

PART III
Chapter 12

Education policy country snapshots

This chapter presents snapshots of education policies in OECD countries. Designed for policy makers, analysts and practitioners who seek information and analysis of education policy taking into account the importance of national context, these country snapshots offer an overview of education policy in a comparative format, presenting context, key issues and goals, and recent policies and reforms for each OECD country. These snapshots are based on the analytical framework developed for the Education Policy Outlook, which draws on the OECD knowledge base on education policies in member countries. The framework organises quantitative and qualitative knowledge on education policy in terms of: a) raising student achievement for all (through equity and quality and preparing students for the future); b) enhancing the quality of institutions (through school improvement and better evaluation and assessment policies); and c) steering education systems (through governance and funding).

The reforms presented were generally introduced between 2008 and 2014. The information is drawn mainly from country responses to an Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey, Education Policy Outlook Country Profiles and OECD comparative and country-specific analysis and statistics on education systems.

* The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

AUSTRALIA

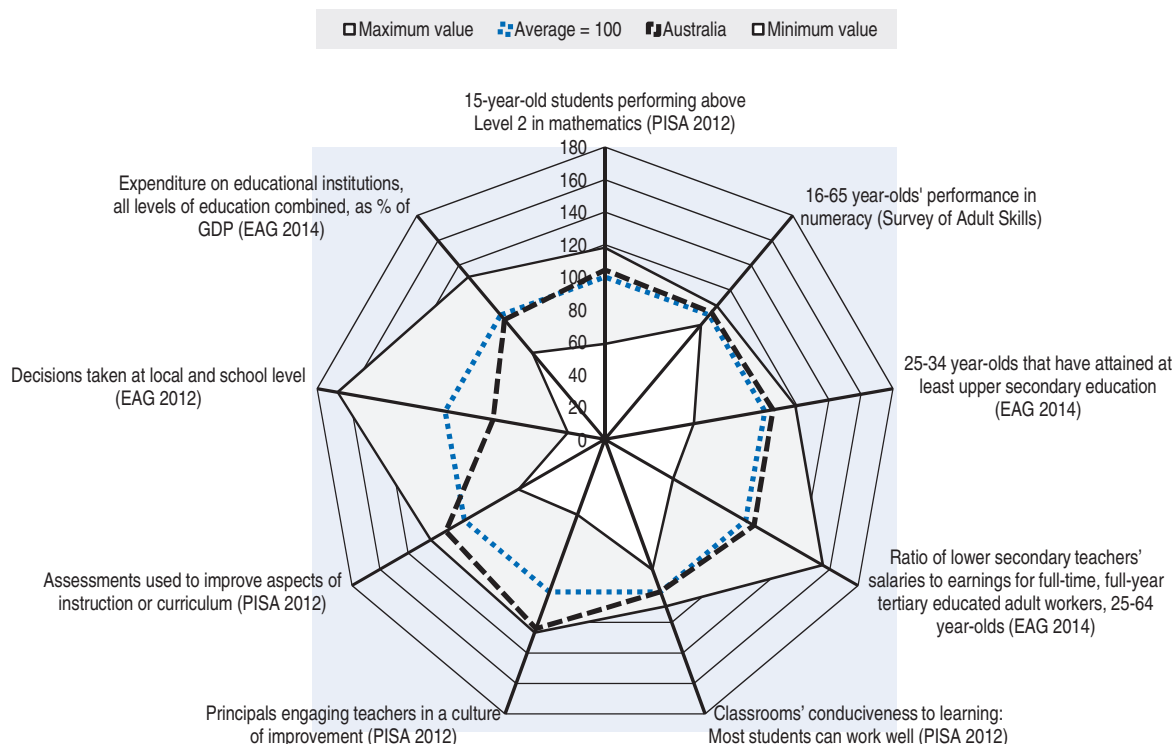
Context

Students: Australia performs above the OECD average in PISA 2012, with decreasing performance in mathematics and reading and unchanged performance in science across PISA cycles. Australia has fewer underperforming students than the OECD average, and the impact of students' socio-economic background on performance is below average. However, rural as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations have lower academic performance and less access to tertiary education than the national average. A high proportion of children are enrolled in early childhood education, and school is comprehensive until age 16. School choice is widely available compared to the OECD area. Secondary and tertiary pathways aim to prepare students for social integration and entry into the labour market. Attainment rates in upper secondary education are at the OECD average. The enrolment rate in upper secondary vocational education and training is above the OECD average, as is the attainment rate in tertiary education. Compared to their peers in other OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, proficiency in literacy among 16-65 year-old Australians is above average. Proficiency in numeracy in this survey is at average, with 16-24 year-olds performing somewhat higher. Unemployment rates in Australia are below the OECD average.

Institutions: Australia's schools have positive learning environments, with autonomy over curriculum and assessment above the OECD average and autonomy over resource allocation (such as hiring and dismissing teachers and budget allocation) at around the OECD average. Teachers at lower secondary level are required to undergo a four-year pre-service training, including a mandatory teacher practicum. Instruction time for students and teachers' teaching time in primary and secondary education are among the highest across OECD countries. At primary and secondary levels, teachers' salaries are also above the OECD average, and class size is around the OECD average. A higher proportion of teachers in Australia than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Moreover, the evaluation and assessment framework is well conceived and can help generate improvements in the classroom with clearer information for schools on areas to improve.


