

# Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers

POINTERS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT





## Table of Contents

Teachers matter: Main concerns and common policy priorities .....	5
Why is teacher policy important? .....	7
Making teaching an attractive career choice .....	9
Developing teachers' knowledge and skills.....	11
Recruiting selecting and employing teachers.....	13
Retaining effective teachers in schools .....	15
About us: Education and Training Policy Division .....	17

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](http://www.oecd.org/edu/teacherpolicy).



## Teachers matter: Main concerns and common policy priorities

### MAIN CONCERNS

- Although the information is often patchy a broad picture of concerns across countries has emerged about:
  - “qualitative” shortfalls: whether enough teachers have the knowledge and skills to meet school needs
  - limited connections between teacher education, teachers’ professional development, and school needs
  - maintaining an adequate supply of good quality teachers, especially in high demand subject areas
  - the image and status of teaching -- teachers often feel that their work is undervalued
  - long term trends in the composition of the teaching workforce, *e.g.* fewer “high achievers” and males
  - sometimes high rates of teacher attrition, especially among new teachers
  - the impact of high workloads, stress and poor working environments on job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness
  - limited means in most countries to recognise and reward teachers’ work
  - in some countries, a large over-supply of qualified teachers, which raises its own policy challenges
  - inequitable distribution of teachers among schools, and whether students in disadvantaged areas have the quality teachers that they need
- Retaining effective teachers implies not only that all teachers have opportunities, support and incentives to continue to improve and perform at high levels, but also that ineffective teachers do not stay in the profession.
- School systems often respond to teacher shortages in the short term in ways that raise concerns about the quality of teaching and learning. They ensure that classrooms have teachers by some combination of:
  - lowering qualification requirements for entry to the profession
  - assigning teachers to teach in subject areas in which they are not fully qualified
  - increasing the number of classes that teachers are allocated
  - increasing class sizes

### POLICY ORIENTATIONS TO MEET KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Policies aimed at attracting and retaining effective teachers need to recruit competent people into the profession, and provide support and incentives for professional development and on-going high performance. Teachers may not reach their potential if settings do not provide appropriate support, challenge and reward.
- Policy initiatives need to improve status and labour market competitiveness, and to improve teacher development, and school work environments for the teaching profession as a whole. They also need to focus on attracting and retaining particular types of teachers, and attracting teachers to work in particular schools.
- Tackling one area without enough attention to inter-related aspects will lead to only partial results. But it is difficult to address all areas simultaneously, and resource constraints mean that trade-offs are inevitable.

### COMMON POLICY PRIORITIES

- Most teachers are employed in the public sector in either career-based or position-based systems.
  - In career-based systems, teachers enter when they are young and the entry criteria are usually demanding. Teachers are normally allocated to posts according to internal rules and promotion is based on a system of grades attached to the individual rather than to a specific position.

- Position-based public services select the best candidate for each position, by external recruitment or internal promotion. Entry from other careers is relatively common. Personnel selection and management is often decentralised to schools or local authority offices.
- Despite major differences between these public service traditions, they share some common policy priorities:
  - Emphasising teacher quality over teacher quantity
  - Developing teacher profiles to align teacher development, performance and school needs
  - Viewing teacher development as a continuum
  - Making teacher education more flexible
  - Transforming teaching into a knowledge-rich profession
  - Providing schools with more responsibility for teacher personnel management

## DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHER POLICY

- Teachers themselves need to be actively involved in policy development and implementation and feel a sense of “ownership” of reform -- otherwise it is unlikely that substantial changes will be successfully implemented.
- Teaching Councils provide teachers and other stakeholder groups with a forum for policy development and a mechanism for profession-led standard setting and quality assurance in teacher education, teacher induction, teacher performance and career development, combining professional autonomy and public accountability.
- Policy has a key role in helping teachers to develop professional learning communities within and beyond schools with teachers actively analysing their own practice in the light of professional standards, and their own students’ progress in the light of standards for student learning.

