

2024-2025

work  
program  
me

..raad  
..wijs  
onder

# Work Programme 2024-2025

<b>1</b>	<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Education as a bridge between generations.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Work Programme 2024-2025.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1.	Advisory report on education as an investment .....	6
3.2.	Advisory report on teacher training programmes.....	7
3.3.	Study on well-being and education.....	7
3.4.	Status Report on Education in the Caribbean Netherlands.....	8
3.5.	Advisory report on multilingualism .....	8
3.6.	Advisory report on the position of the teaching profession.....	9
3.7.	Study on poverty and education .....	9
3.8.	Advisory report on school premises.....	10
3.9.	Advisory report on the forward study on senior secondary vocational education, higher education and science .....	10
3.10.	Advisory report on young people in youth detention centres and residential youth care ....	11
3.11.	Advisory reports on legislation .....	11
<b>4</b>	<b>Tasks and working methods.....</b>	<b>13</b>

# 1 Foreword

Education runs like a golden thread through our society, linking together past, present and future. Education equips children and young people with the tools they need to face the future independently and with confidence, to shape the society in which they live, to meet the challenges they face head-on and to carve out new pathways.

Education mirrors society and, like society, is therefore constantly evolving. It is a crucial public provision which receives a great deal of attention. The Dutch Education Council engages in its many advisory reports and studies in systemic analysis of the education infrastructure in the Netherlands from a long-term perspective. This focus will continue in the forthcoming period, among other things in the form of an analysis of education in the Caribbean Netherlands and an advisory report on educational infrastructure. In addition, the Council maintains a consistent focus on specific groups in education or on parts of the system that warrant extra attention. In the forthcoming Work Programme period, the Council will look specifically at the issues around poverty in relation to education and the adverse impact poverty has on pupil and student development. It will also look at the educational provision for pupils and students living in youth detention centres or residential care.

This Work Programme, which is updated annually, briefly describes the advisory reports and studies that the Education Council will be working on over the next two years. The Council has developed this Programme in part based on discussions with officials from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Dutch Parliament and representatives of pupil and student organisations as well as of associations representing parents, teachers, school heads and other education professionals, umbrella organisations, trade unions, sectoral boards and childcare organisations. The responses to the digital consultation exercise ('Denkt u mee?') have also been incorporated. The Council would like to thank everyone for their contributions.

Edith Hooge  
Chair

Mirjam van Leeuwen  
General Secretary & Director

## 2 Education as a bridge between generations

Education connects generations through the passing on of knowledge, understanding, skills and experience. It equips the younger generation to shape society in their turn and to find answers to the challenges of tomorrow.

### **Introduction to the Dutch Education Council's Work Programme**

Among other things, education can be as a 'transaction' between the different generations: training and education open up access to cultural and intellectual assets and knowledge from the past so they can be passed on to new generations, equipping them to understand the world and its history in order to help them shape the future.

Based on this transactional perspective of education as a bridge linking past, present and future societies and communities, the Education Council identifies four basic principles for the education and training provided by the Dutch education system.

The first principle is that existing knowledge, understanding, skills and experience must be continually made available in an accessible way, because every child, every generation, starts again 'from scratch' in learning about the world and its history. Acquiring a mastery of arithmetic, mathematics and language is an essential part of this.

The second principle is that education should give every child and young person access to the body of cultural and intellectual knowledge.

The third principle is that adult generations not only willingly pass on their knowledge, experience and understanding to the younger generations through education, but also their own questions, doubts and mistakes, so that children and adolescents are able to learn and develop from the basis of an honest, critical and realistic perspective, which helps them to meet the challenges and developments they will face in their turn in the future.

Finally, the fourth principle is that education must also provide a forum where pupils and students can bring to bear their own knowledge and insights, create and try out new things and develop their own perspective. In this way, education acts as a bridge on the path to adulthood.

### **Influence of trends and developments**

From the perspective of education as a bridge between generations, the Education Council sees a number of challenges and developments which today's young generation will face in the future. They include developments which offer scope for discoveries and innovations, which invite creativity and a different way of using raw materials and recycling products. They will also demand empathy, the ability to think more widely than individual interests, and the ability to collaborate in order to achieve solutions to societal challenges.