System: Australia works in a shared national education system in agreement with states. The education system is steered nationally through agreements with states and territories, focused on education priorities and funding. Schools and states share most decision-making in lower secondary education, with schools making most decisions regarding the organisation of instruction. School funding has lacked transparency and coherence, and outcomes of numerous studies have shown the difficulty in determining how individual schools are funded. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is below the OECD average, with a higher share from private sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.1. Selected indicators compared with the average: Australia



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Australia Snapshot was produced combining information from *Education Policy Outlook: Australia*, (OECD, 2013) with OECD data and the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey (2013). More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: Australia's high education performance can be complemented with further focus on reducing inequities by tackling system-level policies hindering equity in education. Other important issues are strengthening incentives for attaining skills demanded by the labour market and increasing access to education and performance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Institutions: Providing continued support for professional development of teachers and school leaders and clearer evaluation and assessment on how schools can improve are among key issues in Australia.

System: Another issue needing attention is increasing the clarity of policies and funding within the decentralised education system.

Selected policy responses

- To strengthen performance and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Australia has made investments in early childhood education and care, with a *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (2009), and has defined completion objectives for VET and ways to strengthen apprenticeships to develop the skills of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Through its schools' policy, *Students First* (2014), the Australian Government targets the following four key policy areas: 1) developing a sound national curriculum; 2) improving the quality of teaching; 3) expanding principals' autonomy; and 4) engaging parents and the wider community in how their school is run.
- The *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership* (AITSL) (2010) aims to promote excellence in teaching and school leadership. The AITSL develops nationally agreed policies and provides resources to support educators to become expert practitioners and drive excellence in teaching and school leadership.
- Australia is also implementing several policies aiming at improving the quality of teaching at different points during a teaching career. It introduced a national approach to the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programmes (2013) to ensure the quality of programmes across the country. Recent policy direction seeks to build on this with the establishment of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (2014) to look at ways to better prepare new teachers. The *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (2013) aims to promote improvement throughout teaching careers. Additionally, the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2013) provide guidance for the quality of teaching across three domains (Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement) and four career stages (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead).
- Through the *National Agreement for Skills and Workplace Development* (NASWD, 2009) and the *National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform* (NP, 2012), the objective is to improve access to training and participation in the labour market. Under the NP, all jurisdictions are required to implement key reforms so that at any age, an unqualified working Australian is able to access a training place subsidised by the government in order to pass at least the first Certificate III qualification. All jurisdictions are also required to support the expansion of the Commonwealth's income-contingent loan policy that helps reduce tuition costs. The Australian Government provides funding to state and territory training systems through funding associated with these agreements.
- In tertiary education, Australia has introduced the Upholding Quality – Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching measure (2014). Additionally, to promote internationalisation at the tertiary level and increase collaboration in the region, Australia is piloting the *New Colombo Plan* (2013), which provides funding for Australian students to study or intern in the Indo-Pacific region.

Spotlight: Providing appropriate resources to all schools

Starting in 2014, in accordance with the Australian Education Act 2013, the Australian Government is delivering recurrent funding to all Australian schools on a needs basis to ensure that schools are appropriately funded to deliver quality education for all their students, regardless of background. Recurrent funding for government and non-government schools is determined on the same basis, with reference to a Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). For non-government schools, their base funding is discounted based on the capacity of the school community to contribute towards the cost of operating their school. In addition, all schools are entitled to specific loadings (additional funds) that address identified student and school needs. These loadings are targeted at students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with limited English skills and students with a disability, as well as at small schools and schools in regional and remote areas.

The new Australian Government recurrent funding model was developed following the independent Review of Funding for Schooling (Final Report, December, 2011) commissioned by Australian Government in 2010. The review made a number of recommendations, including implementing needs-based funding that is independent of sectorial difference and targeting resources to support the most disadvantaged students.

The detailed policy profile is available at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-17-en>