## Why is teacher policy important?

### QUALITY TEACHING IS VITAL FOR IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

- Student learning performance varies widely among students of a similar age. In some countries the difference between 15 year-old students in the top and bottom bands of reading performance is equivalent to the effect of several years of additional schooling.
- Student learning is influenced by many factors. Research on student learning shows that
  - The largest source of variation in student learning is attributable to differences in what students bring to school – their abilities and attitudes, and family and community background
  - Of those variables potentially open to policy influence, factors to do with teachers and teaching are the most important influences on student learning. In particular, the broad consensus is that “teacher quality” is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement
  - Many important aspects of teacher quality are not captured by the commonly used indicators such as qualifications, experience and tests of academic ability. Teacher characteristics that are harder to measure, but which can be vital to student learning include the ability to:
    - convey ideas in clear and convincing ways
    - create effective learning environments for different types of students
    - foster productive teacher-student relationships
    - be enthusiastic and creative
    - work effectively with colleagues and parents

### TEACHERS ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AND COSTLY RESOURCE IN SCHOOLS

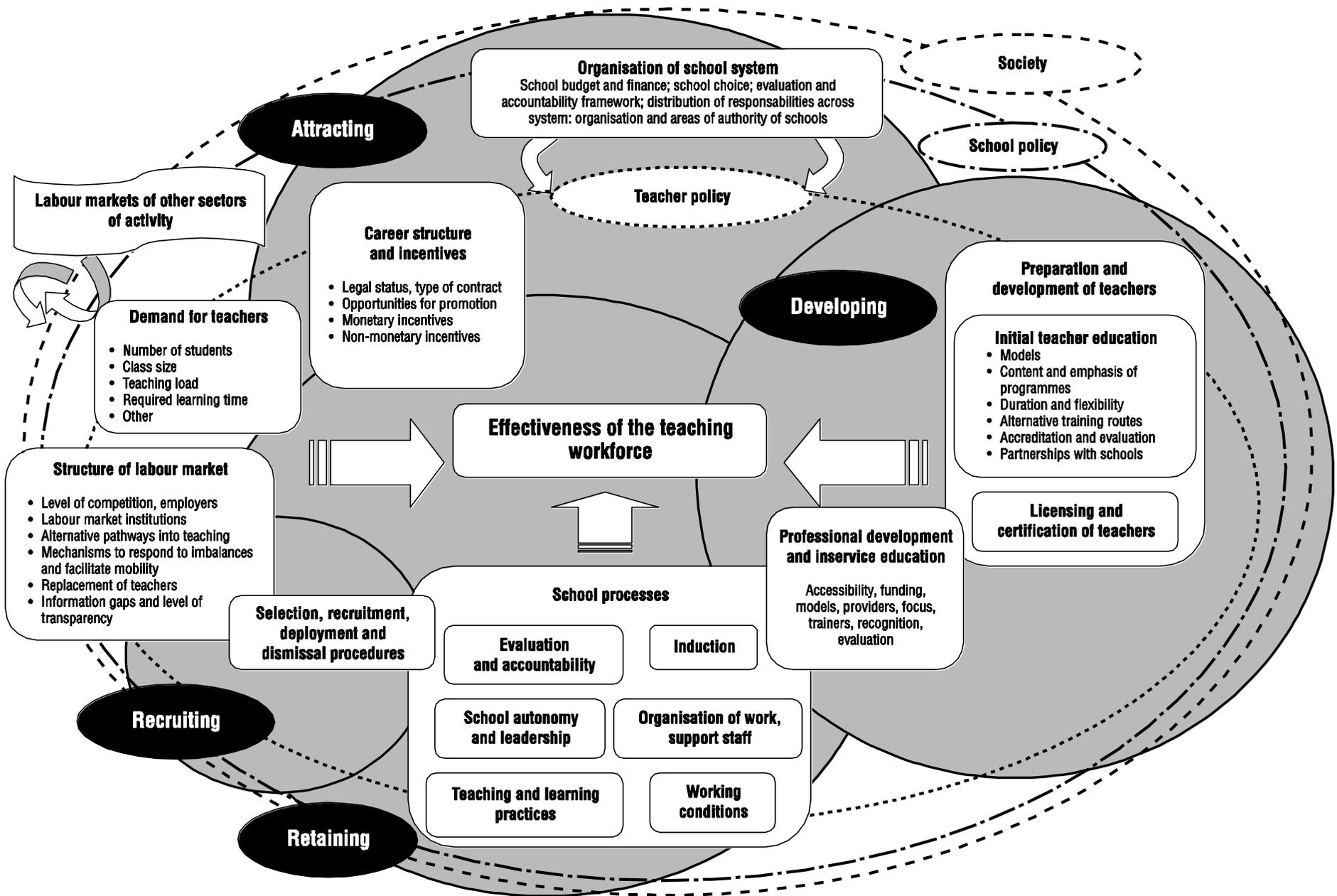
- As the most significant and costly resource in schools, teachers are central to school improvement efforts.
- Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling largely depends on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers, their teaching is of high quality and all students have access to high quality teaching.