The complex domestic and international landscape means this is not always easy. The war in Ukraine shows that conflicts that arise relatively close at hand can lead to war. The steady stream of images and reports showing the dire situation in which people in Ukraine are living brings this home in a very direct way. The consequences of the war are evident in things such as unstable and steeply rising energy prices which have plunged some households into severe

difficulties. That is also a source of concern for the younger generations.

Dutch society is changing rapidly. Sufficient housing, access to care, access to full-time education and an adequate energy supply are all things that can no longer be taken for granted. The labour market squeeze is putting pressure on public services, with shortages of teachers, police officers, doctors, nurses and care professionals. These developments do not affect everyone equally; socioeconomically vulnerable households are less inclined to believe that the government is there for them. Insecurity and inequality of opportunity are often passed down to successive generations within households. It is therefore vital to continue reflecting on how the young generations can be offered the prospect of a better future. That, too, is part of the intergenerational responsibility.

### **Challenges today and tomorrow**

Concerns about the welfare of young people are not new, and the coronavirus pandemic appears to have exacerbated the problems. Many pupils and students wrestle with problems such as loneliness and fear of failure, and feel under pressure for a variety of reasons. Moreover, the education system itself appears to be contributing to this reduced well-being: a quarter of young people experience stress caused by their schoolwork; they feel under constant pressure to perform and excel, and tests and examinations add to that pressure. Schools and colleges say they are unable to offer the complex psychological care needed by pupils, students and parents. All these factors prompted the Education Council to investigate the reasons for the reduced well-being of pupils and students and the role that education plays in this. How can young people be educated and trained in a way that enables them to face the challenges and developments in their own lives as well as those that will face society in the future with greater confidence?

The question of what future challenges and developments today's young people will face can also lead to a reflection on the purpose and goals of vocational and academic education. What demands will society place on the students of the future, and what demands will those students place on education? What knowledge and which professionals will be needed to provide appropriate responses to the trends that influence our society and labour market? Is the present education system equipped to achieve this, and if not, what needs to change? These are the questions for which there are no straightforward answers and which need to be viewed together as a complex whole. The forward study of senior secondary vocational education, higher education and science which has been commissioned by the Dutch education minister is one way of bringing elements of an uncertain future closer and exploring them in an integrated way. At the request of the minister, the Council will publish a report on the forward study.

### **Targeting attention where needed**

The challenges we face raise questions about how society is organised and whether it is adequately equipped for the world of the future. Are the interests of all citizens adequately protected? Despite strong economic growth and a high level of welfare, the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) estimates that economic trends such as high inflation and increased energy costs will push more Dutch households below the poverty line.

It is important that young people growing up in poverty also receive a proper education; this applies not just for primary or secondary school pupils, but also for students in further and higher education. The gap between rich and poor in education manifests itself mainly in the financial capacity of parents to pay for their children's education and additional activities. But the impact of poverty goes much further, extending to the living conditions of children and young people, for

example because they go without breakfast or a healthy lunch, or because of stress at home due to financial problems. Poverty also puts pressure on social relationships and can lead to exclusion and stereotyping. Poverty is thus not just an individual problem, but is something which undermines the broader social ties within society.

Schools are an important meeting point and a partner in helping care professionals and local authorities provide support to young people growing up in poverty. But poverty is also an issue for education itself, given its adverse impact on child development. At the request of the Dutch Parliament, the Education Council will be publishing a study focusing on how schools can address poverty and its negative impact on child development.

The Netherlands has a comprehensive and well-structured education system. Targeted attention is needed within the system for certain aspects of the teaching provision and specific groups of pupils and students, for example those facing an accumulation of problems for which they need attention, support and structure. These are often young people who for a variety of reasons are living in an institution, such as a youth detention centre or residential youth care centre, for whom the government bears a heavy responsibility. A key element in this government responsibility is to provide these young people with a good education. There are however other interests and challenges at play: providing education and support and preparing them to participate in society independently and with good prospects is essential for these young people. Education needs to be one of the stable factors in their lives, and one which is tailored to their capacities. That is currently not always the case for all young people in residential institutions and, at the request of the education minister, the Education Council will be publishing a report focusing on how education provision for young people in youth detention centres and residential care can be improved.