AUSTRIA

Context

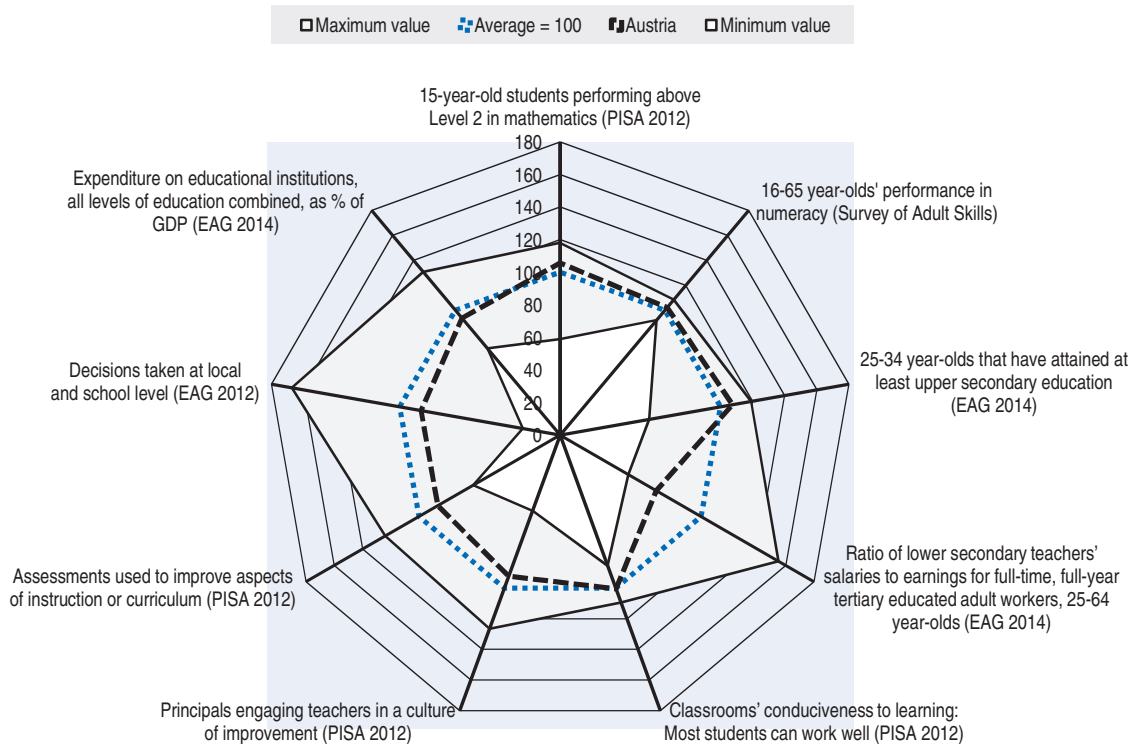
Students: Austria performs above the OECD average in mathematics in PISA 2012, with performance in reading below the OECD average, performance in science around the OECD average and unchanged performance across PISA cycles. The impact of students' socio-economic background in Austria is similar to the OECD average. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 3 with an enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds above the OECD average. Student tracking starts at age 10 (one of the earliest tracking ages among OECD countries) and may hamper equity if not managed appropriately. At the same time, Austria has above average upper secondary attainment and a well-established vocational education and training (VET) system with one of the highest enrolment rates among OECD countries. Entry, attainment and graduation rates in tertiary education remain below the OECD average. Average proficiency in literacy among 16-65 year-olds is lower than in other OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, and proficiency in numeracy is above average. Unemployment rates are comparatively low.

Institutions: Autonomy over curriculum and assessment of schools in Austria is below the OECD average, and they have one of the lowest levels of autonomy in allocating resources. To teach at lower secondary level, teachers are required to have a tertiary qualification in education of three years including a mandatory teaching practicum. Austria has one of the highest proportions of teachers above the age of 50 in OECD countries. Teaching conditions include below-average class size and below-average teaching time in primary and secondary education. School leaders are required to have a specific teaching qualification depending on the school type they apply for, as well as school leadership training and experience in teaching. They carry out both administrative and pedagogical activities, and there is also a long tradition of school inspection which looks at quality of teaching and implementation of administrative tasks.

System: The central government is responsible for governance of the education system. The Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs has overall legislative and implementation responsibility for primary and secondary education and school-based VET at upper secondary level, while the *Länder* are partially responsible for implementation of compulsory education policies. At pre-primary level, the responsibility lies in the *Länder*. The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy is responsible for the higher education sector including Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), with the exception of University Colleges of Teacher Education, which fall within the remit of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs. All higher education institutions have to undergo obligatory external quality assurance on a regular basis, and this task is performed by a single agency established to this end. Decision-making in lower secondary education is shared among the central government, the *Länder*, local governments and


schools. Expenditure on educational institutions as percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) is below the OECD average, with a higher share from public sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.2. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Austria**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Austria Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey (2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: Austria reported the need to increase the participation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in pre-primary education and to reduce the achievement gap between students from disadvantaged or immigrant backgrounds and their peers. Other issues reported by Austria include decreasing early dropout rates and improving the transition to higher levels of education (e.g. from VET to tertiary education). Austria also considers it important to widen access to universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) by providing additional study places.

Institutions: Improving teacher training, assessing the education system and school performance, and giving concrete feedback are of interest for Austria to improve the quality of learning in general and VET schools. Austria also reported the need to make final

school leaving examinations/university entrance certificates (*Matura*) more comparable between schools, and it is currently implementing centralised exams.

System: The central government considers that the multi-level decision-making process can cause inefficiencies in school management. Investments in higher education and research are seen as a possible path to reduce dropout and improve teaching quality and research.