### THE TEACHING WORKFORCE IS LARGE

- The size of the teaching workforce is considerable and teaching is the largest single employer of graduates. Teacher policies affect a lot of people, and can have substantial implications for school budgets as well as graduate employment in general, and employment in the public sector in particular.
- Many countries have an ageing teaching force and find it difficult to attract well qualified new entrants to teaching, or to retain them once they start, although some have relatively low rates of teacher turnover. There can be quality concerns even when teacher shortages are not readily apparent.

### TEACHER POLICY CONCERNS ARE INTENSIFYING

- Teachers are facing increased expectations about their roles as economies and societies evolve. If the teaching profession is to retain the confidence of society it must adapt and act in a constructive manner within a fast-changing society.
- The teaching profession needs to have the skills, knowledge and training needed to cope with the many changes and challenges which lie ahead.
- Teachers themselves have concerns about the future of their profession: whether it is sufficiently attractive to talented new teachers and whether they are sufficiently rewarded and supported in their work.





## Making teaching an attractive career choice

### 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.

## Developing teachers' knowledge and skills

### DEVELOP TEACHER PROFILES TO ANCHOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. Use these teacher profiles as a framework to guide initial teacher education, teacher certification, teachers' ongoing professional development and career advancement.
- Base the profile of teacher competencies on a clear statement of objectives for student learning.
- Ensure that the teacher profile encompasses strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, the capacity to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, contribution to the school and the wider profession and capacity to continue developing.
- Make the profile evidence-based and build on active involvement by the teaching profession in identifying teacher competencies and standards of performance.

### VIEW TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AS A CONTINUUM

- View teachers' development as a lifelong learning experience in order to cater for the rapid changes in schools, the potentially long careers of many teachers and the need for updating skills.
- Improve the interconnection of initial teacher education, induction and professional development to create a more coherent learning and development system for teachers.
- Consider using additional resources to improve induction and teacher development throughout the career rather than increasing the length of pre-service education.

### MAKE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION MORE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE

- Provide consecutive or post-graduate programmes of teacher education to give opportunities to train as a teacher after having completed studies in another field.
- Provide curriculum structures that enable people to enrol part-time or via distance education and to combine teacher education with work or family responsibilities.
- Increase the common components of teacher preparation for different types of school and levels of education to increase opportunities for working in different schools.
- Provide alternative routes into teaching for mid-career changers that combine formal study and on-the-job support with reduced teaching loads.
- Grant credits for qualifications and experience gained outside education to reduce course length and costs.
- Provide retraining and upgrading programmes that enable existing teachers to gain new qualifications to teach in other types of schools or take on high-demand subject areas.
- Develop close relationships with schools, teacher employers and the teaching profession.
- Focus research activities within the teacher education system on the issues facing schools and teachers.
- Provide feedback and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of teacher education.

### IMPROVE SELECTION INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

- Provide more information and counselling to prospective teacher trainees so that they make better informed enrolment decisions.

- Establish procedures to assess whether individuals wanting to become teachers have the necessary motivation, skills, knowledge, and personal qualities.
- Provide incentive schemes to recruit candidates with high-level competencies.
- Provide flexible programme structures that provide students with school experience early in the course.
- Offer opportunities to move into other courses if trainee teachers' motivation towards teaching changes.
- In countries facing teacher shortages, raise awareness of the attractiveness of teaching as a career choice and use selection criteria that ensure the best possible candidates enter teacher education.