### **Trust in future generations**

Children do not learn everything at school; parents and grandparents, other relatives, peers and other role models in their lives also impart insights, experience, knowledge, traditions and aspects of culture. The language children speak at home and take with them to school is an example; there is a growing awareness that Dutch is not always their first language and that the language they speak at home is a resource that can help them to access and acquire knowledge, skills and insights. This is an important factor in a transactional perspective on education. At the request of the responsible ministers, the Education Council will be publishing a report on how education can accommodate linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

Education matters - always, for every child, for every young person. Because education as a bridge between generations means that accumulated knowledge, experiences, skills and insights continually find their way to the next generation, who in turn take them forward into society. With this in mind, if we continue to equip our children and young people with a good education, we can place our trust in the capacities of our future generations.

On behalf of the Dutch Education Council,  
Professor Edith Hooge  
Chair

## 3 Work Programme 2024-2025

The Work Programme 2024-2025 describes the advisory reports and studies that the Education Council will be undertaking over the next two years. As well as reports already in the pipeline on education as an investment and on teacher training programmes, this Work Programme also includes an advisory report to be compiled on the Council's own initiative, an advisory report and a study commissioned by the Dutch Parliament, plus four advisory reports and a Status Report on Education in the Netherlands, compiled at the request of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. The Council will also produce a number of advisory reports on legislation. These reports and studies are briefly described below

Outside this Work Programme, the Education Council is always open to supplementary requests, including for legislative advice.

The Council expects to produce the following publications before the end of 2023:

- an advisory report on school boards;
- an advisory letter on provisions for young children in the context of equal educational opportunities;
- an advisory report on education at the workplace.

The Council published two reports in 2023, *Active in Europe* focusing on the importance of active engagement by the Dutch government with European education policy, and *Scarcity grinds*, on how government and the education sector can address the persistent and unevenly distributed teacher shortages.

The Youth Education Council (JongerenOnderwijsraad) supports the Council in the preparation of its advisory reports and studies. It is made up of pupils and students across a range of ages and school types, who share their experiences, views and ideas about Dutch education and a range of linked topics. A newly constituted Youth Education Council will begin operating from October 2023.

### 3.1. Advisory report on education as an investment

Spending on education is investing in the future. Education delivers a 'return' in the short and long term which benefits both the individual and society. For the individual, education offers an opportunity to participate successfully in society, to generate an income and to experience well-being and happiness; society benefits because education contributes to a smoothly functioning labour market, an innovative economy, strong democracy, equal opportunities and social cohesion.

However, central government spending on education tends not to be seen in this way. Rather, education is regarded mainly as a cost, and the returns generated by education in a broad sense tend to fall off the radar in the political and public debate. Even in the models used by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) to extrapolate the impact of policy, the long-term effects of education play only a limited role.

Given the political desire to increase the focus on broad prosperity, the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) have joined forces to develop a set of Core Indicators for Broad Welfare. These indicators offer a framework for analysing and developing policy from the perspective of broad welfare.

How are these developments reflected in decision-making on budgets for public services? Which considerations play a role in establishing the macro-budget for education?

These questions led to the following request for advice: How can the decision-making for the overall education budget take into account the sustainable contribution made by education to the development of the individual and society?

### **3.2. Advisory report on teacher training programmes**

Teachers play a vital role in education. The job requirements of teachers are laid down in proficiency standards, which are drawn up by teachers' committees and subsequently laid down in law. They describe the minimum levels of knowledge and ability for teachers. Teacher training programmes have the freedom to achieve the proficiency standards in a variety of ways, and also to determine the path to achieving those standards and how progress is tested during the programme.

