Education and Training Policy



Teachers Matter

ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING AND RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



Teachers Matter

ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING AND RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



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Foreword

Many OECD countries face major difficulties in recruiting enough qualified teachers to replace the large numbers who will retire in the next 5-10 years. Most countries report concerns about teacher effectiveness, whether or not they are experiencing teacher shortages. Furthermore, teachers' roles are changing, and they need new skills to meet the needs of more diverse student populations, and to work effectively with new types of staff in schools and other organisations.

In April 2002, the OECD Education Committee launched an international review of teacher policy, to help countries share innovative and successful initiatives, and to identify policy options for attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. This publication is the major output from the work, which also generated 25 reports produced by participating countries, 10 reports by external review teams that visited countries, and several commissioned research studies. This OECD project provides probably the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of teacher policy issues at international level.

OECD work enables countries to learn from each other. It can also open up issues and suggest policy options that it may be difficult to raise in national debates. Both features are evident in this report and the work behind it. The extent of the active engagement of Member and Partner countries is also clear. The 25 participating countries committed very substantial resources over a two to three year period and took risks in opening up their teacher policies to external review and debate. The collaborative approach enabled countries to learn more about themselves while adding to the broader knowledge base by accumulating international evidence on the impact of policy reforms, and the circumstances under which they work best.

The project benefited substantially from the involvement of organisations representing teachers, school leaders, parents, students, teacher educators, and employers on national advisory committees, in preparing written submissions, in meeting review teams and taking part in conferences and workshops.

The project also benefited from the involvement of the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) and other international organisations also interested in teacher policy: the Council of Europe; the European Commission; the European Training Foundation; Eurydice; the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA); the International Labour Organisation (ILO); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES); UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP); and the World Bank.

Appendix 1 to this report details the many people and organisations who have contributed to the project as National Co-ordinators, authors of country background reports, authors of commissioned research papers, and members of country review teams. In all, more than 150 people contributed in one of these roles, and their work has had a

major influence on the project. In addition, the establishment of national advisory committees, the consultative processes used in preparing country background reports and during country review visits, and the large number of schools and tertiary institutions visited by review teams meant that the project benefited from inputs by many hundreds more. We hope that this report adequately reflects all their inputs and adds further to the collective knowledge base.

Within the OECD the project was carried out by the Directorate for Education's Education and Training Policy Division under the leadership of the Division's Head, Abrar Hasan. Phillip McKenzie and Paulo Santiago were responsible for the study and the preparation of this report. Anne Sliwka (University of Mannheim) as a consultant took the main responsibility for the area of teacher development (Chapter 4) in the report and Hirovuki Hase from the OECD Secretariat provided substantial input. Yael Duthilleul (IIEP), on secondment from the World Bank and as a consultant, contributed to the conceptual development of the project and took responsibility for two country review visits. Statistical assistance was provided by the late Catherine Duchêne from the Education Indicators and Analysis Division. Sabrina Leonarduzzi was responsible for all the administrative work, workshop organisation and communications with participating countries. John Coolahan (National University of Ireland, Maynooth) provided special advice at a key stage of the preparation of this report. Viviane Consoli and Melissa Peerless provided editorial assistance on this report. A wide range of other colleagues within the Directorate for Education provided advice at key stages. In particular, close collaboration was established with developmental work on indicators on teachers and teaching, and the work by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) on Schooling for Tomorrow and Formative Assessment: Improving Learning in Secondary Classrooms.

The OECD intends to maintain the momentum of its work on teachers and teaching and to build on the teacher policy project and this report.

This report is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD.

Barry McGaw

Director for Education

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OECD

May 2005

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Executive Summary

The Importance of Teacher Policy

Teacher policy is high on national agendas. The far-reaching economic and social changes underway have made high-quality schooling more important than ever before. The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. OECD Education Ministers have committed their countries to the goal of raising the quality of learning for all. This ambitious goal will not be achieved unless all students receive high-quality teaching.

All countries are seeking to improve their schools, and to respond better to higher social and economic expectations. As the most significant resource in schools, teachers are central to school improvement efforts. Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers, that their teaching is of high quality, and that all students have access to high quality teaching.