#### CHANGE THE EMPHASIS IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

- Ensure that initial teacher education combines strong content knowledge with skills for reflective practice and research on the job.
- View initial teacher education as the entry point for the profession and the platform for teachers' development.
- Improve partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools in order to provide teacher trainees with a more integrated experience.
- Ensure that students' field experiences and academic studies reinforce and complement each other.
- Ensure that mentor teachers receive appropriate training and support, including time allowances.

#### ACCREDIT TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND CERTIFY NEW TEACHERS

- Consider accreditation by an independent agency to assure quality in teacher education.
- Ensure that accreditation criteria focus on the outcomes of programmes rather than on their inputs, curriculum and processes.
- Ensure that certification of teachers includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, communication skills, experience and personal qualities.
- Establish a mandatory probationary period of one to two years of teaching before full teaching certification or a permanent teaching post is awarded.

#### STRENGTHEN INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

- Ensure that mentor teachers in schools provide guidance and supervision to new teachers in close collaboration with the initial teacher education institution.
- Monitor carefully the resources dedicated to induction and mentoring programmes and the quality of mentor training.

#### INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE CAREER

- Encourage an approach to professional development encompassing all following three strategies:
  - entitlement-based, providing teachers with agreed levels of time release and/or financial support
  - incentive-based, recognising participation in professional development as a requirement for salary increases or taking on new roles
  - school-based, linking individual teacher development with school improvement needs
- Find ways for teachers to share their expertise and experience more systematically.

## Recruiting, selecting and employing teachers

### USE MORE FLEXIBLE TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Consider that tenured employment may limit incentives for teachers to continuously review their skills and improve their practice.
- Consider a requirement that teachers renew their teacher certificates every five to seven years to demonstrate that they are still meeting standards of performance.
- Ensure an open, fair and transparent system of teacher evaluation involving well-trained and resourced teaching peers, school leaders and external experts.
- Develop mechanisms to address ineffective teaching with the possibility to move teachers either into other roles or out of the school system.

### PROVIDE SCHOOLS WITH MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Grant greater responsibility and accountability to schools for teacher selection, working conditions and development.
- Encourage a more direct interaction with applicants for teaching posts through personal interviews and school visits to improve the match between the selected candidate and school needs.
- Ensure efficiency and equity when granting more responsibility to schools in teacher selection by:
  - developing school leaders' skills in personnel management
  - providing disadvantaged schools with greater resources with which to recruit effective teachers
  - improving availability of information in the teacher labour market
  - monitoring the outcomes of a more decentralised approach to recruiting
- Ensure that central and regional authorities achieve an adequate and equitable distribution of teacher resources throughout the country.
- Establish independent appeals procedures to ensure fairness and to protect teachers' rights.

### BROADEN CRITERIA FOR TEACHER SELECTION

- Include interviews, preparation of lesson plans and demonstration of teaching skills in selection processes for new teachers.
- Move away from seniority towards other characteristics such as enthusiasm, commitment and sensitivity to student needs when appointing candidates to teaching vacancies.
- Provide appropriate avenues into teaching for mid-career entrants.

### MAKE A PROBATIONARY PERIOD MANDATORY

- Require the completion of a probationary period of one to two years teaching before full certification or a permanent teaching post is awarded.
- Give new teachers every opportunity to work in a stable and well-supported school environment.
- Ensure that the decision about certification is taken by a well-trained and resourced panel.
- Acknowledge the completion of probation as a major step in the teaching career.

## MEET SHORT-TERM STAFFING NEEDS AND ENCOURAGE GREATER TEACHER MOBILITY

- Establish local/regional replacement pools to respond promptly to schools' short-term teacher needs to cover classroom absences due to illness or professional development.
- Ensure mutual recognition of teaching qualifications and the portability of entitlements to leave and retirement benefits in countries with different educational jurisdictions, e.g. federal systems.