All teacher training programmes provided at Dutch higher education institutes are accredited. In addition, a set of common knowledge bases and tests has been developed across the different teacher training programmes which specify the required knowledge and competences. Despite this, the quality of teacher training programmes is a regular subject of debate, with concerns expressed about the content of the curriculum, the level of students at the start and completion of programmes, the scope of programmes, quality standards, examination methods, the alignment with school practice and the limited opportunities to meet the needs of specific target groups such as transfer students. Reference is also made in that debate to the wide diversity of programmes and the fragmented nature of the provision. An underlying problem is the lack of a clear consensus about precisely what the teaching profession entails.

This advisory report addresses the following question: Are the existing proficiency standards adequate for initial teacher training programmes, and is harmonisation of teacher training programmes in other respects possible and desirable? The report focuses on the initial teacher training programmes which prepare teachers for practising their profession.

### **3.3. Study on well-being and education**

There have been growing signs in recent years that all is not as it should be with the mental health of children and young people in the Netherlands. The number of secondary education students with emotional problems is rising sharply, and many primary school pupils also struggle with emotional problems and reduced well-being. On the cusp of moving into further education, young people feel under pressure to choose the 'right' programme and to set themselves apart from their peers.

Students are concerned about their future, for example in terms of finding work, an affordable home and equal opportunities. Teachers are worried about the influence of social media and about the vulnerability of pupils. School, education and study are important contributors to young people's resilience and helping them learn to deal with stress and pressure. But they are also themselves potential sources of stress and pressure not just pressure to perform, but also social pressure experienced by pupils and students with their peers. Another source of pressure is the growing individualisation, including in education. What role do tests and examinations play here? And how much scope is there for educational intervention, given the growing trend within education to approach problems from a medical or therapeutic standpoint?

This study, carried out on the Council's own initiative, explores the question: What needs to change in the educational structure and culture to contribute in an educationally sound and healthy way to children and young people's schooling and development?

### **3.4. Status Report on Education in the Caribbean Netherlands**

Schools in the Caribbean Netherlands fall within the Dutch education system. Since 1 January 2011 education on the islands of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba – the 'BES islands' – has been funded directly from the Netherlands, and since 1 August 2011 has been governed by the Caribbean Dutch education laws.

What do education establishments on the islands and the government see as their tasks in promoting and guaranteeing educational quality? What challenges does education on the BES islands face, including in the light of its small scale? How could government and education establishments respond to those challenges? To what extent does policy or legislation promote or inhibit this? And how does the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science fulfil its responsibility for education policy on the BES islands?

This report, published at the request of the responsible ministers, explores the current status of education in the Caribbean Netherlands and investigates the question: How can the government embed responsibility for the quality and accessibility of education on the BES islands?

### **3.5. Advisory report on multilingualism**

Language is a topic that is currently receiving a great deal of attention. And rightly so: having a good command of language is a crucial prerequisite for participating in education and in society. When talking about 'language', in primary and secondary education we are generally referring to the Dutch language, whilst being conscious of the fact that this is not the first language for every pupil. Language is also a hot topic of conversation in higher education, however, for example in the debate on the right balance between use of Dutch or English as the language of instruction.

One in four Dutch children speaks a second language at home in addition to Dutch, and thus grows up multilingually. In addition, a growing number of educational services – from preschool and early childhood education right through to university education – offer instruction in other languages besides Dutch, especially English. Multilingualism is an added value for society, but is also a challenge for the education system, for example in combating inequality of opportunity in primary and secondary education based on mother tongue, and in higher education due to the dominant position of English.

Pupils who do not speak Dutch at home face a dual challenge at school, having to learn Dutch and at the same time learn and acquire skills in that language. What does this mean for their schooling and development?

There are also some segments of education which have a good deal of experience with multilingualism and where this is more embedded in the teaching, for example in education for newcomers to the Netherlands. What lessons can be drawn from this? What are the opportunities and challenges posed by multilingualism in education?

At the request of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, in this report the Education Council addresses the following question: How can linguistic diversity and multilingualism best be accommodated within education?

### **3.6. Advisory report on the position of the teaching profession**

The teaching profession is attracting a lot of attention. It is always assured of a key place on policy agendas as the ultimate deciding factor in determining educational quality. This has given rise to a range of initiatives, for example aimed at raising the status of teaching as a profession, combating pressure of work, strengthening the professionalism of teachers and lecturers and tackling the teacher shortage. Teachers also play a crucial role in schools and education programmes; as well as teaching and developing education programmes, this role includes co-determination, maintaining contacts with other professionals in and around education and maintaining contacts with pupils, students and parents.

