

# Further reading: What is teacher workforce planning and why is it important?

One of the teaching service's main responsibilities is to ensure that every class and grade in every school throughout the country is sufficiently staffed by qualified teachers who can deliver the scheduled lessons according to the curriculum and expected standards. When this is not possible, due to teacher illness or another unexpected incident, the school leader must ensure a temporary replacement.

Therefore, the teaching service at national, district and school level must assess teacher demand for the coming school year and for the next five years to ensure:

- an adequate supply of teachers from teacher training colleges
- adequate budget allocation to schools and districts
- timely recruitment in time for the start of the school year.

Workforce planning is essential to avoid being taken by surprise by major increases or decreases in demand resulting from changes to policies or regulations, teacher-student ratios, demographics or the number of children of school age.

When **deploying teachers**, the teaching service must aim to ensure an even distribution of qualified teachers, subject teachers and young teachers between urban, rural and remote areas. They must also aim to improve gender balance within the teaching service.

Effective workforce planning ensures the teaching service is **rightsized** with the right people in the right place at the right time. Rightsizing ensures optimal cost-efficiency and effective use of the workforce, achieving the best possible result for the least cost. Inadequate planning and utilisation of the workforce is costly in the long run.

Workforce planning and forecasting requires cooperation across several educational institutions including: schools, district education and school authorities, TSC, MBSSE, MTHE, universities and teacher training colleges, and labour market institutions. The Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) is based on the school census is an important source for the forecast of teachers.

Sierra Leone has a high turn-over of teachers and a high attrition rate. Improved workforce

planning will enable the teaching service to plan systematically for attracting and retaining teachers for life-long or prolonged career.

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