



Foreword

Teachers and school leaders are being challenged to transform educational outcomes, often under difficult conditions. They are being asked to equip students with the competencies they need to become active citizens and workers in the 21st century. They need to personalize learning experiences to ensure that every student has a chance to succeed and to deal with increasing cultural diversity in their classrooms and differences in learning styles. They also need to keep up with innovations in curricula, pedagogy and the development of digital resources.

The challenge is to equip all teachers, and not just some, for effective learning in the 21st century. This will require rethinking of many aspects, including: how to optimize the pool of individuals from which teacher candidates are drawn; recruiting systems and the ways in which staff are selected; the kind of initial education recruits obtain before they start teaching, how they are monitored and inducted into their service, and the continuing education and support they get; how their compensation is structured; and how the performance of struggling teachers is improved and the best performing teachers are given opportunities to acquire more status and responsibility.

Recognizing that addressing these challenges requires teachers not just to improve educational outcomes in classrooms, but to be at the centre of the improvement efforts themselves and to embrace and lead reform, the U.S. Department of Education, the OECD and Education International brought education ministers, union leaders and other teacher leaders together in the first International Summit on the Teaching Profession in March 2011 in order to explore effective policy responses.

This publication summarizes the evidence that underpinned the Summit and reflects on the lessons that have been learned. It looks at system features that shape successful teacher careers and work environments as well as at the processes that can make educational reform effective. While some issues around effective teacher policies continue to be discussed controversially, the Summit participants agreed that significant improvement is possible. Contrary to what is often assumed, a high-quality teaching force is not due simply to a traditional cultural respect for teachers but is a result of deliberate policy choices, carefully implemented over time. The many examples of reforms in this publication that have produced specific results, show promise or illustrate imaginative ways of implementing change, show how the challenges have been addressed.

The publication was drafted by Andreas Schleicher, in consultation with the Summit co-sponsors – the U.S. Department of Education, Education International, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Asia Society and the New York Public Television station WNET – based on the *OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* reports;¹ the *OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)*;² the OECD's comparative policy review *Teachers Matter*;³ the reports of the ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel; the OECD's annual data collection *Education at a Glance*; the OECD's report *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers*;⁴ the OECD's review of *Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes*;⁵ the OECD's study *Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers – International Practices*;⁶ the OECD's report *Making Reform Happen*;⁷ and the outcomes from the recent meeting of OECD Education Ministers in November 2010.

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