Selected policy responses

- In 2010, Austria introduced a *free compulsory year of pre-primary* education with language learning support and a nation-wide curriculum. Austria also extended the *whole-day schooling offers*, providing students with afternoon care outside of teaching time (2013).
- By 2018/19, Austria will have implemented the complete roll-out of New Secondary Schools (*Neue Mittelschule, NMS, 2008*) to raise the age of early tracking. This new comprehensive school system has already been implemented in many schools. It will replace general secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), including through the application of the curriculum of the more prestigious academic secondary schools (*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule*) and more innovative teaching and learning methods.
- The *National Strategy against Early School Leaving* (2012) includes second chance education and a mentoring programme for low performers. Austria is also implementing the recently introduced apprenticeship and upper secondary certificate (*Lehre mit Reifeprüfung*).
- Austria designed the school quality for general schools (*Schulqualität in der Allgemeinbildung, SQA*) and VET schools (*Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung, QIBB*) to improve the quality of teaching and leadership. Substantial reforms of teacher training (*LehrerInnenausbildung NEU*) were also adopted in 2013.
- The Mapping Process for the Austrian Higher Education System (2011) was implemented through four projects: development of physical infrastructure (building development plan), large scale-research infrastructure, university funding and a co-ordination platform (the Austrian Higher Education Conference). Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Science and Research increased the study places at *Universities of Applied Sciences* to meet the needs of technical and business professions. At the end of this phase of expansion (2012/13 to 2014/15), approximately 4 000 additional places will be available at universities of applied sciences. National statistical reports have shown an increase in the overall student body from 16 782 in 2011/12 to 17 956 in 2012/13.
- Austria launched a reform of university funding to increase the number of degrees and decrease dropout. The university structural funds (*University Structural Funds Ordinance, 2012*) were implemented in 2012/13, and the capacity-based discipline-specific university funding will be implemented in the course of the decade, depending on budget allocation.

Spotlight: Developing and assessing national education standards

In 2012, educational standards for mathematics, German and English in Grades 4 and 8 have been defined, to be periodically assessed in nationwide tests. The aim is to ensure that all pupils achieve sufficient levels of basic competence in these subjects and to give feedback to schools to develop quality teaching. Schools are expected to use their results to elaborate a development plan followed up by annual meetings between school leaders and regional authorities (*Bilanz- und Zielvereinbarungsgespräch*).

The first cycle of testing the standards started in 2012. A report on the first full testing cycle is to be published in 2017, to be followed by implementation of a second cycle. The national testing of educational standards complements Austria's participation in international large scale assessments and aims to enable a data-based school development process.

BELGIUM

Context (National)

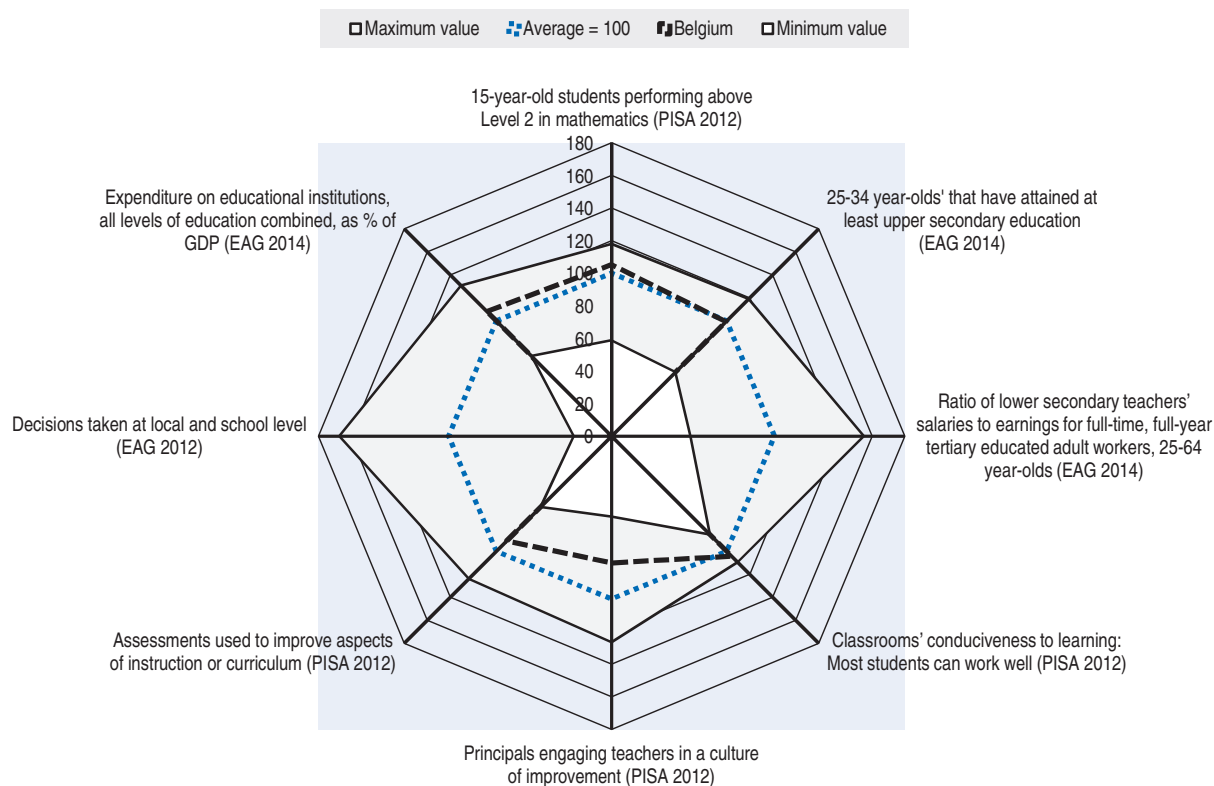
Students: Belgium performs above the OECD average in PISA 2012 in mathematics and reading and is an average performer in science (with some variations in the performance between its different communities). The country's performance in mathematics decreased, while performance in reading and science remained unchanged across PISA cycles. Socio-economic background had an above-average impact on students' performance in PISA 2012, even if Belgium has some positive equity indicators, such as an earlier starting age for early childhood education and care (ECEC) of 2.5 and the highest enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds in ECEC among OECD countries. Free pre-primary education is offered between ages 2.5 and 6. Education is compulsory in Belgium from ages 6 to 18. Student selection mechanisms such as school choice, grade repetition and early tracking (at age 12) may hamper equity if not managed carefully. Attainment at upper secondary education level is similar to the OECD average, and the number of students enrolled in different vocational education and training (VET) programmes, which have close ties with social partners, is above the OECD average. Attainment in tertiary education is also higher than the OECD average, and unemployment rates in Belgium are below the OECD average for all education levels.