## IMPROVE INFORMATION FLOWS AND MONITOR THE TEACHER LABOUR MARKET

- Develop transparent and prompt systems to close the information gaps between teachers and schools to ensure an effective functioning of the teacher labour market by:
  - requiring all teaching vacancies to be posted
  - creating websites where the information is centralised
  - establishing a network of agencies to co-ordinate and foster recruitment activities
- Use tools for monitoring and projecting teacher demand and supply under different scenarios.

## Retaining effective teachers in schools

### EVALUATE AND REWARD EFFECTIVE TEACHING

- Emphasise importance of teacher evaluation to enhance classroom practice, recognise teachers' work and help both teachers and schools to identify professional development opportunities.
- Include in teacher evaluation self-evaluation, informal peer evaluation, classroom observation and regular feedback by the principal and experienced peers.
- Make sure that teacher appraisal occurs within a framework of profession-wide agreed statements of teachers' responsibilities and standards of professional performance.
- Ensure that principals and other senior colleagues are trained in evaluation processes and schools have the resources to meet identified needs in teachers' professional development.
- Consider using teacher evaluation for rewarding teachers for exemplary performance with faster career progression, time allowances, sabbatical periods, opportunities for school-based research, support for post-graduate study or opportunities for in-service education.
- Ensure that measures used to assess teacher performance are broadly based to reflect school objectives and take account of the school and classroom contexts.
- Distinguish ongoing, informal evaluation – formative evaluation – for teacher improvement from summative evaluation for teacher promotion which should have a stronger external component.

### RESPOND TO INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS

- Develop stronger systems of initial teacher education, more rigorous approaches to selection and probation and regular formative teacher evaluation to prevent poor teachers from entering and remaining in the profession.
- Provide processes that both enable ineffective teachers to move either out of the school system or into non-teaching roles and ensure that this happens.
- Include authorities external to the school, including representatives of the teaching profession, when making decisions about ineffective teachers.

### PROVIDE MORE SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHERS

- Ensure that all new teachers participate in structured induction programmes that involve:
  - a reduced teaching load
  - trained mentor teachers in schools
  - close partnerships with teacher education institutions
- Ensure that new teachers are not concentrated in the more difficult locations.

### PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER VARIETY AND DIVERSIFICATION

- Develop a dual approach:
  - create new positions associated with specific tasks and roles in addition to classroom teaching
  - create a competency-based teaching career ladder associated with extra responsibilities

- Create roles such as mentor of new and trainee teachers, co-ordinator of in-service training and school project co-ordinator to recognise the greater range of tasks of schools and teachers.
- Consider a performance- and competency-based professional career ladder associating distinct teacher competencies and responsibilities to career stages as a part of a lifelong learning continuum.

### IMPROVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

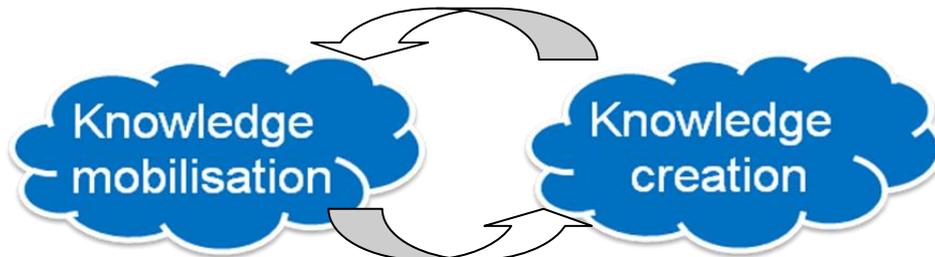
- Improve training, selection and evaluation processes for school leaders, and provide them with upgraded support services and more attractive compensation packages.
- Ensure the presence of a leadership team in each school to share the load and ensure effective delivery so the school principal focuses on educational leadership rather than administrative tasks.
- Advertise openly principals' positions on the basis of clear criteria including professional development activities, formal qualifications and leadership experience as a teacher.
- Select principals through a broadly-based panel including external experts.
- Ensure that principals undergo a formal evaluation before renewal of their appointment.

