

**RECOMMENDATION No. 42**  
**TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION**  
**concerning**  
**SCHOOL INSPECTION**  
(1956)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened in Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the International Bureau of Education, and having assembled on the ninth of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-six for its nineteenth session, adopts on the sixteenth of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-six the following Recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that the principles set forth in Recommendation No. 10 on School Inspection, adopted on the twentieth of July, nineteen hundred and thirty-seven by the VIth International Conference on Public Education, need to be reinforced, re-defined, and adapted to new situations,

Considering the success recently obtained through common endeavour to consolidate peace and to develop economic and cultural contacts among the different countries of the world,

Considering that inspection should contribute to the expansion of education designed to bring about the all-round education of children and youth, through their moral, intellectual and physical development in the service of their mother country, and to further democracy, peace and friendship among nations,

Considering that the increasing importance of education in national life requires education authorities and educationalists generally to do all

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in their power to improve the professional and administrative structure of education, so as to ensure the progress of the educational services and to increase their efficiency,

Considering that the complex, difficult and ever-changing role of the teacher requires inspectors to possess special knowledge and skill,

Considering that the constant improvement and change in curricula teaching materials and methods, and evaluation techniques, call for the unceasing professional growth of teachers — to which inspectors can greatly contribute,

Considering that the inspector, whatever designation he may bear, and whatever conception is entertained of the range and nature of his functions, is an important factor in the smooth and effective working of schools, and in the coordination of school work with the educational and other activities of the local community,

Considering that in almost all countries the inspector is regarded as teacher counsellor, that in the majority of those countries he is entitled to control both teachers' work and school administration, and that he is required to contribute towards improving teaching and education in the schools through appropriate intervention with teachers and with the higher educational authorities,

Considering that views about the inspection of higher education are far from unanimous, and that it is mainly the inspection of primary education and of general and vocational secondary education which appears to be generally thought necessary,

Considering that it is important to organize inspection at each level — central or federal, regional, local — but that it is above all the category of inspector in direct contact with teachers, who can best be made the object of a recommendation of more or less general applicability,

considering that countries sharing similar aims but with very different conditions, need to find varied solutions to the problem of school inspection,

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the several countries the following recommendation:

### **Objectives of inspection**

1) The fundamental aim of inspection should be to promote by every possible means the development and efficiency of educational establishments, and to ensure a two-way liaison between education authorities, and the school and local communities.

2) Inspection should be considered as a service to interpret to teachers and the public the educational policies of the authorities and modern educational ideas and methods, and also to interpret to the competent authorities the experiences, needs, and aspirations of teachers and local communities.

3) The inspector should contribute to ensuring for teachers the necessary means for executing their mission effectively and with dignity, through facilitating further training, precluding their intellectual isolation, and guaranteeing respect of their personalities and ideas, so as to encourage them to take the initiative as often as possible.

4) The inspector should make every endeavour to create among teachers, parents and in the community at large, an atmosphere of understanding, sympathy and esteem, such as is essential for the effective accomplishment of any kind of educational work and for the community's moral and material support of teachers' work.

### **Structure and organization of inspection**

5) Whatever system of school inspection and teacher counselling a country may have, that system should be in harmony with the country's administrative and educational structure,.

6) When, as in certain countries, school inspection and teacher counselling are shared by bodies situated at different levels of school administration, it is desirable that flexible coordination be established amongst the various categories of inspectors and among the various bodies.

7) In countries where the inspector is responsible both to his superiors and to local or regional public or education authorities, it is necessary to avoid any interference liable to make his work more difficult.

8) The control of the inspector's work by the bodies to whom he is responsible — his superiors or the education authorities at the various levels — should be informed by the same principles of understanding and cooperation as the inspector is himself expected to honour in his relations with teachers.

9) It is of advantage for the inspector to have his headquarters as near as possible to the educational establishments and communities he has to serve.

10) Whether inspectors have their headquarters in their own district or are grouped in a single centre, it is essential that mutual contact should enable them to harmonise their points of view, exchange ideas, and consider problems of common interest.

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11) Given the importance of the relationship between primary, secondary and vocational education, it is desirable for the inspectors of these three categories of education to meet together from time to time to discuss common problems.

12) The organization of inspection by subjects or groups of subjects fits naturally into general and vocational secondary education, provided the pupil's all-round development is safeguarded.

13) It is the general practice for inspectors of primary education not to be subject specialists; nevertheless, with subjects such as physical education, art, handicrafts and homecrafts, it may be of advantage to employ specialist inspectors, or ordinary inspectors accompanied by experts in the teaching of those subjects.

14) The increasingly specialised character of certain types of school, such as nursery-infant schools, schools for backward and handicapped children, and schools for adults, justifies the use of specialist inspectors and women inspectors for the inspection of such schools.

15) With a view to ensuring the coordination of education, independent and public schools should be inspected by one and the same body of official inspectors.

16) Although it is not possible to fix rules applying to all situations, it should be recognised that the number of schools and teachers under a single inspector must be made to depend on, among other things, the dispersion of the schools and on the available means of communication, and thus to permit as effective contacts with rural schools as with urban schools.

