention in the profession. It is an important factor in quality and performance, correlating with their own motivation and with the motivation and*



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

achievements of their learners". The conclusions also describe the challenges, needs of support, and impacts on student learning and well-being in an explicit and many-sided manner.

According to the Eurydice (2021) report on "Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being", several factors affect the well-being of teachers and school leaders. Among these, for the purpose of this paper, ETUCE suggested addressing the well-being of teachers and school leaders from a broad perspective addressing the issues of work-related stress, burnout, and psychological and physical support to teachers and school leaders, cyber harassment, as well as the challenges of the online teaching.

The Eurydice (2021) report also emphasises the importance of the working environment. Based on the report this includes the level of collaboration with colleagues and teacher professional autonomy having an important role in the well-being of education personnel. Education personnel working in collaborative environments report a higher level of well-being in their professional work. Conversely, working in disruptive classrooms and lower confidence in managing student behaviour have proved harmful to teacher well-being. Based on these findings, the Eurydice report suggests that policies aimed at enhancing teacher well-being should "reinforce the role of teamwork and collaboration within schools, support teachers in developing social and interpersonal competences, and develop teachers' sense of autonomy in their work".

From a methodology perspective, the recent OECD study on 'Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis' by Viac et al. (2020) provides a comprehensive framework, including substantial academic literature, to understand the relation between occupational well-being of teachers and quality education. The OECD study conceives well-being as a 'multidimensional concept' developed around four key dimensions: cognitive; subjective; physical and mental; and social and provides a deep elaboration on each dimension as well as the interrelation among them.

The work-related stress of teachers and school leaders is recognised as a concern for education workers and employers. Teachers are those that are more exposed to work-related stress in education. According to the European Commission et al.'s (2014) study on 'Policy measure to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession' stress is one of the factors that makes the teaching professional particularly difficult. According to the Eurydice (2021) data, in 12 education systems in Europe, more than 50% of teachers report a high level of stress. In addition, findings from TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2019) reveal that on average across the OECD, only 9% of teachers report not experiencing stress in their profession.

The ETUCE and its member organisations have had a longstanding commitment to countering the work-related stress of teachers, school leaders and other education personnel. There are representative examples like the Report on the ETUCE Survey on 'Teachers' Work-related Stress' (Byhoj, 2007) that identified the main stressors and stress indicators for education personnel; the ETUCE (2010a) Action Plan on teachers' work-related stress. Furthermore, and the ETUCE member organisations developed ETUCE (2016) practical guidelines and exchanged good practice examples of establishing risk assessment systems at national and school levels including psychosocial hazards. The ETUCE (2020) statement on COVID-19 pandemic showcases educational trade unions' efforts to support their members during the pandemic. The report presents the education personnel's and school leaders' efforts to ensure quality teaching as well as the unpreparedness of education systems for the harmful impacts online teaching had on the well-being of teachers and school leaders during the pandemic. The ETUCE has also developed 'Practical Guidelines for Anti-Cyber Harassment measures in Education' (2010b) and 'the Updated ETUCE Action Plan on Preventing and Tackling Violence in Schools' (2010c), providing a framework for education trade unions to prevent and tackle violence in schools, including cyber-harassment. Finally, there is the ETUCE (2012) report on school leadership that includes studying the well-being of school leaders. Similar efforts by other educational trade unions can be found no doubt.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

Whether to address the COVID-19 pandemic in this study raised various views both in preparing and conducting the research. We decided to include studies focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic if they met with the overall selection criteria for this study. This decision proved worthwhile as these studies, in addition to describing the COVID-19 period, also gave us a lot for the future.

It presented the study by the WHO Regional Office for Europe (2021) on 'Schooling during the pandemic' according to which online teaching and, particularly, the continuous switch between face-to-face and online teaching have had a disruptive impact on teachers in terms of pressure and stress. If so, the finding of the ETUCE (2022) report on 'The state of play on COVID-19 for Education Trade Unions' about teachers often missing training on the use of digital tools as well as adequate ICT devices and technical assistance during the online teaching and learning is alarming. Similar challenges are also emphasised by the European Commission et al. (2020) report on 'the Likely impact of COVID-19 on education' that underlines the unpreparedness that teachers faced with e-learning tools and online teaching.

The information collected by the ETUCE for our study raised as a parallel trend to the practice of digital education and ICT tools in education the new forms of violence in the education environments such as cyberbullying and cyber-attacks. According to the UNESCO (2019) report on 'Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying' "the proportion of children aged 11-16 years who use the Internet and who had experienced cyberbullying increased from 7% in 2010 to 12% in 2014.". These growing phenomena have added an additional toll on the well-being of teachers and school leaders. One of the main issues concerning cyberbullying is related to the lack of training for teachers and school leaders to counter cyberbullying and to ensure healthy and safe education environments. According to 54% of education trade unions that participated in a recent ETUCE survey on 'Embracing Diversity in Education' (Danau et al., 2019), cyber-bullying is considered a most pressing training needs for teachers, trainers, academics, and other education personnel.

Finally, we agree with the ETUCE suggestion that it would be 'important to have further research how teachers [and school leaders] are psychologically prepared to the job on initial education, induction phase, and continuous professional development, and how they are helped to avoid work-related stress'.

The concepts of professional learning community, teachers' professional learning and well-being

As described in the introduction, the European Commission wanted the EEPN third year focus on the whole school approach. The whole school approach, with various names, had become on the forefront also in the EEPN second year research. For our study on teachers' and school leaders' learning and well-being, we decided to apply system theory as the framework for the whole school approach. System theory studies organisations as open systems that are in constant interaction with their external and internal operational environments (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Snyder et al., 2000; Weick, 2001). Hence, we were investigating how teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being are defined and look like as well how they are supported in the educational system and organisations. As to the educational organisations, we particularly wanted to focus on the ones closest to the teachers and school leaders, this is on their professional learning communities. Hence, we are here defining as the basic concepts for our study the concepts of professional learning community, teachers' professional learning and well-being.

Professional learning community (PLC) is associated with this report. There is no complete agreement to the definition of the PLC but usually it is agreed that the primary purpose of these communities is to improve student learning and teacher practices (Voelkel Jr. & Chrispeels, 2017). PLCs have different



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

purposes, such as that they can concern the whole organisation or that they can be related to a dynamic team, for example within a school. (Wang, 2016; cf. Stoll, 2012). PLCs are also known as learning networks or networked learning communities (Stoll, 2012). PLCs focus on improving both learning and teaching, and they are also used to improve students' learning and teachers' practices (Stoll, 2012; cf. Hands et al., 2016; Sims & Richard, 2015). Teachers' professional development can be improved by promoting the development of PLCs (Fred et al., 2020). Brower et al.'s research (2010) aimed at finding whether schools are acting as learning communities. Their study of seven secondary education schools indicated characteristics of learning organisation approach, though in a moderate scale. They also studied the relationship between the characteristic of the learning organisations and the diversity in composing the teacher teams. According to these findings, how the teacher teams are composed affects how much collaboration they create. For the system theory approach of our study, the notion of the need to look at diversity from various perspectives by Kool and Stoll (2016) is also important as it included the recognition of contextualisation. Finally, Alava et al. (2022) consider the creation of the professional learning community as the main outcome of pedagogical leadership from the perspective of the organisation.