This report draws on the results of a major OECD project, Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers, that was conducted over the 2002-04 period. The project involved the preparation of Country Background Reports, visits to some countries by external review teams, data collections, commissioned research, and workshops. The fact that 25 countries took part indicates that teacher issues are a priority for public policy, and likely to become even more so in future years.

The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. Society now expects schools to deal effectively with different languages and student backgrounds, to be sensitive to culture and gender issues, to promote tolerance and social cohesion, to respond effectively to disadvantaged students and students with learning or behavioural problems, to use new technologies, and to keep pace with rapidly developing fields of knowledge and approaches to student assessment. Teachers need to be capable of preparing students for a society and an economy in which they will be expected to be self-directed learners, able and motivated to keep learning over a lifetime.

Teacher issues are also currently high on policy agendas because of concerns expressed by teachers themselves about the future of their profession - whether it is sufficiently attractive to talented new entrants, and whether teachers are sufficiently rewarded and supported in their work. As teachers are in daily contact with the students who potentially form the next generation of teachers, the enthusiasm and morale of the current teacher workforce are important influences on future teacher supply.

The current timing of the upsurge of interest in teacher policy issues is particularly important. The fact that the large numbers of teachers who were recruited during the great expansion period of the 1960s and 1970s are now close to retirement is both a major challenge and an unprecedented opportunity in most countries. Although large amounts of experience and skills need to be replaced as teachers retire, a number of countries now

have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape and benefit from substantial changes in the teacher workforce.

A much larger number of new teachers will enter the profession in the next 5-10 years than in the past 20 years. The entry of substantial numbers of new teachers with up-to-date skills and fresh ideas has the potential to substantially renew the schools. There is also the possibility to free up resources for development as a younger teacher workforce implies fewer budgetary pressures. On the other hand, if teaching is not perceived as an attractive profession, and teaching does not change in fundamental ways, there is a risk that the quality of schools will decline and a downward spiral will be difficult to reverse.

Main Concerns

Although the information is often patchy, there is a lack of long-term data, and not all countries are in the same position, a broad picture has emerged.

Concerns about the attractiveness of teaching as a career

- About half the countries report serious concerns about maintaining an adequate supply of good quality teachers, especially in high-demand subject areas.
- There are widespread concerns about long-term trends in the composition of the teaching workforce, *e.g.* fewer "high achievers" and fewer males.
- There are concerns about the image and status of teaching, and teachers often feel that their work is undervalued.
- Teachers' relative salaries are declining in most countries.

Concerns about developing teachers' knowledge and skills

- Almost all countries report concerns about "qualitative" shortfalls: whether enough teachers have the knowledge and skills to meet school needs.
- There are major concerns about the limited connections between teacher education, teachers' professional development, and school needs.
- Many countries lack systemic induction programmes for beginning teachers.

Concerns about recruiting, selecting and employing teachers

- There are concerns in most countries about the inequitable distribution of teachers among schools, and whether students in disadvantaged areas have the quality teachers that they need.
- Schools often have little direct involvement in teacher appointments.
- Some countries have a large oversupply of qualified teachers, which raises other policy challenges.

Concerns about retaining effective teachers in schools

- Some countries experience high rates of teacher attrition, especially among new teachers.
- Teachers express concerns about the effects of heavy workloads, stress and poor working environments on job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness.
- There are only limited means in most countries to recognise and reward teachers'
- Processes for responding to ineffective teaching are often cumbersome and slow.

The ageing of the teaching workforce is compounding many of the above concerns. On average, 25% of primary teachers and 30% of secondary teachers are over 50 years old, and in some countries more than 40% of the teachers are in this age group. Large numbers of retirements are likely in the next few years.

The analysis shows that teacher quantity and teacher quality issues are clearly interlinked. School systems often respond to teacher shortages in the short term 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; or increasing class sizes. Such responses, which ensure that classrooms are not left without a teacher and that a shortage is not readily evident, nevertheless raise concerns about the quality of teaching and learning.

