

EZ – אקטואליה

Teachers of no importance

By Haaretz Editorial

Teachers in Israel earn too little, work under conditions that are too difficult, and their standing in society and within the system in which they work is being constantly eroded. Compared with other countries, teachers in Israel are at the bottom of the wage scale, and compared with people holding academic degrees in the civil service, the average salary of teachers is the lowest.

A Haaretz study carried out in consultation with Professor Abraham Yogev and Ami Wilensky of the School of Education at Tel Aviv University, with assistance by Ph.D. student Idit Livneh, revealed a terrible situation. The situation is familiar to parents and children who require the services of the education system, and opinions on the subject have already been published, especially in the Dovrat Report that was presented to former education minister Limor Livnat.

Whether government investment per pupil in Israel is lower than the world's average, as some experts maintain, or whether it is higher, as others say, the bottom line is that the standing of teachers in Israel is very low. They are in 27th place among the 28 developed countries.

The comparative measure of teachers' status in different countries comprises many factors. It includes salary following 15 years of seniority, working conditions, classroom size, autonomy in selecting teaching content, sense of security at the workplace, ability to develop, the number of teaching hours, the percentage of young teachers in the school system, and their opportunities for advancement.

Contrary to general opinion, teachers in Israel teach more hours than their colleagues in other countries, and they are doing it under worse physical conditions. They work in uncomfortable settings, in loud and violent conditions that do not afford them the opportunity to give individual attention to those who need it. They have short breaks, no offices, and the faculty rooms are crowded. The teachers suffer from rapid burnout compared with other professions and compared with their colleagues in other countries who have better work environments.

The Education Ministry's budget currently stands at NIS 27 million per year, and apparently does not have the desired effect. Perhaps it is possible to make more efficient use of it.

Since the proposals of the Dovrat Committee were shelved, the teachers' standing continues to be eroded, and no overall reform is on the horizon. A society that allows itself to pay such low wages to its teachers and avoids implementing programs meant to improve the system apparently does not consider teachers an important national asset. The result, sadly, is reflected in the tables comparing the performance of pupils in Israel with those in other countries.

Whoever believes that without nurturing and advancing the teachers it is possible to begin to change the education system is making a terrible mistake. Teachers who lack standing guarantee pupils who are less good.

VOCABULARY

earn - להרוויח, להשתכר

standing - מעמד

constantly - באופן עקבי

eroded - להישחק

wage - שכר, משכורת

consultation - התייעצות

maintain - להמשיך, להתמיד, להחזיק בדעה

developed countries - המדינות המתפתחות

comparative - השוואתי

comprises - לכלול, להכיל

seniority - ותק

autonomy - עצמאות, אוטונומיה

content - תוכן

ability - יכולת

opportunity - הזדמנות

Contrary - בניגוד

colleague - עמית, קולגה

afford - לתת, לספק

individual - פרט, יחיד, אינדיבידואל

attention - תשומת לב

rapid - מהיר

burnout - שחיקה

budget - תקציב

NIS - New Israeli Shekel, ₪

efficient - יעיל

proposals - הצעות

shelved - לדחות לעתיד, לשים בצד

reform - תיקון, רפורמה

horizon - אופק

implementing - יישום, ביצוע

asset - נכס, בעל ערך

nurturing - טיפוח, גידול

guarantee - ערבות, אחריות