In an OECD report, Kools and Stoll (2016) present an analysis of literature on the concept of the learning organisation to provide a common understanding of the concept. They come up with seven characteristics for schools as learning organisations. According to these, schools as learning organisations should '1) develop and share their visions centred on the learning of all students; 2) create and support continuous learning opportunities for all staff; 3) promote team learning and collaboration among staff; 4) establish cultures of enquiry, innovation and exploration; 5) establish embedded systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning; 6) learn with and from the external environment and larger learning systems; and 7) model and grow learning leadership' (Kool & Stoll, 2016, 3).

In de Wal et al. (2014) take advantage of Hoyle and John's (1995) definition to describe teachers' professional learning (TPL). According to this description, teachers acquire different knowledge, skills and values that enable them to improve the services they themselves provide to their students. TPL requires teachers to participate in formal, non-formal, and informal learning activities. Formal learning activities include predetermined learning frameworks and require, among other things, the presence of a teacher or an external definition of results. Non-formal learning is often structured and organised by someone but does not lead to formal degrees or certificates. Informal learning activities comprise learning, which is not considered structured and often takes place in the everyday.

Defining well-being is difficult (Helne & Hirvilampi, 2015; O'Brien & Guiney, 2021). Furthermore, it is difficult to measure (O'Brien & Guiney, 2021). According to Helne and Hirvilampi (2015) there will probably never be a consensus on the meaning of the concept. However, the concept of well-being is usually related to health and to the quality of life (Steatcu et al., 2014). Well-being is something that all people want to achieve, and it is related to the satisfaction of needs (Helne & Hirvilampi, 2015). According to O'Brien and Guiney (2021), studies show that those who have a sense of positive well-being are more committed and happier, and this in turn suggests that well-being in the workplace is important.

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND MATERIAL

Based on the overall topic of Teachers and school leaders towards a sustainable whole school approach for quality and inclusive education from the European Commission, the EEPN network formulated four



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

desk research studies to provide education policy recommendations to advance education policy within the topic. The topics and research questions of the four studies are presented in their respective reports. This study focused on the topic of schools as learning communities to support teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being and included five research questions as presented in the introduction.

All the four desk research studies applied the same research design and methods. The data was collected in a digital platform during the winter and spring period of the year 2022 asking all the EEPN partners to provide inspiring research, policy, and practice examples for all the four studies. In all, 103 examples were received. These provided a balanced overview of all the countries represented in the EEPN network.

Of the 103 examples, 35 were categorised as data for the topic of schools as learning communities to support teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being. Of these 35, we selected 7 to review more closely. The main selection criteria were on one hand their correspondence with the research questions and on the other the desire to provide a geographically representative data pool.

We reviewed the seven examples by first positioning them in the overall EEPN desk research framework. This is presented in the Background-descriptions for each of the seven examples. Then we looked for the results of the seven examples as findings to answer our five research questions. These are presented in the Main findings-descriptions for each of the seven examples.

FINDINGS OF SEVEN CHOSEN EXAMPLES

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education: international evidence from the Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS)

More information: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380398>

Background information:

The Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) report by UNESCO (2022) presents the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning (secondary education level, grade eight). The report shows the main challenges and opportunities for change. This is based on first-hand information. The data was collected from 11 culturally and economically diverse countries, with similarly diverse schools and school systems. It is noteworthy that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic differed significantly between countries, for example, in terms of the number of people infected.

Main findings:

The Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) report by UNESCO (2022) All 11 countries reported that most schools were closed at least once during the COVID-19 pandemic phase. In those schools where teaching continued, large differences were observed in the organizations' methods of implementing face-to-face teaching. Also, models of lessons' delivery were influenced by available infrastructure and local contexts. Remote teaching and learning were carried out in those countries that were more affluent. Remote teaching was based on information and communications technology (ICT). In most of the countries that participated in this study, face-to-face teaching was also maintained in school to a certain extent. In those cases where students had limited access to digital material, resources such as paper-based materials were introduced.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

REDS suggests that support for the well-being of students and their families increased during the pandemic. Teaching and learning programmes were able to continue because schools, teachers, and students were flexible and adaptable. Teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic focused more on curricula and their core parts than before. An assessment of student learning progress was more formative during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the REDS report, it should be studied whether earlier-mentioned arrangements could be viable for longer periods. Also, it should be studied what impact these arrangements would have on students and their learning progress. In the future, the effects of the arrangements on teachers and other members of school communities should also be considered. Preliminary findings provide evidence for targeting and tailoring policy responses to different crises. Findings offer meaningful data about what both recovery from the crisis and strengthening the sustainability of education systems will require in the future. Professional learning and well-being do not appear in the report at the same time. However, it can be seen from the report that professional learning is included in the researched subject, for example, due to the change caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis

Viac, C., & Fraser, P. (2020) Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis. OECD Education Working Papers No. 213. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c36fc9d3-en>

More information: [Teachers' well-being : A framework for data collection and analysis | OECD Education Working Papers | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)

Background information:

Because teachers play a very significant role in children's development and learning, educational systems and communities have multiple and complex expectations for teachers' work. Among other things, teachers are expected to ensure that their students acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills to become competent citizens. This requires teachers to increasingly perform new tasks such as responding to students' individual differences and promoting the development of students' emotional skills.

Teachers are expected to flexibly adapt to digital demands. However, all this is only a small part of what is involved in the work of teachers. Their working conditions and classroom processes are in a constant state of change, which can lead to stressful working environment. Teachers with high levels of well-being have usually also high levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy. In addition, they have more motivation at work. However, according to the reviewed report, it is good to note that empirical evidence on the definition of teachers' well-being is limited. *"The goal of this working paper is to provide a conceptual framework that grounds and guides the analysis of OECD instruments in areas related to teachers' well-being and quality teaching as reported by teachers (p. 8)."*

Main findings:

The reviewed report constructed a conceptual framework for analysing teachers' well-being at work. The goal was to define teachers' well-being at work and to identify the dimensions of the concept. This study specifies teachers' well-being around following key components:

- 1) physical and mental well-being,
- 2) cognitive well-being,
- 3) subjective well-being, and



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being

European Education
Policy Network

4) social well-being.

In addition, the study presented the tools available in the PISA 2021 TQ to measure the four key components. The document identified what kind of working conditions at the system and school level affect teachers' well-being at work. In addition, the document explained the expected results for teachers' well-being at work. According to the study, low well-being levels have the following outcomes for teachers: stress and burnout; and motivation to leave the profession. Teachers' good well-being at work on the other hand correlates positively with high-quality teaching.