At another level, countries that are not facing a shortage of qualified teachers may still face concerns about whether the quality of the teaching workforce is adequate particularly if selection processes do not result in the best applicants securing work as teachers.

Without strategic policy action there is a risk that the teaching profession could go into long-term decline. As societies have become wealthier and educational qualifications have increased and employment opportunities have expanded, teaching's appeal as a path to upward social mobility and job security does seem to have diminished. Widespread concerns about the difficulties faced by many schools, fuelled by often very negative media reporting, have damaged teaching's appeal. Expectations and demands on schools have been increasing, while in many countries resources have not always kept pace. Resource constraints are a factor in a number of the identified concerns.

But there are positive signs that policies can make a difference, as the examples provided in the report show. There are countries where teachers' social standing is high, and there are more qualified applicants than vacant posts. Even in countries where shortages have been a concern, there are recent signs of an upturn in interest in teaching, and policy initiatives appear to be having an effect.

Policy Implications at Two Levels

The quality of teaching is determined not just by the "quality" of the teachers although that is clearly critical – but also by the environment in which they work. Able teachers are not necessarily going to reach their potential in settings that do not provide appropriate support or sufficient challenge and reward. Policies aimed at attracting and retaining effective teachers need both to recruit competent people into the profession, and also to provide support and incentives for professional development and ongoing performance at high levels.

Policy initiatives are necessary at two levels. The first concerns the teaching profession as a whole and seeks to improve its status and labour market competitiveness, and to improve teacher development and school work environments. The second set of strategies is more targeted, and focuses on attracting and retaining particular types of teachers, and attracting teachers to work in particular schools. Table 1 summarises the main policy directions according to whether they apply to the teaching profession as a whole, or are more targeted to particular types of teachers or schools.

Table 1. **Policy Implications**

Policy objective	Directed towards the teaching profession as whole	Targeted to particular types of teachers or schools	
Making teaching an	Improving the image and status of teaching	Expanding the supply pool of potential teachers	
attractive career choice	Improving teaching's salary competitiveness		
	Improving employment conditions	Making reward mechanisms more flexible	
	Capitalising on an oversupply of teachers	Improving entrance conditions for new teachers	
		Rethinking the trade-off between the student-teacher ratio and average teacher salary	
Developing teachers'	Developing teacher profiles	Improving selection into teacher education	
knowledge and skills	Viewing teacher development as a continuum	Improving practical field experiences	
	Making teacher education more flexible and	Certifying new teachers	
	responsive	Strengthening induction programmes	
	Accrediting teacher education programmes		
	Integrating professional development throughout the career		
Recruiting, selecting and employing teachers	Using more flexible forms of employment	Broadening the criteria for teacher selection	
	Providing schools with more responsibility for teacher personnel management	Making a probationary period mandatory Encouraging greater teacher mobility	
	Meeting short-term staffing needs	Enoughing grounds touches modified	
	Improving information flows and the monitoring of the teacher labour market		
Retaining effective teachers in schools	Evaluating and rewarding effective teaching	Responding to ineffective teachers	
	Providing more opportunities for career variety and diversification	Providing more support for beginning teachers	
	Improving leadership and school climate	Providing more flexible working hours and	
	Improving working conditions	conditions	
Developing and implementing teacher policy	Engaging teachers in policy development and implementation		
	Developing professional learning communities		
	Improving the knowledge base to support teacher policy		

This is a challenging agenda, but tackling one area without appropriate policy attention to inter-related aspects will lead to only partial results. Nevertheless, it is difficult to address all areas simultaneously, and resource constraints mean that trade-offs are inevitable.

Implications for Different Types of Countries

Not all of the policy implications apply equally to all the 25 participating countries. In a number of cases many of the policy directions are already in place, while for other countries they may have less relevance because of different social, economic and educational structures and traditions.

Most teachers are employed in the public sector, but the basic models of public sector employment differ from country to country. There are two basic models that shape teacher employment, and which are evident in the participating countries: "career-based"; and "position-based". While no country provides a "pure" example of either model, the distinction is helpful in clarifying teacher employment features.

