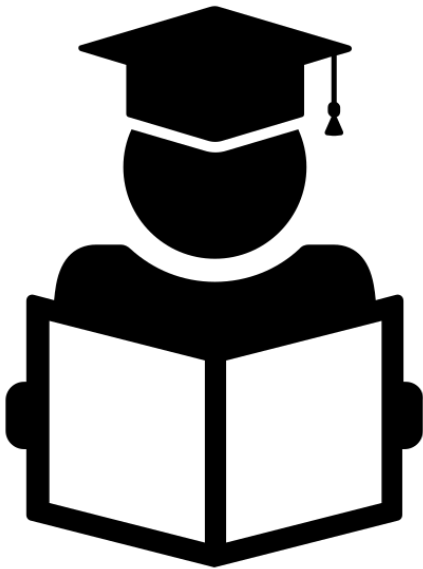


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Are provinces hiring the additional teachers that universities produce?

Poppie Ntaka (10 Nov 2022)



 **RESEP**
Research on Socio-Economic Policy

Teacher Demographic Dividend.

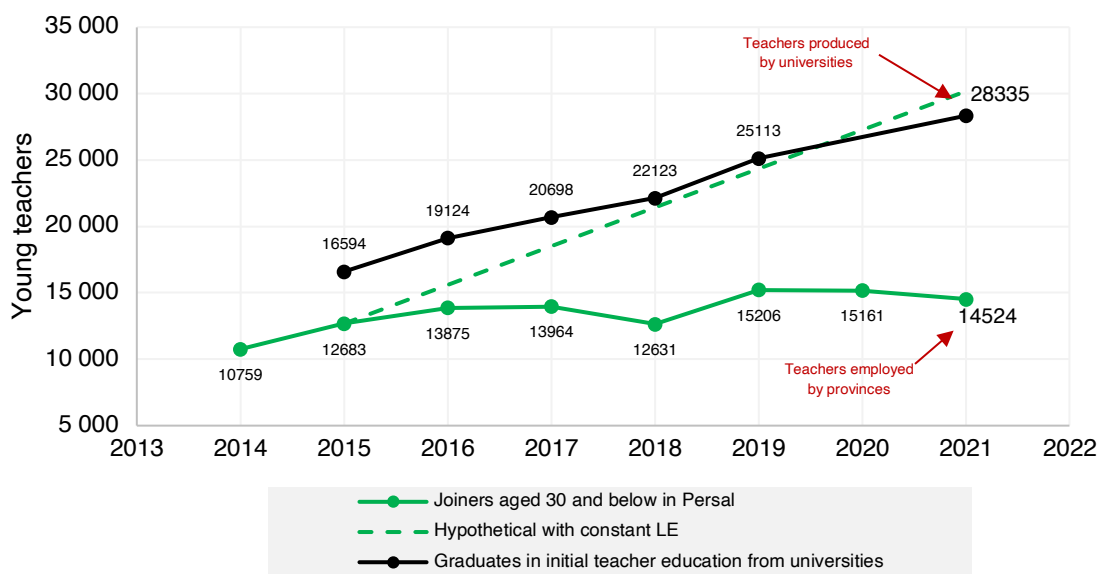
Overview. To adequately respond to the teacher shortages that will face South Africa’s schooling system in the next 10 years, there is a need to understand the capacity of universities to produce teachers (teacher supply) but also the extent to which provincial education departments (PEDs) actually employ new teacher graduates (teacher demand). This note briefly highlights the gap between teacher supply and teacher demand over the last nine years.

Since 2016 universities have increased teacher supply, but provinces have not increased hiring, leading to larger LE ratios over time. Universities have met the initial teacher education (ITE) graduate targets set by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which suggests that they have managed to respond to the pressures of training additional teachers. Figure 1 below shows both the number of ITE graduates produced by universities (from DHET reports), and the number of young joiners into public education (from Persal). It is clear that while teacher production has increased significantly, provinces have not increased the number of teachers they are hiring, with this gap growing over time. In 2021, only 14,524 teachers were hired by provinces, while 28,335 teachers graduated from universities, i.e. only half of graduating teachers were hired. Between 2015 and 2016 this was 75% (Gustafsson 2022, p.31,33).

LE ratios are rising because provinces are not hiring: In Figure 1 the dotted green line shows the number of joiners that would be required to maintain a constant LE ratio from 2015. The fact that actual hiring has fallen below this means that LE ratios are rising across the country. It is telling to note that universities have been producing the ‘correct’ number of graduates, while provinces have not been hiring (likely due to cost constraints).

Universities will need to produce even more teachers to keep up with the incoming retirement wave, although provinces need to hire teachers that are produced. The current graduate production levels (28,000 per year) will need to increase even further to avoid very large increases in class sizes due to large numbers of retiring teachers not being replaced. Yet provinces need to hire the teachers that universities are producing.

Figure 1: Graduates from initial teacher education compared to young Persal joiners



Sources: Figure 19 from Gustafsson (2022). For graduates, source is the DHET annual reports of 2019/20 and 2020/21. To illustrate, the DHET value for 2020/21 would be plotted as the 2021 value in the graph. For Persal joiners, the source is values behind the ‘simple approach’ in Figure 5 of Department of Basic Education (2022b).

Why are provinces not hiring more teachers?The Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 1 of 2018, which resulted in the notches of salaries of educators shifting from a 1% notch increase to a 1.5% notch increase [4], has made it difficult for provinces to hire more teachers, especially in a climate of fiscal austerity and freezes on the Cost of Living increases for public employees. This is because teacher salaries are growing at a faster rate than what is being allocated to the education budget [1], [3]. Furthermore, provinces are facing budget constraints and are likely to respond by freezing middle-management posts or leaving vacant posts unfilled as a cost-saving measure [1], [3], [5].

No-fee and rural schools will be affected the most by the growing gap between increasing teacher retirements and stagnant hiring. If provinces fail to hire more teachers as older teachers exit the system, learner-educator ratios are likely to rise above 2021's projected ratio of about 30 learners per teacher (Gustafsson 2022, p. 31), which means that teachers will be faced with large and growing class sizes, especially for those teaching at poor and remote or rural schools. Additionally, primary schools are more likely to be impacted than secondary schools since there are more older teachers in primary schools than high schools.

Endnotes

[1] Gustafsson, M. (2022). *Projections of educators by age and average cost to 2070*. TDD report. Stellenbosch.

[2] Department of Basic Education. (2022). *Interpreting the contents of the DBE's National Recruitment Database*. Unpublished report. Pretoria.

[3] Spaull, N., Lilenstein, A., & Carel, D. (2020). *The race between teacher wages and the budget: The case of South Africa*. Resep education working papers.

[4] Department of Public Service and Administration. (2018). PSCBC Resolution of 2018. Pretoria. Available online at <https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/pscabc/2018/Res1%20of%202018%20PSCBC.pdf>

[5] Wills, G. (2019). *School Leadership and Management: Identifying Linkages with Learning and Structural Inequalities*. In Spaull, N. & Jansen, J. (eds): *South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality*. Springer.

[6] Department of Basic Education (2022b). *Inflow of new teachers into the public system*. Pretoria. [Unpublished report]