Education and training monitor 2021

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Education and training monitor 2021: education and well-being*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/743550>

More information: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea/education-and-training-monitor>

Background information:

The Education and Training Monitor presents a yearly evaluation of education and training systems across the European Union (EU). Volume 1 introduces a cross-national and thematic analysis. In Volume 2, The Monitor comprises an EU-level analysis and 27 country reports. In 2021, the leading theme was education and well-being. The 2021 Monitor investigated in depth the well-being of students and teachers. The 2021 Monitor analysed countries' progress towards the EU-level targets of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). The EU-level targets are (<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/743550>):

1. "Low achievement in basic skills
2. Low achievement in digital skills
3. Early childhood education and care
4. Early leavers from education and training
5. Tertiary level attainment
6. VET graduates' work-based learning
7. Participation of adults in learning"

Main findings:

According to the reviewed report, it is possible to analyse the concept of well-being in multiple ways. For example, both mental and physical health are related to the concept of well-being. In general, well-being is about the quality of life. However, the amount of consensus related to the concept in question decreases the more precisely we want to define it. Well-being is of great importance to students' learning outcomes and ability to live a meaningful life. Teachers, on the other hand, need a working environment which recognizes their contribution to society including their contribution to national economy. The working environment must also enable teachers to perform their duties. There is considerable room for improvements, even if the countries have a strong welfare policy in the education sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decline in students' well-being, which in turn has affected teachers' and school leaders' well-being. Hence, the promotion of well-being policy is now even more important (see examples 1 and 2 below). Although the pandemic has been an exceptional stress for educational systems, it has



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being

European Education
Policy Network

also made core issues more explicit and raised the level of teaching, for example, through presenting new opportunities for innovation.

Example 1. Information from the Netherlands showed a considerable loss of learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on a survey of primary and secondary school students, it was noticed that their learning progress weakened in all groups. This had an impact on how much pressure was placed on teachers to raise the level of learning in the future.

Example 2. The "Kids' Digital lives in COVID-19 Times" (KiDiCoTi) Survey aimed to understand how both children (10-18-year-olds) and their parents engaged with digital technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic and how this affected their family well-being. In addition, children's online safety was studied. A total of nine EU Member states plus Norway and Switzerland ($n = 11$) were involved in the study. Only few students continued with face-to-face schooling during the COVID-19 lockdown. Between 1 – 4 % of the children did not receive education. Students experienced helplessness when doing schoolwork and homework online. Up to a quarter of students in the following countries felt helpless in the face of online learning: Ireland, Romania, France, Spain, and Germany. Distance education had both positive and negative effects in the countries under study. The study also noticed that in some countries there was a possible polarization of the student population at this point. The research revealed that children, teachers, parents, and schools were all poorly prepared for the rapid transition to distance and online learning. From this, it was also noticed that social interactions are important in terms of students' well-being.

Teachers' well-being during times of change and disruption

McCallum, F. (2021). Teachers' well-being during times of change and disruption. In: White, M. A., & McCallum, F. Well-being and Resilience Education. COVID-19 and its impact on education. Routledge. (183-208).

More information: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003134190-10/teachers-wellbeing-times-change-disruption-faye-mccallum>

Background information:

The global COVID-19 pandemic has critically affected the work of teachers to design learning outcomes, teach and assess student learning. For example, the demands for change have been unprecedented and rapid. Teachers have responded to this crisis and due to this crisis, it is anticipated that teachers' work will change. Due to the previous, there is a growing concern for the well-being of school teachers and leaders. The chapter by McCallum (2021) was based on research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter sought to find out the effects of well-being on teachers. The data was collected from teachers across the world via online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The survey was conducted in 2020 and there were 322 respondents to the survey.

Main findings:

The reviewed chapter predicted that the significant stress experienced in schools would have a lasting effect on future-proof teachers, politicians, and society. Teachers' work and their well-being exists on many levels. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the workday of most teachers. Teachers had to quickly change their ways of working. For example, they had to change courses and create new content for the online learning environment. This has required teachers to seek a balance with their resources.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being

European Education
Policy Network

Policymakers have obtained a new kind of opportunity to enact change for the better. They can make the governments to fund the sustainability of the teaching workforce. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized how complex and interconnected countries are. Also, it has highlighted how integral education is with political, social, and economic systems. According to the reviewed chapter, it is notable that a recovery should never return to the same situation as there was prior to the crisis. Hence, now is the time to recognize the contribution and value of teachers across the globe.

McCallum (2021) defines well-being as the state of being healthy, happy, comfortable, and positive. Well-being enables oneself to flourish in life. In the study, respondents were asked to share their own perceptions of well-being. Respondents often used the keywords health, mental, emotional, positive and well-being.

The reviewed chapter introduced the example of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development (1979). The final level was the chronosystem, which refers, for example, to changes that occur over time. The pandemic has brought new ideas for dealing with this level in connection with teachers' work and well-being. Schooling is being disrupted, and this has long-term effects on well-being, sustainability, and the future.

What if teachers learn in the classroom?

Soini, T., Pietarinen, J., & Pyhältö, K. (2016). What if teachers learn in the classroom? *Teacher Development*, 20(3), 380-397. doi: [10.1080/13664530.2016.1149511](https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2016.1149511)

More information: [Full article: What if teachers learn in the classroom? \(tandfonline.com\)](https://www.tandfonline.com)

Background information:

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher learning in terms of teachers' professional functioning agency embedded in the classroom. In addition, the study analysed the relationships between teachers' sense of professional functioning and burnout.

Based on previous research, the following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. Teachers' sense of professionalism in the classroom is manifested in interrelated parts. These sections create a collaborative environment and aim for transformative practice and reflection in the classroom.
2. Perceived professional agency reduces burnout.
3. The interaction between teachers' professional functioning and socio-contextual burnout experience is mediated by teachers' ability to implement active boundary crossing. Active boundary crossing means a learning orientation to problems encountered at work.

A total of 2310 Finnish primary school teachers (including primary, subject, and special education teachers) answered the survey. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Academy of Finland supported the study.

Main findings:

According to the results of the study, teachers' sense of professionalism is complex. It includes factors such as motivation, perceived effectiveness, and strategic skills. These factors affect teachers' active learning in the classroom. To facilitate teachers' active learning in the classroom, these factors of active functionality should be continuously and simultaneously promoted in everyday school activities. The



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being

European Education
Policy Network

results of the study give indications to teachers' sense of professionalism being a significant factor in experienced teachers' burnout. The study identified factors that reduce the risk of burnout among teachers. These included an active effort to develop adaptive and dynamic teaching methods, the ability to cross boundaries in teachers' learning, and building cooperative learning in the classroom. These in turn facilitate professional functioning and reduce perceived inadequacy in the interaction between teachers and students. In these research results, cynicism towards the professional community was not related to the creation of a cooperative learning environment in the classroom. Critical examination of the teacher's pedagogical practices and interaction with the students raises expectations about the practices of the professional community. Teachers who use reflexivity may find it frustrating if these expectations are not met. It should be noted that reflection alone does not in every case lead to new learning, in other words, insightful practice or deeper understanding. Creating purposeful coherence across the boundaries of professional contexts promotes active professional functioning and thus it also fosters work well-being. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that it is appropriate to encourage teachers to create pedagogical practices that facilitate the functionality of the student and the teacher. Thus, it also increases meaningful learning and the well-being of the entire school.

Self-efficacy, job satisfaction and teacher well-being in the K-12 educational system

Ortan, F., Simut, C., & Simut, R. (2021). Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction and Teacher Well-Being in the K-12 Educational System. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(23): 12763. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182312763.

More information: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8656960/>

Background information:

Since teaching is a key part of the educational process, teachers' well-being and job satisfaction have a significant impact on educational outcomes. The subject of the reviewed study was to analyse factors affecting the job satisfaction of the teaching profession. Even more precisely, the study analysed the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and the main categories of determinants. These determinants were relational aspects, work-related aspects, self-efficacy, and working conditions. The survey was conducted in the North-Western region of Romania, and it was delivered to 658 K-12 (pre-university) teachers. Factory analysis and a structural equation model were used to test the hypotheses.