In career-based systems, teachers are generally expected to stay in the public service throughout their working life. Initial entry normally occurs at a young age, it is based on academic credentials and/or a civil service entry examination, and the entry criteria are usually demanding. Once recruited, teachers are normally allocated to posts according to internal rules. Promotion is based on a system of grades attached to the individual rather than to a specific position. Starting salaries are often relatively low, but there is a clear pathway to higher earnings, and pension schemes are usually relatively generous. France, Japan, Korea and Spain provide examples of countries with many of the characteristics of career-based public services. In the main, countries with career-based teaching services do not have major problems with teacher supply. Most have many more well-qualified applicants than available vacancies. Public sector employment in such countries tends to be quite different in character from private sector employment, and on a number of criteria (average salary, job security and pension benefits) is often judged to be superior.

The concerns in career-based systems tend to be more qualitative in nature, namely that teacher education is not well connected to school needs, the entry selection criteria do not always emphasise the competencies needed for effective teaching, teachers lack strong incentives to continue developing once tenure is obtained, and the strong emphasis on regulations limits the capacity and incentives for schools to respond to diverse local needs. There are also concerns that such systems lack appeal to those who are unsure whether they want to commit early to a lifetime teaching career, or who have gained experience in other careers. In response, therefore, the major policy priorities in such countries include forging stronger connections between teachers' initial education, selection and professional development, introducing more flexible employment positions, opening up possibilities for external recruitment, providing local education authorities and school principals with more scope for personnel decisions, and instituting management by objectives.

Position-based public services tend to focus on selecting the best-suited candidate for each position, whether by external recruitment or internal promotion. Such systems generally allow more open access at a wide range of ages, and entry from other careers is relatively common, as is movement from teaching to other jobs and later returns to teaching. Although initial salaries are often attractive, they generally plateau relatively early in the career. Teacher advancement depends on successfully competing for vacancies, and the number of higher-level vacancies is usually restricted. Personnel selection and management in such systems are often decentralised to schools or local authority offices. Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are examples of countries with many of the features of position-based public service employment.

A number of such systems face teacher recruitment problems, especially for teachers in areas like mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Although the conditions of public sector employment in such countries tend to be similar to private sector employment, the public sector often lacks the capacity and flexibility to compete on private sector terms. Such systems also often find it difficult to retain a core of experienced teachers beyond the 30 to 40-year-old age bracket. Schools in such countries therefore often have high staff turnover, especially in disadvantaged areas. Because position-based systems rely less on regulation than career-based systems in assigning staff to schools, they often have greater disparities among schools in terms of teacher qualifications and experience.

In response to such concerns, the policy priorities in countries with position-based teaching services include a greater emphasis on system-wide criteria for staff selection, performance evaluation, and building career pathways. Because local authorities play such a critical role in personnel management, and tailoring school programmes to meet local needs, such countries also need to place comparatively greater emphasis on the selection and training of principals and other school leaders. Because the processes of teacher selection and management tend to be more market-like in position-based systems, schools in disadvantaged or unpopular locations need to be provided with significantly more resources to enable them to compete for quality teachers, and there needs to be much more differentiation in salaries and working conditions in order to attract the types of teachers that are in short supply. Uniform salaries and conditions are likely to result in an oversupply of some types of teachers, and shortages of others.

Common Policy Directions

Despite the major differences between the career-based and position-based public service traditions, they share some common policy directions.

Emphasising teacher quality over teacher quantity

There is now substantial research indicating that the quality of teachers and their teaching are the most important factors in student outcomes that are open to policy influence. There is also substantial evidence that teachers vary markedly in their effectiveness. Differences in student performance are often greater within schools than between schools. Teaching is a demanding job, and it is not possible for everyone to be an effective practitioner and to sustain that over the long term. However, the general approach to teacher selection and employment has tended to regard teachers as largely interchangeable and to focus on the numbers of teachers rather than on the qualities that they have or could develop.