17) It is, moreover, impossible to fix the minimum number of visits the inspector should make during a given period, depending as this does on factors such as the needs of the schools, the experience of the teachers, and the various problems under consideration; nevertheless, excluding incidental visits, the inspector should be able to visit all the various educational establishments in his district, especially the one-teacher schools within the course of not more than a year; it is fully recognized that, in less well-developed systems, more frequent visits will be essential.

18) Without establishing strict norms for the duration of inspection visits, due note should be taken of the dangers of too hasty visits; it is through calm and human contacts that the inspector will best succeed in winning teachers' confidence and in giving them the help and advice they need.

19) Although the inspector is responsible for advising the schools his advice should be given only in close consultation with the headmaster;

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in certain cases it might be advisable to convene a conference of the whole staff or of groups within it.

### **Inspectors' duties and methods**

20) While the advantage of limiting the inspector's role to counselling and guidance cannot be denied, it should be noted that the majority of countries nevertheless continue to insist that he should retain other functions including those connected with administration and supply.

21) Wherever the inspector is considered as being both counsellor and administrator responsible for ensuring educational advance in his district — two duties difficult to separate — it is desirable that he should be relieved of the more routine official tasks that so often absorb a large part of his time.

22) The assistance which the inspector should have with secretarial work, is even more necessary wherever his duties extend to such matters as compulsory education, school building and equipment, appointments, transfers, promotions, and disciplinary measures in regard to teachers.

23) It is mainly in administrative tasks that the inspector incurs the risk of duplication of effort and even of conflict with other agents of school administration; every possible simplification and coordination of administrative procedure is therefore of advantage.

24) It should be remembered that, even in countries where the inspector has no administrative duties, he is expected to act, at regional and local level in particular, as the agent of the educational authorities, by proposing measures for the quantitative or qualitative development of education, by undertaking statistical and other studies of the various aspects of school life, and by taking an active part in committee work, etc.

25) As counsellor and leader the inspector can do a great deal for the pre-service and further training of teachers, through the organization of meetings both national and international, conferences, seminars, and vacation courses; when he participates in such services, effective liaison must be ensured between the inspector, the teacher training centres, and all the administrative bodies involved.

26) The inspector should supervise the application of official instructions, and when necessary explain to teachers how to apply them; the inspector should also transmit the desires, wishes and hopes of the teachers in his charge, to the higher authorities.

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27) Without his necessarily assuming direct responsibility, and provided a rationally arranged schedule gives him the necessary time, the inspector should encourage extra-scholastic activities, of both a social and an educational kind, such as school meals services, holiday camps, and parent-teacher meetings; he should assist the schools to enter into appropriate international contacts.

28) When during his visits, an inspector is led to make suggestions of an educational character, and perhaps to follow them up with a practical demonstration, he should take every care to respect the teacher's intellectual freedom and initiative.

29) It is desirable that the inspector should take account of educational suggestions made to him by teachers and teachers' associations.

30) Wherever the inspector is required to make any kind of direct assessment of the teacher's work, such assessment should be objective, and designed to guide and encourage the teacher, and should be made known to the teacher.

31) The right should be guaranteed to teachers to make appeal against inspectors' judgments which they deem to be unjustified.

### **Inspectors' appointment and status**

32) Whatever body may be responsible for appointing inspectors, and whatever system of selection may be adopted, every guarantee should be given to candidates and teachers to ensure that such appointment is objective and based only on personal worth, professional capacity, and merit.

33) Since the appointment of inspectors depends essentially on their professional qualities, care must be taken to avoid all discrimination based on race, sex, beliefs, philosophical or political opinions or the social origin of candidates.

34) In the appointment of inspectors, special consideration should be given to scholastic attainments and diplomas, knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, and educational experience, a certain minimum number of years of teaching service being deemed essential.

35) In addition to the academic and educational knowledge the prospective inspector may reasonably be required to possess, he should have certain specific qualifications: health, integrity, impartiality, an independent character, goodwill and kindness, initiative, and enthusiasm.

36) The professional training of inspectors has certain advantages; in addition to advanced pedagogical and psychological courses, such training should comprise a study of comparative education which familiarises inspectors with the educational problems of other countries, and their solutions.

37) Serving inspectors should be given every possible facility for further training (conferences and vacation courses, seminars, and, above all, scholarships for study and travel abroad), and should also enjoy courses in audio-visual aids, a special library covering literature on new educational experiments, ideas and viewpoints, and lectures by eminent educationalists on school supervision and inspection, new trends in educational theory, child psychology, etc.

38) Inspectors' salaries should correspond to the importance of the duties assigned to them, and should be equal to those of other officials doing administrative or social work of comparable importance; inspectors should enjoy the material and social advantages which are accorded to officials of the same grade.

39) It is important to ease as far as possible the travelling involved in inspectors' work; inspectors' travelling and subsistence allowances should be commensurate with the dignity and needs of the inspector's function.

40) With a view to encouraging inspectors in the performance of their duties, and enabling technical and administrative services to benefit from their experience, it is desirable wherever possible that inspectors should be eligible for promotion to higher posts both in their own hierarchy and in school administration.