Main findings:

According to Ortan et al. (2021), promotion, self-efficacy, working condition, and positive student behaviour have significant effects on teachers' job satisfaction. The factors mentioned above influence both job satisfaction and well-being. These factors ensure a positive work environment. The most important factor affecting job satisfaction is the teacher's self-efficacy. The second most important factor related to job satisfaction is advancement opportunities in the education sector. The teachers also felt that the support they receive from management is significant in terms of job satisfaction. For example, good technology and school supplies help teachers produce high-quality teaching content. Nowadays, hybrid education has become more common and because of that, they have greater importance than in the past. Teaching and teachers' job satisfaction also depend on how collegial cooperation works in schools. Regarding the workload, it seems that if the workload is constantly high and it interferes with the teaching process, it reduces job satisfaction and can lead to burnout, for example. An efficient work environment has many effects on different factors. Among other things, it decreases burnout, attrition,



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being

European Education
Policy Network

teacher turnover, and emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, efficient work environment increases well-being, teacher retention, and job satisfaction.

Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000-2019

Hascher, T., & Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational Research Review*, Volume 34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411>.

More information: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1747938X21000348>

Background information:

Teacher well-being is an essential issue for schools and society because it relates with educational governance, with student outcomes as well as with teaching effectiveness (Duckworth, Quinn & Seligman, 2009; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Research has shown that high teacher well-being helps schools both to increase the commitment of its staff members and to stabilize their activities (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996). In opposition, low teacher well-being is seen as hindrance to educational reforms and school improvement. This can also cause higher rates of teacher absences (Parker et al., 2012).

Regardless of the vast agreement that well-being should be conceptualized as a multidimensional concept, there is no consensus how it should be defined. There is also a discrepancy which components are essential and which variables correlate. In addition to that, there is not so much theoretical work related to teacher well-being that focus on the characteristics of the teaching profession. Hascher's and Waber's (2021) systematic review aimed to elucidate the concept of teacher well-being and how it can be fostered. The systematic review tried to provide a broad understanding of teacher well-being research by both synthesizing and comparing the empirical research. Hascher and Waber (2021) broadly operationalized teacher well-being as a multidimensional concept. Hascher's and Waber's (2021) systematic review analysed the existing body of empirical literature on teacher well-being during the years of 2000-2019. The research material consisted of 98 studies from over 40 countries covering all continents.

Main findings:

Hascher and Waber (2021) were able to identify the following research fields and categorized the analysed 98 studies accordingly:

1. well-being psychology,
2. positive psychology,
3. psychology of work and organization,
4. teacher well-being,
5. health research, and
6. other studies.

According to the research material, it seems that research on teacher well-being has been mainly based on general constructs of well-being, without pointing out the specific demands, challenges, and tasks of the teaching profession. There was only a small number of studies focusing on teacher well-being in the teaching profession.

Even though Hascher's and Waber's (2021) research material is an extensive review and covers publications from 20 years, they could not find a scientific consensus on the definition of teacher well-being. According to Hascher and Waber (2021), future research should carefully recapitulate which model



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

of teacher well-being is being applied and why. Teacher well-being can be a complex phenomenon, and it can consist of many different forms. This means that there may not be a single correct definition of teacher well-being. However, Hascher and Waber (2021) suggest defining several core elements that represent teacher well-being. They also demand clear differentiation between the predictors, indicators, and outcomes of teacher well-being. Despite the broad heterogeneity of research results, social interactions seem to be at the core of teacher well-being. Also, they are essential in fostering it.

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

We were glad to obtain 35 pieces of data for our study of the total of 103. In addition, our data and the seven selected examples had broad geographical representation among European Union nations. Furthermore, our wish for system theory thinking was met in several ways in the selected seven examples. Professional learning and well-being were not handled in isolation but as integrated with their various contexts. Finally, we also think that the main findings we could retrieve from the examples did provide answers to our research questions.

We also met with some challenges in the research process. As for the data collection, we could not access all the submitted material for miscellaneous reasons. In addition, the data did not always include the most recent material, and similar things appeared in several pieces of data. The data mainly focused on teachers' and students' professional well-being. The concept of the learning community was not mentioned as such in the data. It was, however, well integrated in it. The same can be stated about professional learning. Its connection with professional well-being became explicit in the data. Low professional well-being correlated with low professional learning, and high professional well-being with high professional learning. We did not find much information on school leaders. In the data, their role was to mainly be embedded in the role of the organisation as a cause for low professional learning and well-being, or as a support for achieving high professional learning well-being. An internal and unpublished research paper on international and European policy contexts by ETUCE carried out in 2021 covered areas that the data collected from the EEPN overall network did not meet, and so some of the data in this paper was included in the final EEPN network data pool, and the evidence it provided was cautiously used to support the review of this study.

As for the analysis of the data, the EEPN has not established a systematic framework common to all its studies. The reliability of the analysis and, hence, that of the recommendations needs further development. In our study, we had connected professional learning and well-being together. This was not typically the case in our data, but the two were handled separately. In addition, a follow-up system for the impact of the recommendations would also be useful.

In the system theory approach, things are interrelated. Hence, we were anticipating complex and contextual answers with diversity for the research questions. The following presents the answers for the research questions as they were found in the reviewed data. The answers intentionally show the complexity, contextuality, interrelatedness, and diversity the data provided. In the transformation of the answers to the research questions, the fundamental point turned out to be not on the concrete findings in the data but how to handle them to reach better professional learning and well-being for teachers and school leaders.

Answers for the research questions

What defines professional learning and well-being?



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

The reviewed examples did not investigate teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being together, and the focus on professional well-being was explicit. Professional learning was, however, implicitly integrated with the investigation on professional well-being, and the examples indicated explicit correlation between the two. We could also find evidence for both the whole school approach and for the system thinking as significant elements when defining professional learning and well-being.

In their extensive review of 98 publications from 20 years, Hascher and Weber's (2021) could not find a scientific consensus on the definition of teacher well-being. In their data, research on teacher well-being had been mainly focusing on the general constructs of well-being, not pointing out the specific demands, challenges, and tasks for the teaching profession. They view teachers' professional well-being as a complex phenomenon, which can consist of many different forms. Hence, there may not be a single correct definition for teacher well-being. Hascher and Weber (2021) suggest defining several core elements that represent teacher well-being. For this purpose, they categorised the findings of their review in six core categories for teacher well-being:

1. well-being psychology,
2. positive psychology,
3. psychology of work and organization,
4. teacher well-being,
5. health research, and
6. other studies.

According to Hascher and Weber (2021), despite the broad heterogeneity of research results, social interactions seem to be at the core of teacher well-being. Also, they are essential in fostering it. They also ask for explicit differentiation between the predictors, indicators, and outcomes of teacher well-being. Furthermore, they suggest that future research should carefully define which model of teacher well-being is being applied and why.

The Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) report by UNESCO (2022) focused on the experiences during the pandemic in with the main stress how teaching was provided. Professional learning and well-being not explicitly connected with each other in the report. However, the report does implicitly connect them with each other, for example, due to the change caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report does not either provide explicit information for defining professional learning or well-being. However, it provides a lot of information on how teaching was provided or not, on face-to-face teaching, and on remote teaching as well as on their characteristics and prerequisites.