Key ingredients in a teacher quality agenda include more attention to the criteria for selection both into initial teacher education and teaching employment, ongoing evaluation throughout the teaching career to identify areas for improvement, recognising and rewarding effective teaching, and ensuring that teachers have the resources and support they need to meet high expectations. A strong conclusion from the project is that teachers are highly motivated by the intrinsic benefits of teaching – working with children and young people, helping them to develop, and making a contribution to society – and that system structures and school workplaces need to ensure that teachers are able to focus on these tasks.

In its most radical form, a greater emphasis on teacher quality could see teachers' work being redesigned to focus more on professional and knowledge-based components, with perhaps fewer teachers being employed, but with more other people being employed to do those parts of teachers' current work that do not require teachers' professional skills, and teachers being paid substantially more to attract and retain the best possible candidates.

Developing teacher profiles to align teacher development and performance with school needs

There is widespread recognition that countries need to have clear and concise statements of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do, and these teacher profiles need to be embedded throughout the school and teacher education systems. The profile of teacher competencies needs to derive from the objectives for student learning, and provide profession-wide standards and a shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching.

The teacher profiles need to encompass strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, the capacity to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, to contribute to the school and the profession, and the capacity to continue developing. The profile could express different levels of performance appropriate to beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and those with higher responsibilities. A clear, well structured and widely supported teacher profile can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the elements involved in developing teachers' knowledge and skills, and for providing a means of assessing whether teacher development programmes are making a difference.

Viewing teacher development as a continuum

The stages of initial teacher education, induction and professional development need to be much better interconnected to create a more coherent learning and development system for teachers. A statement of teacher competencies and performance standards at different stages of their career will provide a framework for the teacher development continuum. As part of this there needs to be a clear set of expectations about teachers' own responsibilities for their ongoing development, and a structure of support to facilitate their growth.

A lifelong learning perspective for teachers implies that in most countries much more attention will need to be focused on supporting teachers in the early stages of their career, and in providing the incentives and resources for ongoing professional development. In general, there could be better value from improving induction and teacher development throughout teachers' careers rather than increasing the length of pre-service education.

Making teacher education more flexible

In a number of countries people need to make decisions about becoming a teacher early in tertiary education. This can lock them into a specific career path despite the possibility that their interests may change, and they may eventually find themselves teaching only after completing a programme of study that has prepared them for little else. Such structures can also deny opportunities to enter teaching to other tertiary students later in their studies, or to mid-career people in other occupations who decide they would find greater satisfaction as teachers.

A more flexible system of teacher education would provide more routes into the profession, including: post-graduate study following an initial qualification in a subject matter field; opportunities for those who started in schools as paraprofessionals or teachers' aides to gain full qualifications that build on their experience in schools; and possibilities for mid-career changers to combine reduced teaching loads and concurrent participation in teacher preparation programmes. The system should involve close linkages with schools, including providing more direct support to beginning teachers early in their career. Such changes, which are already being introduced in a number of countries, help to concentrate teacher education resources on the people who will put them to best use.

Transforming teaching into a knowledge-rich profession

One of the main challenges for policy makers facing the demands of a knowledge society is how to sustain teacher quality and ensure all teachers continue to engage in effective ongoing professional learning. Research on the characteristics of effective professional development indicates that teachers need to be active agents in analysing their own practice in the light of professional standards, and their own students' progress in the light of standards for student learning. Teaching remains largely unchanged as other forms of work have been dramatically transformed. Many other professionals commence their working lives with a sense that they are entering a role that has been shaped by past research and that will be transformed during their working lives by future research. That is an excitement that teaching has not yet offered. There are signs of change in some countries, with teachers developing a research role alongside their teaching role; with teachers engaging more actively with new knowledge; and with professional development focused on the evidence base for improved practice.

Providing schools with more responsibility for teacher personnel management

Successful enterprises often say that personnel selection is the most important set of decisions that they make. In the case of teaching, the evidence suggests that all too often the selection process follows rules about qualifications and seniority that bear little relationship to the qualities needed to be an effective teacher. The sheer size of school systems in many countries means that the process of teacher selection is often highly impersonal and it is hard for teachers to build a sense of commitment to the schools where they are appointed – or for the schools to build a sense of commitment to them.