### IMPROVE WORK CONDITIONS

- Recognise the breadth and complexity of teachers' roles and responsibilities in job profiles.
- Use well-trained professional and administrative staff to help reduce the burden on teachers.
- Provide better facilities at schools for staff preparation and planning.
- Establish programmes that enable teachers to work part-time, take more leave opportunities or reduce their working hours without jeopardising their long-term employment and pension rights.
- Ensure that schools provide attractive environments for older teachers.
- Develop programmes aimed at retaining important skills in schools including professional development activities for older teachers, reduced classroom teaching and overall hours and new tasks including curriculum development, advising other schools and mentoring new teachers.

## About us: Education and Training Policy Division

### HOW EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY DIVISION WORKS



We work within the broader OECD setting where governments compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and coordinate domestic and international policies, while taking into account country-specific contexts. We also engage actively with stakeholders to draw their perspectives and insights into our work.

Our thematic reviews examine different policy topics that are chosen by countries through the Education Policy Committee. Thematic reviews are designed to:

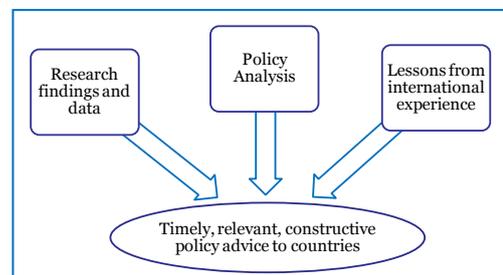
- provide general benefits to all countries *plus* additional benefits to countries making voluntary financial contributions
- offer timely and constructive policy advice that:
  - takes country context into account
  - takes into account implementation challenges

#### **Current thematic reviews**

- Encouraging quality in ECEC
- Assessment and Evaluation Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes
- Overcoming School Failure: Policies that Work
- Skills beyond School – Post-secondary Vocational Education and Training
- Transitions for Students with Disabilities beyond Secondary School

#### **Recent thematic review topics**

- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Teacher policy
- School leadership
- Vocational education
- Tertiary education
- Adult education and training
- Lifelong learning
- Career guidance
- Qualifications frameworks
- Recognising non-formal/informal learning
- Equity
- Migrant education



#### **Tailor-made projects**

- Tailor-made projects to address country-specific challenges and priorities are undertaken at the request of individual countries, and are carried out by mobilising our stock of knowledge and expertise.

## MAIN PRODUCTS AND CHANNELS FOR DISSEMINATING OUR WORK

- Publications and reports
  - Country background reports
  - Country Reviews
  - Analytical reports and working papers
  - Synthesis reports
- Pointers for Policy Development
- Conferences and presentations
- Visits to OECD (ministers, senior officials, parliamentary groups)
- Briefing for country visits by senior OECD officials
- Tailor-made reviews for individual countries
- Contribute to OECD's *Economic Surveys* and *Going for Growth*
- Contribute as experts to country work

## KNOWLEDGE WE CAN MOBILISE

- Tacit knowledge and subject experience acquired through thematic reviews, other projects and collaboration with other parts of OECD
- Expertise in policy analysis
- Expertise in working with stakeholders and building capacity
- International experience relevant to countries' challenges
- Networks:
  - Research community
  - Policy experts
  - Officials

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

General enquiries and knowledge mobilisation	<a href="mailto:Deborah.Roseveare@oecd.org">Deborah.Roseveare@oecd.org</a>
Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood">www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood</a> <a href="mailto:Miho.Taguma@oecd.org">Miho.Taguma@oecd.org</a>
Assessment and Evaluation Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy">www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy</a> <a href="mailto:Paulo.Santiago@oecd.org">Paulo.Santiago@oecd.org</a>
Overcoming School Failure: Policies that Work	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/edu/equity">www.oecd.org/edu/equity</a> <a href="mailto:Beatriz.Pont@oecd.org">Beatriz.Pont@oecd.org</a>
Skills Beyond School – Post-secondary VET	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/edu/learningforjobs">www.oecd.org/edu/learningforjobs</a> <a href="mailto:Simon.Field@oecd.org">Simon.Field@oecd.org</a>
Transitions for Students with Disabilities beyond Secondary School	<a href="mailto:Deborah.Roseveare@oecd.org">Deborah.Roseveare@oecd.org</a>