The study by Viac et al. (2020) constructed a conceptual framework for analysing teachers' well-being at work. It specified teachers' well-being around following key components:

7. physical and mental well-being,
8. cognitive well-being,
9. subjective well-being, and
10. social well-being.

In addition, the study recognised the contextual and diverse nature of teachers' professional well-being. For this purpose, it presented the tools available in the PISA 2021 TQ to measure the four key components. In addition, the study identified what kind of working conditions at the system and school level affect teachers' well-being at work. In addition, the document explained the expected results for teachers' well-being at work.

The Education and training monitor 2021 by the European Commission (2021), too, recognised the need to analyse the concept of well-being in multiple ways, for example, from the perspective of mental



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

or physical health. The report referred to well-being as the quality of life. It is also noteworthy that, according to the report, the amount of consensus related to well-being decreases the more precisely we want to define it. For example, well-being is of great importance to students' learning outcomes and ability to live a meaningful life. Teachers, on the other hand, need a working environment which recognizes their contribution to society including their contribution to national economy. The working environment must also enable teachers to perform their duties.

According to Ortan et al. (2021), promotion, self-efficacy, working condition, and positive student behaviour have significant effects on teachers' well-being and job satisfaction, for example, by ensuring a positive work environment. The most important factor affecting job satisfaction is the teacher's self-efficacy and the second most important one the advancement opportunities. In addition, the teachers needed support from school leaders, for example, to obtain good technology and school supplies to help them to provide high-quality teaching. The increase of hybrid education has strengthened the need for these. Furthermore, both teaching and teachers' job satisfaction depend on how collegial cooperation works in schools. According to Ortan et al. (2021), a constant high workload interferes with the teaching process, reduces job satisfaction, and can lead to burnout. An efficient work environment, on the other hand, may have several positive effects. Among other things, it decreases burnout, attrition, teacher turnover, and emotional exhaustion. Finally, efficient work environment increases well-being, teacher retention, and job satisfaction.

McCallum (2021) identified teachers' work and their well-being to exist on many levels. In addition, they noted how the COVID-19 pandemic had shown how complex and interconnected countries and their education systems as well as their educational governance are. Furthermore, they recognised how integral education is with the political, social, and economic systems.

According to Soini et al. (2016), teachers' sense of professionalism as a whole is complex. This can be extended to professional learning and well-being. It includes factors such as motivation, perceived effectiveness, and strategic skills that affect teachers' active learning in the classroom and should be continuously and simultaneously promoted in everyday school activities. The study gives indications to teachers' sense of professionalism being a significant factor in experienced teachers' burnout identifying factors that reduce the risk of burnout among teachers. These include an active effort to develop adaptive and dynamic teaching methods, the ability to cross boundaries in teachers' learning, and building cooperative learning in the classroom. These in turn facilitate professional functioning and reduce perceived inadequacy in the interaction between teachers and students. The critical examination of the teacher's pedagogical practices and interaction with the students raised expectations about the practices of the professional community. Teachers who use reflexivity may find it frustrating if these expectations are not met. It should be noted that reflection alone does not in every case lead to new learning, in other words, insightful practice or deeper understanding are needed. Creating purposeful coherence across the boundaries of professional contexts promotes active professional functioning and thus it also fosters work well-being. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that it is appropriate to encourage teachers to create pedagogical practices that facilitate the functionality of the student and the teacher. Thus, it also increases meaningful learning and the well-being of the entire school, which beautifully fits with the overall whole school approach framework for our study.

What is the status of professional learning and well-being?

The Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) report by UNESCO (2022) reported that in all its 11 participant countries most schools were closed at least once during the COVID-19 pandemic phase. There was



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

significant variation as to the methods of implementing face-to-face teaching. Models of lessons' delivery were influenced by available infrastructure and local contexts favouring more affluent countries, for example, in relation to remote teaching, which was mainly based on information and communications technology (ICT). Interestingly, support for the well-being of students and their families increased during the pandemic. Teaching and learning programmes were able to continue because schools, teachers, and students were flexible and adaptable. During the COVID-19 pandemic teaching focused more on curricula and their core parts than before, and the assessment of student learning progress was more formative. According to the REDS report, it should be studied whether the improvements could be viable for longer periods. Also, it should be studied what impact these arrangements would have on students and their learning progress. In the future, the effects of the arrangements on teachers and other members of school communities should also be considered. Preliminary findings provide evidence for targeting and tailoring policy responses to different crises. Findings offer meaningful data about what both recovery from the crisis and strengthening the sustainability of education systems will require in the future.

The Education and training monitor 2021 by the European Commission (2021) identified considerable room for improvements, even if the studied countries have a strong welfare policy in the education sector. The study recognised the great importance of well-being to students' learning outcomes and ability to live a meaningful life and that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decline in students' well-being. This, in turn, has affected teachers' and school leaders' well-being. Teachers particularly need working environments which recognize their contribution to society including their contribution to national economy. In addition, the working environment must enable teachers to perform their duties. Improvements in teaching caused by the pandemic were found, too. Core issues had become more explicit in teaching raising its level, for example, through new innovations.

McCallum (2021) predicted both significant stress during the COVID-19 pandemic and that the stress experienced in schools would have a lasting effect on future-proof teachers, politicians, and society. According to McCallum the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the workday of most teachers. Teachers had to quickly change their ways of working. For example, they had to change courses and create new content for the online learning environment. This has required teachers to seek a balance with their resources and policymakers to obtain new kind of opportunities to enact change for the better. They can make the governments to fund the sustainability of the teaching workforce. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized how complex and interconnected countries are. Furthermore, it has highlighted how integral education is with political, social, and economic systems. According to the reviewed chapter, it is notable that a recovery should never return to the same situation as there was prior to the crisis.

How does the educational system support professional learning and well-being?

In all the studied 11 countries in the Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) UNESCO (2022) most schools were closed at least once during the COVID-19 pandemic phase. The models of lessons' delivery were influenced by available infrastructure provided by the educational system and by local contexts. Remote teaching and learning were carried out in those countries that were more affluent. According to REDS, the support education systems provided for the well-being of students and their families increased during the pandemic. Preliminary findings provide evidence for targeting and tailoring policy responses to different crises. Findings also offer meaningful data about what both recovery from the crisis and strengthening the sustainability of education systems will require in the future.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

Viac et al. (2020) constructed a conceptual framework for analysing teachers' well-being at work. The goal was to define teachers' well-being at work and to identify the dimensions of the concept. The study specified teachers' well-being around four key components: physical and mental well-being, cognitive well-being, subjective well-being, and social well-being. In addition, it presented the tools available in the PISA 2021 TQ to measure the four key components. Furthermore, it identified that the working conditions affecting teachers' well-being at work must be considered both at the system and school level.

In addition to recognising the need to analyse the concept of well-being in multiple ways, the Education and training monitor 2021 by the European Commission (2021) connected well-being with the educational system in several ways. For example, well-being is of great importance to students' learning outcomes and ability to live a meaningful life. Teachers, on the other hand, need a working environment which recognizes their contribution to society including their contribution to national economy. The working environment must also enable teachers to perform their duties.

