

## Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students Pointers for policy development

### STEERING MIGRANT EDUCATION POLICY

- Recognise that immigrant students in many OECD countries are linguistically, culturally, economically and academically diverse and avoid a "one size fits all" migrant policy that may fail to meet the needs of individual immigrant students, especially those who are most at risk.
- Find the right balance between designing targeted measures for immigrant students and universal measures from which both native and immigrant students could benefit.
- Use a combination of tools to steer migrant education policy at national, regional and/or local level, depending on country-specific constitutional, political and institutional arrangements, including:
  - Setting explicit policy goals for immigrant students within the broader education policy goals
  - Setting regulations and legislation for the right to migrant-specific education
  - Designing effective funding strategies
  - Establishing standards, qualifications and qualifications framework for language teachers, bilingual teachers
  - Establishing curricula, guidelines and pedagogy for language and intercultural teaching
  - Building capacity of teachers, school leaders, and regional leaders
  - Raising awareness of rights and responsibilities of immigrant children and dissemination of good practice
  - Monitoring education outcomes of immigrant students and advancing research, evaluation and feedback.
- Foster a holistic approach and shared responsibility at all levels, including national governments – not only of the host country, but often of sending countries – local governments, schools (principals, language teachers, subject teachers, classroom teachers), parents and communities, and students themselves.

### SCHOOL LEVEL POLICIES TO IMPROVE MIGRANT EDUCATION

- Strengthen language support . Effective policy examples would include:
  - Provide early language stimulation and support parents to read at home for their children
  - Ensure consistent and continuous support at all levels of education
  - Focus on academic language learning and the integration of language and content learning
  - Value and validate mother tongue proficiency
- Ensure quality teaching and learning environments
  - Train all teachers for diversity – not only language teachers but also subject and classroom teachers
  - Prioritise formative assessment and personalised learning
  - Encourage sharing of good practice of school management and application of research findings in pedagogy
  - Strengthen school leadership and whole-school approach to accommodate diverse student needs
- Encourage parental and community involvement
  - Support parents for better knowledge about the education system of the host country
  - Remove language and cultural barriers for immigrant parents and get their voices heard
  - Find resources in local communities such as mentors, especially those with immigrant backgrounds
  - Support learning for after-school time and summer holidays to compensate the lack of family resources

## SYSTEM LEVEL POLICIES TO IMPROVE MIGRANT EDUCATION

- Better manage variations in quantity and quality of support across regions and schools and concentration of migrants in schools
  - Establish a legal and financial framework to ensure consistent support across different regions and schools
  - Identify what works and give incentives to promote knowledge sharing among regions and schools
  - Setting targets to reduce the gap between immigrant and native students
  - Concentrate efforts on improving quality in schools with high concentration of immigrant students
- Design an effective funding strategy
  - Concentrate funding on language support
  - Target particular groups/ areas/ schools, etc.
  - Target various disadvantaged students through weighted indicators
  - Evaluate use and cost effectiveness
- Effective monitoring and evaluation
  - Systematically evaluate and measure the effectiveness of policy interventions in migrant education
  - Centrally monitor quality and equity through school and teacher evaluation practices
  - Improve data quality and coverage to consolidate evidence on education outcomes for immigrant students
  - Train teachers to carry out effective monitoring and feedback-giving in classroom

## FURTHER READING

These general pointers for policy development are drawn from the OECD Reviews of Migrant Education, which covered policy examples from 22 countries. The findings of this review are presented in *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance*, published in April 2010. Policy reviews in 6 countries (Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden), background reports prepared by 12 countries and other documents of the review are also available on the OECD website [www.oecd.org/edu/migration](http://www.oecd.org/edu/migration).