The school is emerging as the key agency within the education system for improving student learning, which implies that schools need to have more responsibility – and accountability – for teacher selection, working conditions, and development. However, to exercise these responsibilities effectively, it is clear that many schools will need more skilled leadership teams and stronger support. In particular, schools serving disadvantaged communities, which often face major difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled teachers, will need substantially more resources to make working in such schools a viable career choice. The successful decentralisation of personnel management requires that central and regional authorities play a strong role in ensuring an adequate and equitable distribution of teacher resources throughout the country. Externally determined performance standards are also necessary to ensure that greater school involvement in personnel management does not worsen inequalities among public schools.

Developing and Implementing Teacher Policy

The issues raised in the report go to the heart of teachers' work and careers, and the success of any reform requires that teachers themselves are actively involved in policy development and implementation. Unless teachers are actively involved in policy formulation, and feel a sense of "ownership" of reform, it is unlikely that substantial changes will be successfully implemented. On the other hand, stakeholder groups should not be able to exercise a veto over education reforms that are mandated through democratic political processes. To do so would be to risk losing the public support on which education so critically depends. It is difficult to find the right balance, but open and ongoing systematic dialogue and consultation are fundamental to the process.

There are also institutional arrangements that can make a difference. Several countries have developed Teaching Councils that provide teachers and other stakeholder groups with both a forum for policy development and, critically, a mechanism for profession-led standard setting and quality assurance in teacher education, teacher induction, teacher performance and career development. Such organisations seek to obtain for teaching the combination of professional autonomy and public accountability that has long characterised other professions such as medicine, engineering and law. This would involve teachers having greater say in the criteria for entry to their profession, the standards for career advancement, and the basis on which ineffective teachers should leave the profession.

The need to more actively engage the teaching profession extends beyond reasons of politics and pragmatism. One of the main challenges for policy makers facing the demands of a knowledge society is how to sustain teacher quality and ensure all teachers continue to engage in effective modes of ongoing professional learning. Policy has a key role to play in helping teachers to develop professional learning communities within and beyond schools.

In many countries there are extensive research gaps concerning teachers, their preparation, work and careers. Such research is important not only for improving the knowledge base for teacher policy, but also as a way of introducing new information and ideas to schools and ensuring that teachers engage more actively with new knowledge. There is a particular lack of research which compares teachers' working conditions and careers with those in other professions. Much of the data and research used in teacher policy formulation is largely self-referential, and comparative information on other careers would help provide a perspective on trends and findings in regard to teachers – as well as ideas for change.

Policy formulation would also benefit from more extensive monitoring and evaluation of innovation and reform. Countries are finding that they can capitalise more on the diversity within their systems by testing policy reforms on a pilot basis, with volunteer schools and regions, before widespread implementation. Identifying the factors involved in successful innovations, and creating in other schools the conditions for their dissemination, mainstreaming and sustainability, are central to an effective implementation strategy.

Education and Training Policy Teachers Matter

ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING AND RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Good teachers are the backbone of any education system. That's why governments are constantly seeking teacher policies that will help them recruit and retain the best.

Most countries are concerned with an ageing teaching workforce and attracting new recruits, coupled with the demands of more diverse student populations, higher expectations and new responsibilities. To be effective, teacher policy must address these issues.

Teachers Matter provides a comprehensive, international analysis of:

- trends and developments in the teacher workforce in 25 countries around the world:
- research on attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers;
- innovative and successful policies and practices that countries have implemented; and
- teacher policy options for countries to consider.

While documenting many areas of concern about teachers and teaching, the report also provides positive examples of where policies are making a difference. It spotlights countries where teachers' social standing is high, and where there are more qualified applicants than vacant posts. Even in countries where shortages have been a concern, there are recent signs of increased interest in teaching, and policy initiatives appear to be taking effect.

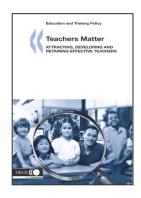
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