McCallum (2021) predicted that the significant stress experienced in schools would have a lasting effect on the whole educational system. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided policymakers new kind of opportunities to enact change for the better. For example, they can make the governments to fund the sustainability of the teaching workforce. Particularly, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized how complex and interconnected countries are. Also, it has highlighted how integral education is with political, social, and economic systems. According to McCallum (2021), a recovery from a crisis should never return to the same situation as there was before the crisis. Hence, now is the time to recognize the contribution and value of teachers across the globe.

How do educational organizations support professional learning and well-being?

The Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) report by UNESCO (2022) reported large differences in the organisations' methods of implementing face-to-face teaching schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The models of lessons' delivery were influenced in addition by available infrastructure also by local contexts. Remote teaching and learning were carried out by organisations in those countries that were more affluent. Remote teaching was based on information and communications technology (ICT). In most of the countries, face-to-face teaching was also maintained in school to a certain extent. In those cases where students had limited access to digital material, resources such as paper-based materials were introduced by the schools. Teaching and learning programmes were able to continue because schools, teachers, and students were flexible and adaptable. In addition, educational organisations could improve their teaching in several ways. For example, teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic focused more on curricula and their core parts than before. The assessment of student learning progress was more formative during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the future, the effects of the arrangements on teachers and other members of school communities should also be considered.

Viac et al. (2020) constructed a conceptual framework for analysing teachers' well-being at work. The goal was to define teachers' well-being at work and to identify the dimensions of the concept. The study specified teachers' well-being around four key components: physical and mental well-being, cognitive well-being, subjective well-being, and social well-being. In addition, it presented the tools available in the PISA 2021 TQ to measure the four key components. Furthermore, it identified that the working conditions affecting teachers' well-being at work must be considered both at the system and school level.

According to the Education and training monitor 2021 by the European Commission (2021), it is possible to analyse the concept of well-being in multiple ways. For example, both mental and physical health are



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

related to the concept of well-being. In general, well-being is about the quality of life. However, the amount of consensus related to the concept in question decreases the more precisely we want to define it. Well-being is of great importance to students' learning outcomes and ability to live a meaningful life. Teachers, on the other hand, need a working environment which recognizes their contribution to society including their contribution to national economy. The working environment must also enable teachers to perform their duties. There is considerable room for improvements, even if the countries have a strong welfare policy in the education sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decline in students' well-being, which in turn has affected teachers' and school leaders' well-being. Hence, the promotion of well-being policy is now even more important. Although the pandemic has been an exceptional stress for educational systems, it has also made core issues more explicit and raised the level of teaching, for example, through presenting new opportunities for innovation.

According to the results of Soini et al. (2016), teachers' sense of professionalism is complex. It includes factors such as motivation, perceived effectiveness, and strategic skills. These factors affect teachers' active learning in the classroom. To facilitate teachers' active learning in the classroom, these factors of active functionality should be continuously and simultaneously promoted in everyday school activities. The results of the study give indications to teachers' sense of professionalism being a significant factor in experienced teachers' burnout. The study identified factors that reduce the risk of burnout among teachers. These included an active effort to develop adaptive and dynamic teaching methods, the ability to cross boundaries in teachers' learning, and building cooperative learning in the classroom. These in turn facilitate professional functioning and reduce perceived inadequacy in the interaction between teachers and students. In these research results, cynicism towards the professional community was not related to the creation of a cooperative learning environment in the classroom. Critical examination of the teacher's pedagogical practices and interaction with the students raises expectations about the practices of the professional community. Teachers who use reflexivity may find it frustrating if these expectations are not met. It should be noted that reflection alone does not in every case lead to new learning, in other words, insightful practice or deeper understanding. Creating purposeful coherence across the boundaries of professional contexts promotes active professional functioning and thus it also fosters work well-being. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that it is appropriate to encourage teachers to create pedagogical practices that facilitate the functionality of the student and the teacher. Thus, it also increases meaningful learning and the well-being of the entire school.

According to Ortan et al. (2021), promotion, self-efficacy, working condition, and positive student behaviour have significant effects on teachers' job satisfaction. The factors mentioned above influence both job satisfaction and well-being. These factors ensure a positive work environment. The most important factor affecting job satisfaction is the teacher's self-efficacy. The second most important factor related to job satisfaction is advancement opportunities in the education sector. The teachers also felt that the support they receive from management is significant in terms of job satisfaction. For example, good technology and school supplies help teachers produce high-quality teaching content. Nowadays, hybrid education has become more common and because of that, they have greater importance than in the past. Teaching and teachers' job satisfaction also depend on how collegial cooperation works in schools. Regarding the workload, it seems that if the workload is constantly high and it interferes with the teaching process, it reduces job satisfaction and can lead to burnout, for example. An efficient work environment has many effects on different factors. Among other things, it decreases burnout, attrition, teacher turnover, and emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, efficient work environment increases well-being, teacher retention, and job satisfaction.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

Hascher's and Waber's (2021) view teacher well-being a complex phenomenon that consists of many different forms. They also suggest defining several core elements that represent teacher well-being. They also demand clear differentiation between the predictors, indicators, and outcomes of teacher well-being. Despite the broad heterogeneity of research results, social interactions in their educational organisations seem to be at the core of teacher well-being. Also, they are essential in fostering it.

How should professional learning and well-being be supported sustainably?

In relation to the COVID-2019 pandemic, the Educational Disruption Survey (REDS) emphasised the importance of available infrastructure and local contexts. During the COVID-2019 pandemic, remote teaching and learning were carried out in those countries that were more affluent, basing on information and communications technology (ICT). In those cases where students had limited access to digital material, resources such as paper-based materials were introduced. REDS also noted that support for the well-being of students and their families increased during the pandemic and that this also supported teachers' and school leaders' well-being. Teaching and learning programmes were able to continue because schools, teachers, and students were flexible and adaptable, and they had the autonomy for this. For example, teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic focused more on curricula and their core parts than before and the assessment of student learning progress was more formative during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the REDS report, we need research on whether these kinds of arrangements could be viable for longer periods. In addition, we need research on what impact these arrangements would have on students and their learning progress. Finally, the effects of the arrangements on teachers and other members of school communities should also be considered. Preliminary findings provide evidence for the significance of targeting and tailoring policy responses to different crises. Findings also offer meaningful data about what both recovery from the crisis and strengthening the sustainability of education systems will require in the future.

Viac et al. (2020) constructed a conceptual framework for analysing teachers' well-being at work coming up with four key components: physical and mental well-being, cognitive well-being, subjective well-being, and social well-being. In addition, the study presented the tools available in the PISA 2021 TQ to measure the four key components. The document identified what kind of working conditions at the system and school level affect teachers' well-being at work. In addition, the document explained the expected results for teachers' well-being at work. According to the study, low well-being levels have the following outcomes for teachers: stress and burnout; and motivation to leave the profession. Teachers' good well-being at work on the other hand correlates positively with high-quality teaching.