Institutions: In Belgium, schools report a degree of autonomy over curriculum which is slightly below the OECD average. Teachers from pre-primary to lower secondary education undergo on average three years of teacher training, including a mandatory teaching practicum. In upper secondary education, a master's degree in addition to the teacher training certificate is the typical qualification requirement for most teachers in secondary general, technical and art education. More 15-year-old students in Belgium than the OECD average consider their classrooms as conducive to learning, although teacher-student relations seem comparatively less positive and school leaders seem to perform fewer instructional tasks. Teachers' working conditions in primary and secondary education include teaching time below the OECD average and above-average salaries.

System: Belgium has three autonomous education systems, which are administrated by the three linguistic Communities (Flemish Community, French Community and German-speaking Communities), and the role of the federal government is limited. The federal level is responsible for pensions of the educational staff, determining the starting and finishing ages of compulsory education and the minimum diploma requirements. Schools are organised into three networks: community education, subsidised public and subsidised private (as they are run by a private entity). The proportion of decisions taken at school and state level in lower secondary education varies widely between the French and Flemish communities and also depends on the network and share of private financing (with greater autonomy in private networks). On average, most decisions in lower secondary education are taken at the state level in the French community, while most


decisions are taken at the school level in the Flemish community. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher funding share from public sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.3. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Belgium**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Belgium Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: The Flemish community reported that special attention is needed for students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups, students who do not speak the language of schooling at home, and students who drop out before completing secondary education. Flanders (Flemish community) is also considering limiting early tracking of students in secondary education. Beyond school, Flanders envisages improving quality assurance mechanisms in higher education and making adult education more responsive to labour market needs. The French Community aims in particular to reduce grade repetition, personalise students' academic trajectory to increase quality and equity; and upgrade the secondary VET programme to facilitate students' transitions into further

education. To increase equity, both the Flemish and French communities see integrating Special Education Needs (SEN) students into mainstream education as a priority.

Institutions: Improving teacher training opportunities is seen as an issue in Belgium. Flanders highlights providing better teacher career development opportunities, while the French community highlights improving school leadership.

System: Both communities report an aim to rationalise the higher education system to increase efficiency and coherence. To this end, Flanders aims to use new modes of public-private investment to enhance capacities in response to demographic evolution. The French community envisages improving general co-ordination of activities. Other important funding issues in the French community include increasing student spots in schools to face demographic challenges and improving complementary funding distribution between institutions.

Selected policy responses

Flemish community:

- An *Agreement between the Flemish Government and the Social Partners on Professional Careers* (2012) aims to facilitate the transition from education to the labour market and increase employability.
- A *national qualifications' structure* introduced a short-cycle tertiary education level (2009) to promote access to tertiary education and to better meet labour market needs.
- A parliamentary act to improve quality in tertiary education (2012) introduced institutional assessments to complement the current programme accreditation mechanism.
- A public-private funding partnership (2011) set up for a *participatory Design Build Finance Maintain (DBFM) company (Participatieve DBFM-vennootschap)* aims to improve school infrastructure and build 211 schools.
- A *parliamentary act on the financing of primary and secondary education* (2008) aims to allocate available resources according to the socio-economic background of students in the schools, rather than according to the educational network to which a school belongs. The act also provides for an evaluation of the new financing system to be carried out after a few years.

French community:

- A differentiated management system (*Decree of 30 April 2009*) provides additional resources to students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to increase equity in school achievement. Moreover, complete or *partial integration of SEN students* in the regular school system has been implemented.
- The *decree that defines the status of school leaders and their engagement letters* (2007) was implemented. The decree also sets up an initial training for school leaders complemented with a first hands-on experience.
- A new organisation of VET in upper secondary education (*Certification Par Unités*, 2010) reorganises the curriculum by units of study and mixes general knowledge with professional skills.
- Starting in the 2014 school year, compulsory and upper secondary schools have about 13 750 new spots for students, funded by EUR 55 million of direct investment.

- The *Landscape Decree (Décret Paysage, 2014)* defining the higher education system and academic organisation of schooling (Article 79) aims to enable an individualised school trajectory for students from all types of higher education institutions. The decree also sets up the Higher Education and Research Academy (*l'Académie de Recherche et d'enseignement supérieur, ARES*), to serve as a platform for co-ordination and dialogue.

