Synergies for Better Learning
An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment
Pointers for Policy Development

This summary of policy options is drawn from the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes, which covered school-level evaluation and assessment policies in 28 countries. The findings of this Review are presented in *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*. Country-specific reports and further documents from the Review are available at [www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy).

**THE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK: EMBRACING A HOLISTIC APPROACH**

**Governance**
- Integrate the evaluation and assessment framework
- Align the evaluation and assessment framework with educational goals and student learning objectives
- Secure links to the classroom and draw on teacher professionalism
- Give a prominent role to independent evaluation agencies
- Promote national consistency while giving room for local diversity
- Integrate the non-public sector in the overall evaluation and assessment framework

**Design and procedures**
- Ensure core components are sufficiently developed within the evaluation and assessment framework
- Establish articulations between components of the evaluation and assessment framework
- Place the students at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework
- Build on some key principles to effectively implement evaluation and assessment

**Capacity**
- Sustain efforts to improve capacity for evaluation and assessment
- Improve the articulation between levels of authority and assure support from the centre

**Use of results**
- Maintain sound knowledge management within the overall evaluation and assessment framework
- Commit to the use of evidence for policy development

**Implementation**
- Anticipate potential implementation difficulties
- Engage stakeholders and practitioners in the design and implementation of evaluation and assessment policies
- Communicate the rationale for reform
- Use pilots before full implementation and review implementation
- Ensure adequate capacity and sufficient resources

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT: PUTTING THE LEARNER AT THE CENTRE**

**Governance**
- Establish a coherent framework for student assessment
- Develop clear goals and learning progressions to guide student assessment
- Ensure a good balance between formative and summative assessment
- Establish safeguards against an overreliance on standardised assessments
- Share responsibilities for the governance and implementation of assessment frameworks
Procedures
- Draw on a variety of assessment types to obtain a rounded picture of student learning
- Support effective formative assessment processes
- Clarify and illustrate criteria to judge performance in relation to national goals
- Ensure the consistency of assessment and marking across schools
- Promote assessment formats that capture valued key competencies
- Build on innovative approaches developed in particular education sectors
- Tap into the potential of ICT to develop sophisticated assessment instruments
- Ensure that student assessment is inclusive and responsive to different learner needs

Capacity
- Put the learner at the centre and build students’ capacity to engage in their own assessment
- Maintain the centrality of teacher-based assessment and promote teacher professionalism
- Identify assessment priority areas for teacher initial education and professional development
- Use teacher appraisal and school evaluation processes to help teachers develop their assessment capacity

Reporting and use of results
- Develop clear reporting guidelines
- Engage parents in education through adequate reporting and communication
- Ensure transparency and fairness when using assessment results for high stakes decisions
- Promote the regular use of assessment results for improvement

TEACHER APPRAISAL: ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

Governance
- Clarify the purposes of teacher appraisal and ensure that it fits national education objectives
- Resolve tensions between the developmental and accountability functions of teacher appraisal
- Establish a coherent framework for teacher appraisal
- Establish a mandatory probationary period for new teachers
- Consolidate regular developmental appraisal at the school level
- Establish periodic career-progression appraisal involving external evaluators
- Create a teacher career structure with distinct pathways
- Address the challenges of implementation

Procedures
- Establish teaching standards to guide teacher appraisal and professional development
- Use multiple instruments and sources of evidence
- Provide support for effective classroom observations
- Establish safeguards against simplistic use of student results for teacher appraisal
- Ensure that student feedback to teachers is used for formative purposes

Capacity
- Prepare teachers for their role in appraisal processes
- Strengthen the capacity of school leaders for teacher appraisal
- Ensure that designated evaluators are qualified for their role
- Build central expertise to continuously improve teacher appraisal policies and practices
Use of results
- Ensure that teacher appraisal feeds into professional development and school development
- Establish feedback loops between teacher appraisal systems and initial teacher education
- Establish links between teacher appraisal and career advancement decisions
- Consider the use of non-monetary rewards as a complementary tool to recognise teachers
- Ensure that underperformance is identified and adequately addressed

SCHOOL EVALUATION: FROM COMPLIANCE TO QUALITY

Governance
- Clarify the role and purpose of school evaluation within the wider evaluation and assessment framework
- Ensure the focus for school evaluation is the improvement of teaching, learning and student outcomes
- Evaluate and adapt external school evaluation to reflect the maturity of the school evaluation culture
- Raise the profile of school self-evaluation
- Align external school evaluation with school self-evaluation

Procedures
- Develop nationally agreed criteria for school quality to guide school evaluation
- Develop appropriate resources for school self-evaluation
- Ensure a strong evidence base for external school evaluation and appropriate analysis tools
- Ensure transparency in external school evaluation procedures

Capacity
- Ensure the credibility of external evaluators and enhance their objectivity and coherence
- Ensure sufficient capacity and retraining as necessary to fit the approach to external school evaluation
- Strengthen school principals’ capacity to stimulate an effective school self-evaluation culture
- Promote the engagement of all school staff and students in school self-evaluation
- Promote peer learning among schools

Reporting and use of results
- Optimise the feedback of nationally collected data to schools for self-evaluation and development planning
- Promote the wider use of the results of external school evaluation
- Ensure the systematic follow-up of external school evaluations
- Report a broad set of school performance measures with adequate contextual information

THE APPRAISAL OF SCHOOL LEADERS: FOSTERING PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

Governance
- Promote the effective appraisal of school leaders within the broader assessment and evaluation framework while giving room for local diversity
- Clarify the purposes of school leader appraisal

Procedures
- Develop a common leadership framework or set of professional standards for school leaders
- Promote the appraisal of pedagogical leadership together with scope for local adaptation
- Promote the appraisal of school leaders’ competencies for monitoring, evaluation and assessment
- Consider school leaders’ efforts to distribute leadership and enhance teacher leadership within schools and assume leadership responsibilities beyond their school borders as an integral part of appraisal
- Promote the use of multiple instruments and sources of evidence
Capacity
- Build capacity for effective school leader appraisal
- Promote school leader appraisal as an opportunity for peer learning

Use of results
- Ensure school leader appraisal informs professional development
- Consider the development of a career structure and career advancement opportunities to reward successful school leaders

EDUCATION SYSTEM EVALUATION: INFORMING POLICIES FOR SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

Governance
- Ensure a broad concept of education system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework
- Ensure policy making is informed by high quality measures, but not driven by their availability
- Situate education system evaluation in the broader context of public sector performance requirements

Procedures
- Develop a national education indicator framework
- Design a national strategy to monitor student learning standards
- Ensure the collection of qualitative information on the education system
- Assure the monitoring of changes over time and progress of particular student cohorts
- Ensure collection of adequate contextual information to effectively monitor equity

Capacity
- Establish and secure capacity for education system evaluation
- Promote the development of evaluation capacity at the local authority level
- Ensure objectivity and credibility in education system evaluation activities

Reporting and use of results
- Strengthen analysis of education system evaluation results for planning and policy development
- Communicate key results of education system evaluation to stakeholders
- Support feedback for local monitoring

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