According to the Education and training monitor 2021 by the European Commission (2021), it is possible to analyse the concept of well-being in multiple ways. For example, both mental and physical health are related to the concept of well-being. In general, well-being is about the quality of life. However, the amount of consensus related to the concept in question decreases the more precisely we want to define it. Well-being is of great importance to students' learning outcomes and ability to live a meaningful life. Teachers, on the other hand, need a working environment which recognizes their contribution to society including their contribution to national economy. The working environment must also enable teachers to perform their duties. There is considerable room for improvements, even if the countries have a strong welfare policy in the education sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decline in students' well-being, which in turn has affected teachers' and school leaders' well-being. Hence, the promotion of well-being policy is now even more important (see examples 1 and 2 below). Although the pandemic has been



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

an exceptional stress for educational systems, it has also made core issues more explicit and raised the level of teaching, for example, through presenting new opportunities for innovation.

According to Ortan et al. (2021), promotion, self-efficacy, working condition, and positive student behaviour have significant effects on teachers' job satisfaction. The factors mentioned above influence both job satisfaction and well-being. These factors ensure a positive work environment. The most important factor affecting job satisfaction is the teacher's self-efficacy. The second most important factor related to job satisfaction is advancement opportunities in the education sector. The teachers also felt that the support they receive from management is significant in terms of job satisfaction. For example, good technology and school supplies help teachers produce high-quality teaching content. Nowadays, hybrid education has become more common and because of that, they have greater importance than in the past. Teaching and teachers' job satisfaction also depend on how collegial cooperation works in schools. Regarding the workload, it seems that if the workload is constantly high and it interferes with the teaching process, it reduces job satisfaction and can lead to burnout, for example. An efficient work environment has many effects on different factors. Among other things, it decreases burnout, attrition, teacher turnover, and emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, efficient work environment increases well-being, teacher retention, and job satisfaction.

McCallum (2021) predicted that the significant stress experienced in schools would have a lasting effect on future-proof teachers, politicians, and society. Teachers' work and their well-being exists on many levels. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the workday of most teachers. Teachers had to quickly change their ways of working. For example, they had to change courses and create new content for the online learning environment. This has required teachers to seek a balance with their resources. Policymakers have obtained a new kind of opportunity to enact change for the better. They can make the governments to fund the sustainability of the teaching workforce. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized how complex and interconnected countries are. Also, it has highlighted how integral education is with political, social, and economic systems. According to McCallum (2021), it is notable that a recovery should never return to the same situation as there was prior to the crisis. Hence, now is the time to recognize the contribution and value of teachers across the globe.

Hascher and Waber's research (2021) on 98 studies covering a period of 20 years could not find a scientific consensus on the definition of teacher well-being. Teacher well-being can be a complex phenomenon, and it can consist of many different forms. This means that there may not be a single correct definition of teacher well-being. However, Hascher and Waber (2021) suggest defining several core elements that represent teacher well-being. They also demand clear differentiation between the predictors, indicators, and outcomes of teacher well-being. Despite the broad heterogeneity of research results, social interactions seem to be at the core of teacher well-being. Also, they are essential in fostering it. According to the research material, it seems that research on teacher well-being has been mainly based on general constructs of well-being, without pointing out the specific demands, challenges, and tasks of the teaching profession. There was only a small number of studies focusing on teacher well-being in the teaching profession.

Soini et al. (2016) view teachers' sense of professionalism complex. It includes factors such as motivation, perceived effectiveness, and strategic skills. These factors affect teachers' active learning in the classroom. To facilitate teachers' active learning in the classroom, these factors of active functionality should be continuously and simultaneously promoted in everyday school activities. The results of the study give indications to teachers' sense of professionalism being a significant factor in experienced teachers' burnout. The study identified factors that reduce the risk of burnout among teachers. These included an active effort to develop adaptive and dynamic teaching methods, the ability to cross



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

boundaries in teachers' learning, and building cooperative learning in the classroom. These in turn facilitate professional functioning and reduce perceived inadequacy in the interaction between teachers and students. In these research results, cynicism towards the professional community was not related to the creation of a cooperative learning environment in the classroom. Critical examination of the teacher's pedagogical practices and interaction with the students raises expectations about the practices of the professional community. Teachers who use reflexivity may find it frustrating if these expectations are not met. It should be noted that reflection alone does not in every case lead to new learning, in other words, insightful practice or deeper understanding. Creating purposeful coherence across the boundaries of professional contexts promotes active professional functioning and thus it also fosters work well-being. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that it is appropriate to encourage teachers to create pedagogical practices that facilitate the functionality of the student and the teacher. Thus, it also increases meaningful learning and the well-being of the entire school.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE CONCLUSIONS

The recommendations below were constructed as an outcome of the whole research process for this study. It started with the overall topic of Teachers and school leaders towards a sustainable whole school approach for quality and inclusive education from the European Commission. The EEPN network constructed four desk research studies to provide education policy recommendations to advance education policy within the overall topic. The topics and research questions of the four studies are presented in their respective reports. This study focused on the topic of schools as learning communities to support teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being and included five research questions as presented below. As for the final education policy recommendations, they were compiled based on the answers to the research questions as presented in the Review and conclusions section of this report.

Recommendation 1

When forming and enacting educational policy recommendations for teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being, it is essential to leave enough space and opportunity as well as sufficient resources and support to contextual negotiation and enactment on all levels of the education system. This is due to both concepts being complex and contextual. Because of this, it is also vital that we study them from various perspectives and always in connection with their contexts. According to research, we can identify their core features as well as their inter- and intra-connectedness.

Recommendation 2

It is essential to regularly study the status of teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being, and, based on the results, provide support and resources to meet the identified challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected students' and teachers' professional learning and well-being, but not all the effects are negative. For example, there has been more support to well-being, and teaching has better focused on core issues as well as been able to renew itself. The harmful effects have targeted more those countries that have not been able to afford to renew their



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

teaching and those educational organisations that have not had the educational leadership to enable their professional learning communities to renew themselves as needed.

Recommendation 3

It is essential to note that the educational systems can support teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being and that there is significant variation in this. Research and policy measures are needed to act accordingly. The COVID-19 pandemic has both affected teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being and shown how teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being demand many-sided support and resources from the education system. In addition, particularly in affluent countries the educational system has been able to support teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being in ways that has supported students' and their families' learning and well-being. There is significant variation though.

Recommendation 4

It is essential to note that educational organisations have a significant role in supporting teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being. This support may have various forms. These must be identified and based on the results, provide support and resources to meet the identified challenges leaving enough space and opportunity as well as sufficient resources and support to contextual negotiation and enactment. The reviewed data may not have provided an amplitude of examples of how organisations are supporting teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being. However, they provide a rich pool of what has been essential, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic and, hence, how organisations should be supporting teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being. These are beautifully in line with how the data described teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being in general: complex and contextual.