Spotlight: Preventing school dropout

Belgium is working to reduce student dropout through different policies. Flemish Belgium created an *Action Plan on Early School Leaving (2013)* to reduce school dropout in secondary education by 2020, which combines preventive actions, policy co-ordination and alternatives for students who have already dropped out. In French Belgium, the *Take-off project (Projet décolâge, 2012)* develops pedagogical tools for remediation instead of grade repetition.

CANADA

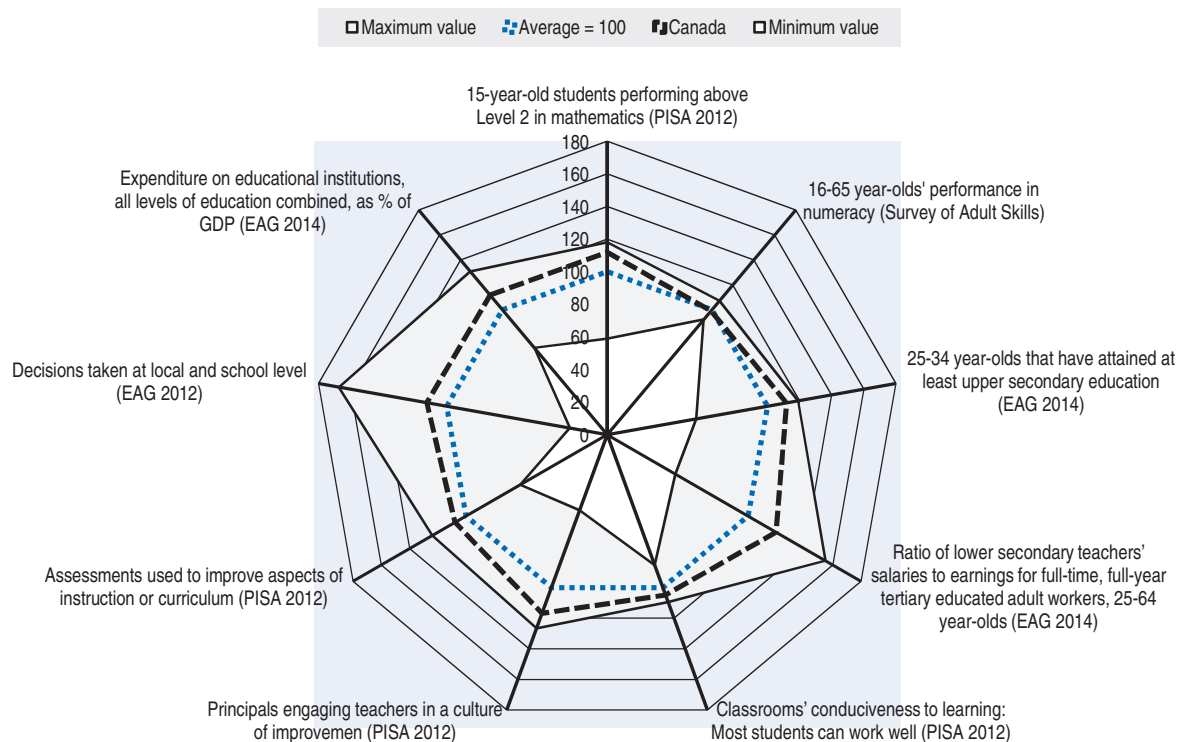
Context

Students: Canada continues to be among the top performers in PISA 2012, although performance in mathematics, reading and science has decreased across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic status on mathematics performance is lower than the OECD average, with performance of students from an immigrant background similar to that of their peers. Canada has fair and inclusive policies that can contribute to high levels of equity. All provinces and territories provide pre-primary education for 5-year-olds. School is compulsory until age 16 or 18, depending on the province or territory, and grade repetition is below the OECD average. Attainment in upper secondary education is above the OECD average. Due to the structure of education systems in most Canadian provinces and territories, the proportion of students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes at upper secondary level is among the smallest in the OECD. However, attainment in Canada is higher in technical tertiary education, and is the highest in tertiary education among OECD countries. Adults (16-65 years-old) performed at the average in literacy and below the average in numeracy compared to the other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills. Unemployment is below the OECD average.

Institutions: Canada has positive learning environments compared to the OECD average. Schools have less autonomy than the OECD average in both resource allocation and responsibility for curriculum and assessment. Teachers have at least a bachelor's degree and one year of pre-service teacher training, which includes teaching practicums. Teachers have heavier teaching workloads than in other OECD countries, with more teaching time at both primary and secondary levels. Evaluation and assessment arrangements are a key component of every provincial and territorial education system and a key area for collaboration through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).


System: Education is decentralised in Canada. In each of the 13 jurisdictions, one or two ministries or departments of education are responsible for organisation, delivery and assessment of its education system. In several provinces, elementary/secondary education and post-secondary education are the responsibility of separate ministries or departments. Decision-making is entrusted to school boards or districts and the level of responsibility delegated is at the discretion of the provincial/territorial government. In general, almost half of decisions are taken at the local level in lower secondary education. Canada's ministers of education and advanced education collaborate on pan-Canadian educational priorities under the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC). Canada's expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher share from private sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.4. Selected indicators compared with the average: Canada



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Canada Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: Improving the performance of minority-language and Aboriginal students can contribute to better equity and quality of education in Canada. Also, it would be important to strengthen the apprenticeship system through measures such as increasing the attractiveness and completion rates of apprenticeships and skilled trades' programmes among youth, as well as the participation of employers.

