

# MORE TEACHERS!

## 15 POINTS AGAINST THE SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS

*There is a teacher shortage all over Germany. The GEW has made 15 suggestions to politicians on what needs to be done now. This is how the teacher shortage can be combated and the crisis in the classrooms of our schools prevented.*

Education educates people, education forms society – and education is work by people with people and for people – a meaningful and responsible assignment. This must meet high professional standards. Education specialists and the GEW have been warning of the impending teacher shortage for years. However, politicians have failed to react adequately. Today, the shortage of teachers and other educational professionals as well as paraprofessionals has grown into a social crisis that requires the utmost attention. That is why the GEW has made 15 proposals on how to meet this challenge in the short, medium and long term.

### **1. Cut teachers' working hours**

Most teachers love their job, but work under very high stress levels. The result: above-average rates of part-time work, partly in order to reconcile family and career, long-term sickness, early retirement – and a deterring effect on young people who are about to decide on a career. In order to keep trained teachers in schools, the working conditions of teachers must be improved and thus made more attractive (reduction in working hours, smaller classes, more compensatory hours, better health protection, higher age reduction, support systems for teachers such as team coaching and supervision, etc.). The GEW is ready and able to negotiate on these points.

## 2. Implement multi-professional teams

Schools need to be staffed better – with staffing based on the needs of the students. This includes different professions, especially for the expansion of extended day schooling, inclusion and the integration of refugees: Social workers, learning support staff, psychologists, school nurses, therapists, art teachers, music teachers, interpreters and heritage- and or community-language teachers as well as teachers of German as a foreign or second language. These staff should work together in multi-professional teams. In this way, tasks and work can be better distributed according to the different qualifications and the stress on the teachers will be eased. The quality of the school's programmes and teaching will improve. The satisfaction of all employees would increase.

## 3. More IT and administrative support

Additional administrative staff, assistants and IT specialists need to be recruited. They should take on non-teaching tasks and, among other things, set up and maintain the digital infrastructure and look after laboratories, workshops and classrooms used for home economics. Teachers will thus be relieved of non-teaching-related tasks. This frees up more time for educational and social work with pupils.

## 4. Good pay for good work – increasing the attraction of the teaching profession

The attractiveness of the teaching profession must be improved. This includes paying all fully qualified teachers according to A 13 (civil servants) and E 13 (salaried employees). This is not only a question of equal treatment with other academic professions in the public sector and the recognition of the teachers' professionalism in their pedagogical and subject-based work, but also helps to combat the shortage of teachers, particularly at primary schools. The work at primary as well as secondary schools, which is predominantly carried out by women, is long overdue for a re-evaluation and upgrade.

## 5. Increase university places, improve study programmes

The state governments must increase the number of places at universities for teacher training programmes and abolish study restrictions for the teaching profession (numerus clausus as well as access to Master's programmes). In doing so, they should take the special needs of certain subject combinations into account. The restriction of training to only apply e.g. for grammar schools, should be replaced with qualifications for teaching all students in a particular age range – for example at secondary level. In addition, the high drop-out rate must be reduced.

This requires more emphasis to be placed on teacher training programmes at universities in terms of concepts and staffing and a significant improvement in support for students in the teacher education courses – not least through a better supervision ratio and ending the system of short-term contracts for long-term teaching tasks.

## 6. Recognising foreign degrees

The recognition of teaching qualifications obtained abroad must be made easier. Improving German skills, and any other necessary further qualifications for these teachers should be delivered in service – i.e. in paid working time – and secured by sufficient reductions in teaching hours. Teachers only having one teaching subject – which is the rule abroad – should not be a criterion for excluding them from recognition and any necessary in-service training.

## 7. Strengthen teacher training

The federal state governments must increase the number of places in the final in-school phase of teacher training (traineeship), including most part-time options. The number of lessons where the trainee teacher replaces a fully qualified teacher must be reduced and the supervision of trainee teachers must be significantly improved in order to reduce the high drop-out rate. Teachers with the first state examination without a traineeship position should be able to complete a preparatory service in another type of school – e.g. in a comprehensive school as opposed to a grammar school – if required and/or be given the opportunity to acquire an additional teaching subject in a shortage area at the same time.