Recommendation 5

To support teachers' and school leaders' professional well-being and professional learning, it is essential to apply a systemic approach that takes into consideration contextual factor and to leave enough space and opportunity as well as sufficient resources and support to contextual negotiation and enactment. The reviewed data provided explicit evidence for the complexity and diversity of teachers' and school leaders' professional learning and well-being. This complexity and diversity are manifested in various ways in different contexts that comprise at least the national, organisational, professional learning community and individual levels. There is need for tailored interpretation, contextualisation, and enactment. No one situation nor solution exists.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being

European Education
Policy Network

REFERENCES

- Alava, J., Kovalainen, T. & Risku, M. (2022). Positioning and Conceptualising Finnish Pedagogical Leadership in the international setting. In R. Ahtiainen, E. Hanhimäki, J. Leinonen, M. Risku & A-S. Smeds-Nylund (Eds). *Leadership in educational contexts in Finland Theoretical and empirical perspectives*. Springer. (In print)
- Brower, P., Brekelmans, M., Nieuwenhuis, L. & Simons, R-J. (2010). Communities of practice in the school workplace. *Journal of Educational Administration* (50/3), 346-364.
- Byhoj, H. (2007). *Report on the ETUCE Survey on Teachers' Work-related Stress*. ETUCE. https://www.csee-etuice.org/images/attachments/Report_WRS_EN.pdf
- Council of European Union (2020). Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future. *Official Journal of the European Union C 193/19*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2020.193.01.0011.01.ENG
- Creemers, B. P. M., & Reezigt, G. J. (1996). School level conditions affecting the effectiveness of instruction. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 7(3), 197-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345960070301>
- Danau, D. (2019). *Embracing Diversity in Education*. ETUCE. https://www.csee-etuice.org/images/RP_Inclusion-compressed.pdf.
- Duckworth, A. L., Quinn, P. D., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2009). Positive predictors of teacher effectiveness. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(6), 540-547. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760903157232>
- ETUCE (2016). Joint Practical Guidelines on How to Promote Joint Social Partner Initiatives at European, National, Regional and Local Level to Prevent and Combat Psychosocial Hazards in Education. ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/resources/recommendations/1718-joint-practical-guidelines-on-how-to-promote-joint-social-partner-initiatives-at-european-national-regional-and-local-level-to-prevent-and-combat-psychosocial-hazards-in-education-2016>.
- ETUCE (2010a). *Updated ETUCE Action Plan on teachers' work-related stress*. ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/images/attachments/ActionPlanstress2009EN.pdf>
- ETUCE (2010b). Cyber-harassment project (2009-2010). ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/policy-issues/teachers-health-and-safety/166-violence/954-projet-sur-la-violence-dans-les-ecoles-2009-2010>.
- ETUCE (2010c). ETUCE Action Plan on: Preventing and Tackling Violence in Schools. ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/resources/policy-papers/120-etuice-action-plan-on-preventing-and-tackling-violence-in-schools>.
- ETUCE (2012). ETUCE School Leadership Survey Report. ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/resources/publications/143-etuice-school-leadership-survey-report-2012>
- ETUCE (2020). ETUCE Statement on tackling the COVID-19 crisis. ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/resources/statements/3693-etuice-statement-on-tackling-the-covid-19-crisis-april-2020>.
- ETUCE (2022). Back to School: The state of Play on COVID-19 for European Education Trade Unions. ETUCE. <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/resources/publications/4085-back-to-school-the-state-of-play-on-covid-19-for-european-education-trade-unions>.



- European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Di Pietro, G., Biagi, F., Costa, P., et al., (2020). *The likely impact of COVID-19 on education: reflections based on the existing literature and recent international datasets*. Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/126686>
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Udave, J., Carlo, A., Valette, S., et al., (2014). *Study on policy measures to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Europe: final report. Volume 1*, Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/40827>
- European Commission. (2021), Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Education and training monitor 2021: education and well-being*, Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/743550>
- Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe Careers, Development and Well-being*. Eurydice. <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/teachers-europe-careers-development-and-well-being>
- Fred, H., Meeuwen Pierre, V., Ellen, R., & Marjan, V. (2020). How to enhance teachers' professional learning by stimulating the development of professional learning communities: operationalising a comprehensive PLC concept for assessing its development in everyday educational practice. *Professional development in education*, 46(5), 751-769.
- Hands, C., Guzar, K., & Rodrigue, A. (2016). The Art and Science of Leadership in Learning Environments: Facilitating a Professional Learning Community across Districts. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 61(2), 226-242. <https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v61i2.56108>
- Hascher, T., & Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational Research Review*, Volume 34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411>.
- Helne, T., & Hirvilammi, T. (2015). Well-being and sustainability: A relational approach. *Sustainable Development*, 23(3), 167-175.
- In de Wal, J. J., den Brok, P. J., Hooijer, J. G., Martens, R. L., & van den Beemt, A. (2014). Teachers' engagement in professional learning: Exploring motivational profiles. *Learning and individual differences*, 36, 27-36.
- Kools, M. and Stoll L. (2016), *"What Makes a School a Learning Organisation?"*, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 137, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlwm62b3bvh-en>
- McCallum, F. (2021). Teachers' well-being during times of change and disruption. In: White, M. A., & McCallum, F. Well-being and Resilience Education. COVID-19 and its impact on education. Routledge. (183-208).
- O'Brien, T., & Guiney, D. (2021). Well-being: How we make sense of it and what this means for teachers. *Support for learning*, 36(3), 342-355.
- OECD (2019), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, TALIS, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>.
- Ortan, F., Simut, C., & Simut, R. (2021). Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction and Teacher Well-Being in the K-12 Educational System. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(23): 12763. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182312763.



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

**Schools as learning communities to
support teachers' and school leaders'
professional learning and well-being**

European Education
Policy Network

- Parker, P. D., Martin, A. J., Colmar, S., & Liem, G. A. (2012). Teachers' workplace well-being: Exploring a process model of goal orientation, coping behavior, engagement, and burnout. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(4), 503–513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.01.001>
- Sfeatcu, R., Cernușcă-Mițariu, M., Ionescu, C., Roman, M., Cernușcă-Mițariu, S., Coldea, L., ... & Burcea, C. C. (2014). The concept of well-being in relation to health and quality of life. *European Journal of Science and Theology, 10*(4), 123-128.
- Sims, R. L., & Penny, G. R. (2015). Examination of a failed professional learning community. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 3*(1), 39-45.
- Snyder, K.J., Acker-Hocevar, M. & Nyder, K.M. (2000). *Living on the Edge of Chaos: Leading schools into the Global Age*. American Society for Quality.
- Soini, T., Pietarinen, J., & Pyhältö, K. (2016). What if teachers learn in the classroom? *Teacher Development, 20*(3), 380-397. DOI: 10.1080/13664530.2016.1149511
- Stoll, L. (2012). Stimulating learning conversations. *Professional Development Today, 14*(4), 6–12.
- Sutton, R. E., & Wheatley, K. F. (2003). Teachers' emotions and teaching: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Educational Psychology Review, 15*(4), 327–358. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026131715856>
- UNESCO (2019). Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://www.unicef.org/media/66496/file/Behind-the-Numbers.pdf>
- UNESCO. (2022). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education: international evidence from the Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380398>
- Viac, C., & Fraser, P. (2020). Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis. OECD Education Working Papers No. 213. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c36fc9d3-en>
- Voelkel Jr., R.H., & Chrispeels, J.H. (2017). Within-School Differences in Professional Learning Community Effectiveness: Implications for Leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 27*(3), 424-451. doi:10.1177/105268461702700305
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications*. George Braziller.
- Wang, T. (2016). School leadership and professional learning community: Case study of two senior high schools in Northeast China. *Asia pacific journal of education, 36*(2), 202-216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1148849>
- Weick, K.E. (2001). *Making Sense of Organization*. Blackwell Publishing.
- WHO Regional Office for Europe (2021). *Schooling during COVID-19 Recommendations from the European Technical Advisory Group for schooling during COVID-19*. WHO. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/340872/WHO-EURO-2021-2151-41906-57497-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>