

Chapter 5

RECRUITING, SELECTING AND EMPLOYING TEACHERS

Summary

Teacher policy needs to ensure that the best available teachers are selected for employment, and that individual schools have the teachers they need. This chapter outlines concerns about recruiting, selecting and employing teachers and develops policy options for countries to consider.

Teachers are generally employed as public servants, and in a number of countries this is associated with tenured employment once permanency is obtained. There may not be sufficient incentives for all teachers to continuously review their skills and improve their practice, especially where there are only limited mechanisms for teacher evaluation and accountability. Policy options include the requirement that teachers renew their teacher certificates every five to seven years, built on an open, fair and transparent system of teacher evaluation.

The selection criteria for new teachers need to be broadened to ensure that the applicants with the greatest potential are identified. Some countries are reducing the weight accorded to seniority in determining which candidates are appointed to teaching vacancies, so as to avoid beginning teachers being assigned to the more difficult and unpopular schools. The evidence suggests that greater school involvement in teacher selection and personnel management helps to improve educational quality.

There is considerable evidence that some beginning teachers, no matter how well prepared and supported, struggle to perform well or find that the job does not meet their expectations. A formal probationary process can provide an opportunity for both new teachers and their employers to assess whether teaching is the right career for them.

In some countries the limited mobility of teachers between schools, and between teaching and other occupations, restricts the spread of new ideas and approaches, and results in teachers having few opportunities for diverse career experiences. The lack of mobility may mean that teacher shortages in some regions are paralleled by oversupply in others. Providing incentives for greater mobility and removing barriers are important policy responses.