

## **What schools are capable of**

**Some schools cope better with increased autonomy than others. The extent of autonomy a given school can deal with depends on its own capacity to make policy. The Education Council calls for the possibility to vary the level of autonomy given to primary and secondary schools.**

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Schools need to be able to find the right combination of people and materials that fit best with their pupils and their environment. Once this 'policymaking capacity' has reached a critical mass, schools should be able to decide for themselves whether they need a lot or a few restrictive or controlling measures by government. This choice is not desirable in all areas, but is certainly desirable in regard to lump sum financing in primary education, for example, the creation of a teaching programme, or a looser interpretation of the collective bargaining agreement. The Education Council wishes to provide a statutory basis for these choices through experiments and exceptions.

### **Raise the quality of leadership and teachers**

The quality of school leadership is a factor that determines the policymaking capacity of a school. The Education Council is in favour of a coherent package of measures to raise the quality of leadership and teachers. Measures could include the formulation of professional standards, coaching and attractive terms of employment. Teachers should be encouraged to work in self-managing teams, for example, or to work together to develop innovative educational practices. It would also be good to strive internally towards a smaller scale, and to reduce large school conglomerates into smaller sub-schools and teams.

### **Opting out should be a legally available option**

In recent years, increased scale has led to a lot of variation in organisational and governance structures within the education sector. It is the Education Council's view that this is a good thing. A certain degree of scale is needed to give the school its policymaking capacity, but it still needs to remain manageable. Schools should be able to decide for themselves how they are organised. This includes decisions on mergers, and whether or not to join the Participation Fund (the body that meets the cost of staff sick leave). In exceptional cases, schools or groups of teachers should be given the chance to develop their own educational concept and opt out of the existing governance structure. The Education Council calls for a statutory basis for opting out in order to tackle the creation of oversized schools and school governing bodies, to give teachers an active role again, and to encourage initiatives.