

Making Teaching an Attractive Career Choice Pointers for policy development

IMPROVE THE IMAGE AND STATUS OF TEACHING

- Improve teachers' self-image of their work and their importance as role models for students.
- Build stronger links between schools and the community, e.g. with parents and employers, to enhance the status of teaching.
- Provide opportunities for tertiary students to visit schools and observe teachers' work.
- Enhance the image of teaching through general campaigns in the media.
- Ask teachers' own views about what needs to be emphasised, for example, teaching's social relevance, working with young people, creativity, autonomy, working with colleagues.
- Develop promotional programmes to allow career change both to, and from, teaching to reinforce the message that teaching need not be a lifetime career.
- Promote the benefits of teaching to under-represented groups, e.g. males and those from minority cultural backgrounds, by:
 - promoting positive teacher role models from these backgrounds
 - correcting misconceptions responsible for negative views of teaching
 - disseminating information about teaching to these groups

IMPROVE TEACHING'S SALARY COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

- Recognise that raising teachers' salaries across-the-board is very costly and target larger salary increases to key groups in short supply such as new teachers to maximise cost-effectiveness.
- Develop special programmes and incentives to attract subject specialist teachers, e.g. fee waivers, scholarships and forgivable loans to attract people into teaching and salary bonuses and recognition of work experience for qualified teachers in subjects of short supply.
- Provide flexible working conditions by increasing opportunities for part-time teaching as well as sabbatical leave, extended leave without pay and job exchanges with industry.

EXPAND THE SUPPLY POOL OF POTENTIAL TEACHERS

- Open teaching profession to individuals with relevant experience outside education by enabling suitably qualified candidates to start working and earning before completing teacher training qualifications.
- Promote mobility of teachers across educational levels by ensuring that different teacher education programmes have more elements in common and by providing more opportunities for retraining and upgrading teachers' skills.
- Maintain contact with former teachers by keeping them informed of educational developments and job opportunities and provide targeted retraining schemes.

MAKING REWARD MECHANISMS MORE FLEXIBLE

- Replace the system of single salary scales by more flexible salary scales which take into account teacher recruitment difficulties.
- Consider expanding incentives with substantial salary allowances for teaching in difficult areas, transportation help for teachers in remote areas or bonuses for teachers with skills in short supply.
- Reduce class contact times and class sizes for schools in difficult areas.

IMPROVE ENTRANCE CONDITIONS FOR NEW TEACHERS

- Provide well-structured and resourced induction programmes for new teachers.
- Ensure that selection processes give the available jobs to the best candidates.
- Reduce the weight given to seniority in ranking applicants for teaching vacancies to reduce the risk of new teachers being disproportionately assigned to difficult schools.

RETHINK TRADE-OFF BETWEEN STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO AND AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY

- Use further spending on schools either to reduce student-teacher ratios or to increase teachers' average salaries or a combination of the two depending on the situation of countries:
 - favour targeted class size reductions to younger students or those from disadvantaged backgrounds rather than across-the-board class-size reductions
 - in countries with teacher shortages, increase teachers' average salaries and employ more support staff in schools to enable teachers to focus more on their specialist expertise
 - in countries with an oversupply of teachers and both high student-teacher ratios and average teacher salaries, focus additional spending on employing more teachers to improve teaching and learning conditions in schools, rather than raising salaries

CAPITALISE ON AN OVERSUPPLY OF TEACHERS

- Be more selective about recruiting teachers by broadening teacher selection criteria and processes, e.g. interviews, aptitude tests, preparation of lesson plans and demonstration of teaching skills.
- Ensure that employment as a teacher depends on demonstrated need and individual competence and is not guaranteed to any graduate.
- Make initial teacher education programmes broader so that individuals obtain skills and qualifications that provide other employment opportunities.

FURTHER READING

These general pointers for policy development are drawn from the Thematic Review on Teacher Policy and the findings are presented in *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*, published in 2005. Country background reports prepared by 25 countries, country reviews of 10 countries and other documents are on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/teacherpolicy.