Yet substantive decisions on education do not always reflect a strong position for teachers. In the development of national education policy, and especially policy on teachers, as well as in choices made within school or institute, the degree to which and the way in which teachers are able to exert influence varies. Despite numerous attempts to form a professional group, the organisation of the teaching profession is fragmented, and by no means all teachers are affiliated with a professional organisation.

The Education Council has highlighted aspects of the teaching profession in numerous advisory reports and studies, and referred to the importance of a strong professional organisation. Despite this, the position of the teaching profession at national level and within schools, education programmes and further and higher education establishments leaves much to be desired. Which aspects recommended by the Education Council in relation to teaching and the development of a professional group have been taken up and which have been ignored? Where does the influence and involvement of teachers need to be strengthened, and what is needed for this?

Published at the request of the Dutch Parliament, in this report the Council maps what has been done with earlier action points, conclusions and recommendations in relation to teaching. The Council then re-assesses the role of teachers based on the question: How can the position of the teaching profession be strengthened nationally and at the level of schools, programmes and institutes?

### **3.7. Study on poverty and education**

Forecasts suggest that more than a million Dutch citizens will be living below the poverty line in 2024. A growing number of children are growing up in a household with an income that is below the 'modest but adequate' criterion developed by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). Financial worries are also a reality in households with an income above the poverty line, and are growing among working people who have hitherto never had difficulty making ends meet. As well as financial difficulties, this leads to sociocultural poverty, which in turn impacts on social cohesion. Poverty puts pressure on the social fabric of society and is therefore not just an individual problem, but one which affects society as a whole.

Children and young people living in poverty find it less easy to access good-quality, rich education. They benefit less from what the education system offers and are more inclined to drop out early because of education-related costs such as voluntary parental co-payments, buying a laptop, diary or gym outfits, travel expenses, costs for supplementary activities at school such as a school trip or debating course, and out-of-school activities such as additional lessons, exam training or homework classes. Having to go to school without breakfast, experiencing (financial) stress at home and receiving less support from their home setting all have a negative impact on children's learning and development.

Children's development ought to be the starting point for policy and its implementation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was signed in 1989, provides the foundation for this. The primary focus of policy for households in poverty ought therefore to be on the perspective of the child and what is best for them. Rising poverty also poses a challenge in terms of how the education system can accommodate this. The response to these challenges can vary depending on the local situation and school.

Commissioned by the Dutch Parliament, this study by the Council explores the question: What should be the response of schools to poverty and its adverse impact on young people's development?

### **3.8. Advisory report on school premises**

Good school buildings are an important precondition for good education, for both pupils and teachers. However, many buildings are old and sometimes poorly maintained, and there is much debate about who is responsible for funding primary and secondary school buildings: local authorities or schools?

Some Dutch municipalities have transferred their responsibility for school premises and resources to school boards, and proposals for 'integrated building plans' are being developed. There are wide local differences in how the issue of school buildings is approached. Responsibilities for building new premises and maintaining existing facilities are split, which leads to disputes and differences.

Many buildings are old, and around a quarter of Dutch primary and secondary school premises do not meet the minimum ventilation standards. Achieving a consistently good internal climate, for example in terms of temperature and lighting levels, is also impossible for many schools. This has adverse repercussions on the school achievements of pupils.

The (poor) accessibility of buildings and lack of space are also problematic, for example for pupils with disabilities or extra support needs. Quality of school buildings is therefore an important factor in the ambition of achieving more inclusive education.

Another development which places demands on the quality of school buildings is the integration of education with other provisions in multifunctional buildings. Does this benefit the quality of education? To what extent are schools able to make their own choices in this regard if there are also aspects to consider which are relevant from the standpoint of general social policy?

In this report, the Council addresses the following question from the education minister: What is needed to ensure the quality of educational buildings in the future?