Institutions: Canada also faces the dual challenge of achieving a well-sized and prepared teacher population where it is most needed, and of providing support and guidance to schools.

System: Continuing to set priorities will be important while also continuing to practice variety within a decentralised system, as well as improving access and efficiency of funding to tertiary education.

Selected policy responses

- Nova Scotia's *SchoolsPlus* programme (2008) is an inter-agency approach to support the child and family, with the school as the centre of service delivery. The aim is to provide students and their caregivers with help more quickly, through easy referral to specialists and community services (e.g. crisis intervention, youth mental health services, after-school programming, parent and family support, sexual health and child care).
- New Brunswick launched the *Labour Force and Skills Development Strategy* (2013) to strengthen student pathways, support learning and skills development and attract and retain skilled individuals to participate in the New Brunswick labour market. In part, the strategy aims to align kindergarten to grade 12 and post-secondary education with labour-market needs so that students can gain the knowledge and skills needed for an easier transition into the workforce.
- Quebec introduced the *I Care About School!* strategy (*L'École, j'y tiens !*, 2009) to reach a completion rate of 80% in secondary education by 2020 (through reduced class size, after-school care and reintegrating dropouts).
- Ontario's *Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy* (2003) was created to increase graduation rates and support all students in Ontario to successfully complete their secondary schooling and reach their post-secondary goals. The strategy built leadership capacity for secondary schools by creating the Student Success Leader, the Student Success Teacher and Student Success Teams, which tracked and addressed the needs of disengaged students, and worked to establish quality learning for all students. Good leadership at all levels (ministry, district and school level), coupled with extensive capacity building, was considered fundamental to the success of the reform (see *Evaluation of the Ontario Ministry of Education's Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy: Final Report*). In 2011/12, Ontario had a high-school graduation rate of 83%, a 15% improvement since 2003/04. Over the eight years that the Student Success Strategy has been in place, this represents approximately 115 500 more students who have graduated than would have if the rate had remained at its 2003/04 level.
- Alberta's new *Student Learning Assessments (SLAs)* (2013) will replace the *Provincial Achievement Tests*. Information from the SLAs will be used to generate a report delivered to students, teachers, and parents at the beginning of the school year on the students' strengths and areas for improvement relative to provincial standards.
- The *Learn Canada 2020* (2008) framework is a joint declaration by provincial and territorial ministers of education to enhance Canada's education systems, learning opportunities and overall education outcomes. The framework builds on what are considered the four pillars of lifelong learning: Early Childhood Learning and Development; Elementary to High School Systems; Post-secondary Education; and Adult Learning and Skills Development.
- To set priorities, ministers of education across Canada agreed (2013) that numeracy was a key priority and that "provinces and territories would work together to identify and share best practices on innovative teaching and learning strategies to raise student achievement in this area".

- Canada provides funding for innovation and research through: 1) scholarships for master's, doctoral and postdoctoral students as part of the *strategic priorities (2013-16)* of the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council*; and 2) scholarships and fellowships for undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral students through the *National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada*.

Spotlight: Creating a national vision on early learning

The CMEC *Early Learning and Development Framework (2014)* presents a pan-Canadian vision for early learning to be adapted to the needs and circumstances of each province and territory and support the development of policies and initiatives that enhance the quality and continuity of the learning experience in the early years and beyond. The principles guiding this framework are: 1) the child is integral to policy and programme development; 2) the family is central to a child's development; 3) honouring the diversity of children and families is integral to equity and inclusion; 4) safe, healthy and engaging environments shape lifelong learning, development, behaviour, health and well-being; 5) learning through play capitalises on children's natural curiosity and exuberance; and 6) the educator, or the extended family as educator, is central to supporting learning and development through responsive and caring relationships.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-18-en>