## 8. Raise pay for trainee teachers to above the minimum wage

Pay for trainee teachers must be significantly increased. Around 1,500 euros before tax and social security per month for more than full-time employment after five years of study is unworthy and also discourages potential new teachers with other types of professional and life experience who want to take up teaching.

## 9. A joint effort to allow graduates (without degrees in education) to train to be teachers

Even if all of these above measures were to be tackled immediately, this would not be enough in the short term to secure the teaching programmes at schools as well as the immediately necessary improvements. The federal states, universities, study centres and trade unions must therefore agree on a joint effort to qualify so-called lateral and side entrants immediately.

This requires attractive conditions for prospective teachers that also allow them to work part-time in order to significantly reduce the high drop-out rate. On-the-job training must be organised in such a way that missing training content can be caught up on while working. Sufficient paid time must be freed up for this. The GEW is not in favour of cutting back on the quality of training. Graduates who want to train to be teachers with a suitable university degree should be able to start the final phase of teacher training directly if required. The final phase of teacher training must be organised in such a way that it is possible to catch up on missing training content from the degree course. Once they have successfully completed their training, their qualifications shall be treated equivalently with all other teachers' qualifications.

#### 10. Support employees without a teaching qualification and offer them real prospects

Teaching by employees who have not trained as teachers or who are currently in training is an emergency measure for which political planning failures of the past are responsible. In these cases, employees without a teaching qualification should be provided with an experienced teacher as a mentor with sufficient facility time to be able to properly support the trainee teacher. Employees who have proven themselves at school should be offered realistic prospects for post-graduate qualification with recognition as fully trained and qualified teachers. The GEW rejects chains of fixed-term contracts and dismissals during school holidays. These are at the expense of employees, pupils, schools and social security systems.

#### 11. Strengthen mentors

Teachers who supervise trainee teachers (mentors) must receive a compulsory reduction in their teaching hours of at least two hours per teacher and subject whether the teacher is a standard education graduate doing the final part of their teacher training or a graduate who didn't study education. Schools that provide training need additional teachers. By compensating for financial disadvantages, retirees and pensioners can be recruited for counselling or teaching.

#### 12. Better equip schools in difficult environments

Schools in challenging social situations face particular problems. They must be actively supported with additional federal funding, to be distributed according to the socially indexed distribution formula developed by the GEW, as well as compensatory hours for teachers from state funds. Unequal things must be treated unequally. The additional funds can be used, for example, to finance double staffing and create better working conditions. This will make these schools more attractive for teachers as well as other professions.

#### 13. Breaking new ground

Model projects should be used to examine whether entry into the profession can be made faster and more attractive through a modified term here in conjunction with a subsequent supervised career entry phase. The GEW also encourages the federal states to launch new pilot projects for a single-phase teacher training programme that integrates theoretical and practical training from the outset. For the teaching qualification at vocational schools, it proposes a single-phase dual Master's programme as a second standard method to qualify teachers.

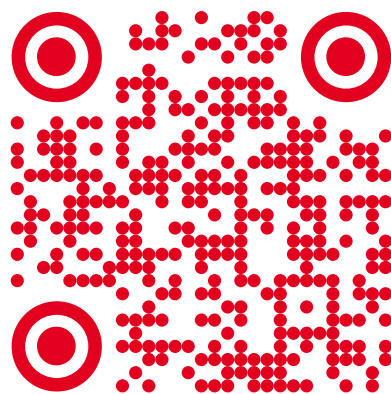
#### 14. Change of course in recruitment policy

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) and the federal states must develop a strategy to continuously train and recruit a sufficient number of teachers in order to overcome the constant cycle of teacher surpluses and shortages. The ministries must draw on the expertise of employees and their representatives. The GEW offers our support in this endeavour.

#### 15. Ensure binding nature

In the past, many KMK agreements have been made to improve teacher training and to cover the demand for teaching staff. As a rule, these have not been implemented across the board. To ensure that this happens in the future, the GEW proposes a federal-state treaty on teacher training and meeting the demand for teachers.

More about the German education union



<http://kurz.gew.app/gew-en>