### **3.9. Advisory report on the forward study on senior secondary vocational education, higher education and science**

The Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science has commissioned a forward study on the future of senior secondary vocational education (MBO), higher education and science in the Netherlands. The central questions addressed in this study include: How will students learn in 2040? How will knowledge be developed then? What will be expected in the future from MBO schools, universities of applied sciences, universities and science? What will society and the labour market need then?

The forward study is intended to provide an insight into the impact of trends in further education and science. It will also look at how further education and science can contribute to the achievement of societal missions, as well as addressing issues in relation to the transfer of knowledge, lifelong development, funding and legislation.

At the request of the minister, the Council will publish an advisory report on the forward study once it has been published. This advisory report will serve as input for the minister's policy response, and for the parliamentary debate on the forward study.

At the request of the minister, the Council is leaving scope in its Work Programme for the coming period to accommodate potential supplementary requests for advice ensuing from the forward study.

### **3.10. Advisory report on young people in youth detention centres and residential youth care**

Education provision for young people in youth detention centres and residential care in the Netherlands is not in a healthy state, a finding backed by research as well as numerous reports by the Inspectorate of Justice and Security, the Inspectorate of Education and the Health and Youth Care Inspectorate. There is a structural shortage of places for young people and of staff with the necessary experience.

School classes are currently filled to the maximum and the classes change frequently as youngsters arrive and leave. There are limited opportunities for placements in internships and it is very difficult for young people leaving these facilities to find a place in a mainstream school.

Education can make a great difference for these young people, too. To what extent does the education system manage to do this? Does it align adequately with the capacities of these young people? How can a more effective balance be struck between support, care and education, and what will benefit these young people?

The minister requested the Council to address the following question in this report: How can education for young people in youth detention centres and residential care be improved, and what is needed for this?

### **3.11. Advisory reports on legislation**

The Education Council has a statutory task to advise the government on legislative proposals. Proposals which imply essential changes in terms of to governance, control, supervision and funding, which impinge on Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution (on the provision of education), or which have major implications for educational practice, are all topics on which the Council advises. The precise legislative proposals are determined in consultation between the Council and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

In its legislative advisory reports, the Council examines what the proposal means for educational practice and assesses its conformity with Article 23 of the Constitution. The Council also looks at aspects such as the practicability and consistency of the proposed legislation.

The Council provides its advice on legislation after Internet consultation and before the Dutch Council of State has issued its advice. The turnaround time for these reports is short: the Council publishes its advice within six weeks in an advisory letter.

The Council has plans to publish advice on legislation on the following topics in the pipeline for the coming period:

- Strategic staffing policy;
- Supervision of informal education;
- School accreditation.

## 4 Tasks and working methods

*Good education for everyone: that is the goal which the Dutch Education Council is committed to helping achieve.*

For more than a hundred years the Council has been advising successive governments and parliaments, both on request and on its own initiative, on education policy and legislation.

The Council examines the functioning of the Dutch education system, both retrospectively and from a long-term perspective. It identifies and highlights issues, identifies pinchpoints and undesirable effects inherent in legislation and policy proposals and outlines perspectives or solution pathways. It does this in the form of evidence-based studies, advisory reports or legislative advice. The Council also draws up a periodic Status Report on education in the Netherlands, in which it presents an overarching picture of Dutch education. The Council also advises local authorities on aspects related to educational premises.

The Council's advisory reports and studies deal with all aspects of the education system, from pre-school provision right through to post-university education and lifelong learning and development. It addresses questions such as: How can education contribute to the development of the individual and society? Who needs to take action? What is the role of national and local government? Which responsibilities lie with school boards and which with school leaders and teachers? When do organisations and professionals around the school need to act? What is the role of pupils, students and parents?

The Council is an autonomous body, which is grounded in Dutch society and education. Its reports are fed by the knowledge and experience of those working in the field, and also draw on education policy and legislation, as well as being based on scientific knowledge and insights from a wide range of scientific disciplines, such as educational science, economics, sociology and educational law. The Council also draws on into sectoral and international comparisons. The Youth Education Council (JongerenOnderwijsraad) warrants special mention; it is made up of pupils and students across a range of ages and school types, supports the Council with experiences and ideas about Dutch education and a range of linked topics on which the Council gives advice.

