

Position Statement on the Role of Teachers' Associations in Education Policy and Planning

Education plays a unique and specific role in advancing human society, and as teachers play an essential role in educational advancement, teaching should be regarded as an esteemed profession. Teachers contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of society, and thus it is essential that the teaching profession be granted a high status not only for the sake of the quality of education, but also for the progress of society as a whole.

Just as the teaching profession must be granted a high status, so should teachers' associations. Teachers' associations are among the most committed supporters of improvement in the quality of education. Teachers bring their professional knowledge and experience to any discussions of change in educational systems, and thus the collective voice and expertise of teachers and their professional associations is critical for any effective educational planning and policy making.

With the tremendous growth of English as the language of global communication, many countries are implementing English language education as a central component of their education systems. However, much of the educational planning and policy making is being carried out without the active participation of local English language educators. By neglecting to draw upon the expertise and experience of English language educators, authorities may be implementing ineffective language education policies.

TESOL strongly advocates that authorities at all levels recognize the right of teachers' association to exist, and that teachers' associations be accorded legal status. Since teachers' associations play an integral role in improving the expertise and status of their members, authorities should provide support in whatever way possible to strengthen their sustainability.

Furthermore, TESOL urges that authorities encourage the active participation of teachers and their associations in the process of transforming education, and in educational planning and policy making. Authorities and teacher associations should actively seek and agree on the most effective ways to establish regular methods of communication, consultation, and coordination with one another in all aspects of education planning and policy. Particularly in regard to English language education, authorities should draw upon the expertise of English language educators and their associations, such as TESOL affiliates, in developing and implementing sound language education planning and policy.

*Approved by the Board of Directors
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