

## WHY FOCUS ON SCHOOL RESOURCES?

Effective and equitable resource use is high on education policy agendas across the OECD. As school systems seek to enhance learning outcomes and reduce achievement gaps between different student groups, there has been greater focus on directing resources to those areas where improvements in teaching and learning can best be achieved.

A range of global developments have increased attention to efficiency and equity in school education. Fiscal pressures following the global financial crisis, demographic developments influencing the size and composition of student populations and increasingly complex school governance arrangements have all contributed to a renewed interest in optimising resource use in education.

## THE OECD CAN PROVIDE POLICY ADVICE ON SCHOOL RESOURCE USE

As resources are always limited, they need to be well spent to support educational objectives. In making resource decisions, policy makers and school professionals face competing demands from multiple actors and must make choices involving complex trade-offs. An optimal use of resources should achieve both efficiency and equity objectives together, by ensuring that resources are channelled to where they are most needed.

The *School Resources Review* provides analysis and policy advice on how to govern, distribute and manage resources so that they contribute to achieving countries' educational objectives to the fullest. It reviews policy evidence to help governments achieve effectiveness, efficiency and equity objectives in schooling. The overarching policy question for the Review is "What policies best ensure that school resources are effectively used to improve student outcomes?"

The Review seeks to make the most of the OECD's greatest strengths – providing a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, and identify and share good practices. It combines desk-based analysis offering a comparative international perspective with individual country reviews resulting in tailored advice to volunteer countries.

## A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING SCHOOL RESOURCES

The scope of the Review covers a broad range of interlinked resource types, including:

- **School funding** (e.g. expenditures on education, funding mechanisms, school budget);
- **School networks** (e.g. school size, location, facilities, sectors and programmes); and
- **School staff** (e.g. teachers, school leaders, education administrators).

Other resources, in particular **time** and **information and communication technologies (ICT)**, are considered in a second stage of the project in 2019-20.

The analysis is structured around three dimensions of policy:

- **Governance** (who makes decisions about resource use and how are they implemented?)
- **Distribution** (how to allocate resources across different priorities?)
- **Management** (how to plan, evaluate and follow up on resource use?)

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The Review combines desk-based analysis and country reviews. The work is organised in three overlapping phases:

### ANALYTICAL PHASE

The OECD team draws together different types of evidence – international indicators, country background reports (CBRs), academic research and policy papers – to understand the factors that shape resource use in school systems and develop a comparative perspective on resource policy issues.

### COUNTRY REVIEW PHASE

A team of reviewers (including OECD staff and external experts) analyses national data and undertakes intensive case study visits to volunteer countries consulting a wide range of stakeholders. The study visits feed into OECD country review reports providing tailored policy advice to individual countries.

### SYNTHESIS PHASE

A series of thematic comparative reports brings together analytical and country review evidence to provide an overview of common challenges and policy options for all countries.

## DELIVERABLES

The project produces a range of outputs designed to assist policy making in school education.

- **Thematic comparative reports** provide a stock-take of country policies and practices and offer options for policy development. Three thematic reports have been prepared with a focus on:
  - [Funding School Education](#) (2017)
  - [Developing Responsive School Systems](#) (2018)
  - [Rethinking Human Resource Policies for Schools](#) (2019)
- **Country Review Reports** investigate policies and practices in participating countries, highlight current strengths and challenges and propose tailored advice to improve resource use in specific national contexts. They are published as part of the series *OECD Reviews of School Resources*.
- **Country Background Reports (CBRs)** are prepared by national author teams based on a common framework provided by the OECD to facilitate comparative analysis and maximise opportunities for countries to learn from each other.
- **Literature Reviews** analyse international indicators and research findings on relevant issues and are published as OECD Education Working Papers.
- **Qualitative data collections** gather comparative information on the main features of countries' school resourcing frameworks as a basis for analysis in the thematic reports.
- **Annual meetings of the OECD's Group of National Experts (GNE) on School Resources** bring together delegates from all interested OECD and partner countries to review progress with the Review and share country experiences on the effective use of school resources.
- **Dissemination events** are organised in collaboration between the OECD and interested countries to share and discuss findings with national stakeholders.

## WHO TO CONTACT

For further information, contact the project leader, Deborah Nusche, [deborah.nusche@oecd.org](mailto:deborah.nusche@oecd.org), or visit [www.oecd.org/edu/school/schoolresourcesreview.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/schoolresourcesreview.htm).