In preparing its advisory reports, the Council also draws on the knowledge and expertise of other advisory and policy bodies, and conversely also contributes expertise on request to support advice given by other bodies. Joint advisory reports are sometimes published. As one of the founding members of EUNEC, the European Network of Education Councils, the Council also shares knowledge and expertise with other advisory bodies in Europe and beyond.

The members of the Education Council are appointed in a personal capacity for a term of four years. They are recruited on account of their scientific expertise, practical experience in education and/or societal contribution, combined with their vision on education. Their broad expertise means they always bring to bear different perspectives – for example educational, economic, legal or international – to the topics under consideration.

### *Principles*

The Education Council says what needs to be said and is a critical interlocutor for government and the education system. In its choice of topics, its substantive analyses and its recommendations, the Council bases its approach on five public values: quality; accessibility; efficiency; plurality and freedom of choice; and social cohesion, inclusion and democracy. Each of these values deserves to be promoted and each interacts with the others. An emphasis on one value can be detrimental to other values, and there may be mutual conflicts between them. This means that constant judgements have to be made. As regards *quality*, for example, the Council may look both at the quality of education in a broad sense

and the conditions that make quality education possible. *Accessibility* is about the unhindered availability of education to every pupil and student. It also impinges on issues such as equality of opportunity. *Efficiency* is concerned with the cost-effectiveness of the education system in relation to its societal outcomes. It is also about setting educational goals, linking them to financial policy and monitoring whether those goals are achieved. *Plurality* in education has its roots in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution. The Council highlights the importance of plurality in the system, including comprehensive public education provision and the associated freedom for parents and pupils to opt for the school of their choice. The Council's approach strikes a balance between the needs, interests and wishes of pupils, students and parents on the one hand and public and societal interests on the other. Finally, the Council looks at education in relation to *social cohesion, inclusion and democracy*, both in schools and in society. The school is a social community and a place in which to learn to live together in a democracy. From this perspective, the Council believes it is important that pupils from different backgrounds and with different abilities are able to meet each other at school and that schools devote sufficient attention to democratic citizenship.

Good education for everyone: that is the goal which the Dutch Education Council is committed to helping achieve. For more than a hundred years the Council has been advising successive governments and parliaments, both on request and on its own initiative, on education policy and legislation. The Council's work culminates in evidence-based studies and advisory reports focused on offering solutions for the long term. They deal with all aspects of the education system, from pre-school provision right through to post-university education and lifelong learning and development.

The Council is an autonomous body, which is grounded in Dutch society and education. Its reports are fed by the knowledge and experience of those working in the field, and also draw on education policy and legislation, as well as being based on scientific knowledge and insights. The Youth Education Council (JongerenOnderwijsraad), made up of pupils and students across a range of ages and school types, supports the Council with experiences and ideas about Dutch education and a range of linked topics.

#### **Education Council members**

Professor E.H. (Edith) Hooge (Chair)  
Dr O. (Orhan) Agirdag  
Professor G.J.J. (Gert) Biesta  
Professor P.W.A. (Pieter) Huisman  
Dr A. (Esmah) Lahlah  
Dr D.J.M. (Dominique) Majoor  
D. (Daisy) Mertens MEd  
Dr C.J. (Cor) van Montfort  
Professor S.F. (Susan) te Pas  
Professor T. (Trudie) Schils  
L.Y.P. (Luc) Sluijsmans  
M.P. (Mirjam) van Leeuwen (General Secretary & Director)

#### **Ordering publications**

Dutch Education Council (Onderwijsraad)  
Prins Willem Alexanderhof 20  
2595 BE Den Haag  
The Netherlands  
secretariaat@onderwijsraad.nl  
+31 (0)70 310 0000

ISBN 978-94-6121-085-2  
Internal document no. BS.2300032

#### **Design**

thonik

#### **Photography**

Edwin Walvisch  
© Onderwijsraad, Den Haag

Published by the Dutch Education Council (Onderwijsraad), The Hague, Netherlands, September 2023