CHILE

Context

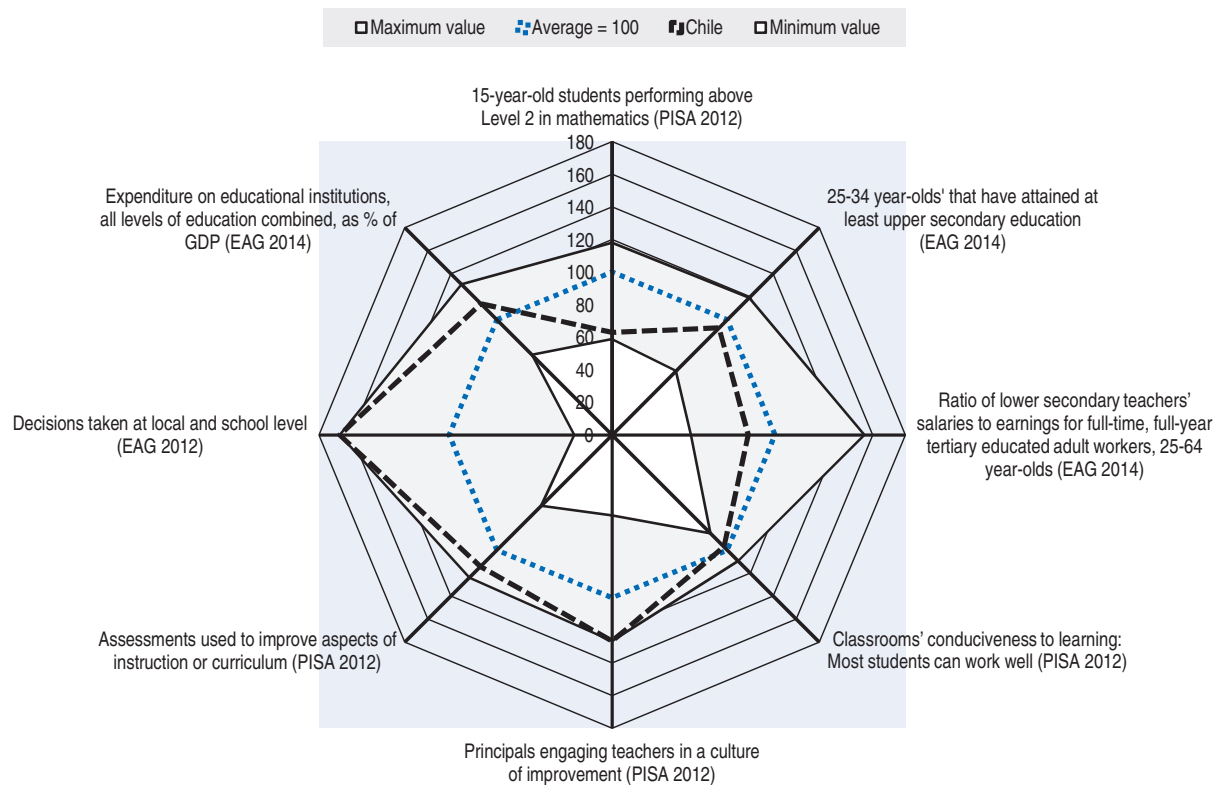
Students: Chile performs below the OECD average in PISA 2012, with improvements in mathematics and reading performance and unchanged performance in science across PISA cycles, as well as progress in educational attainment compared to other OECD countries in recent years. Equity remains an issue, particularly for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and from rural areas. The impact of socio-economic status on students' mathematics performance is one of the largest among OECD countries. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Chile usually starts at age 4. Enrolment in pre-primary programmes has increased for 3-4 year-olds and remains below the OECD average. Education in Chile is compulsory from ages 6 to 18. Educational practices that may hinder greater progress in equity if not managed carefully include grade repetition, school choice and transfers to other schools for struggling secondary students. Attainment rates in upper secondary and tertiary education, as well as enrolment in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET), are below the OECD average. The transition into further education and the labour market is challenging, while unemployment in Chile is below average.

Institutions: Chile's learning environments are at the OECD average and vary widely across schools, according to PISA findings. Schools' autonomy over resource allocation and curriculum and assessment is above the OECD average. While the scores of candidates entering the teaching profession on the voluntary national University Selection Test (*Prueba de Selección Universitaria*, PSU) are increasing, there is a need for improvement. Teaching licensing and practicum are not mandatory to enter the profession. On average, lower secondary teachers' pre-service training lasts five years, and including a teaching practicum is at the discretion of training institutions. Teaching conditions in primary and secondary institutions in Chile include teaching time and class size above the OECD average, and below-average salaries. A higher proportion of teachers in Chile than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Support for teachers includes clear standards, comprehensive evaluations intended for improvement and professional development opportunities. The recent creation of institutions to develop more systematic evaluation may contribute to monitoring school processes and guiding school improvement.

System: In Chile, governance of the education system is shared between central and local authorities. The Ministry of Education sets the central framework and the policy agenda, providing schools with a high level of autonomy. Education is delivered by municipalities and by a high proportion of privately managed educational institutions that receive public subsidies. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) is above the OECD average, with one of the highest

funding shares from private sources among OECD countries. Chile also had one of the most significant increases in expenditure per student among OECD countries between 2005 and 2011 at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels of education.

Figure 12.5. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Chile**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Chile Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Chile* (OECD, 2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171620>

Key issues and goals

Students: Within a context of significant improvements, delivering equity and quality in education remains a challenge in comparison to other OECD countries. Public funding and quality assurance of tertiary education institutions also remain key issues to ensure efficiency and equity. The challenge extends to aligning skills of young people with the needs of the labour market to ensure social progress.

Institutions: Chilean schools require strong school leaders and support to implement and drive school improvement, along with continued support to improve teaching conditions. The evaluation and assessment framework can be further consolidated for greater coherence.

System: Chile aims to provide local authorities and institutions with the capacity to deliver quality provision within a national vision and to ensure efficiency and equity of public funding in education.

Selected policy responses

- A financial incentive, the Law on Preferential Subsidies (*Ley de Subvención Escolar Preferencial*, 2008) was introduced to strengthen performance and support disadvantaged students. It provides additional funding and support for schools that serve students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, from pre-primary through secondary education. In tertiary education, a more comprehensive scholarship programme pays full tuition expenses for high-performing disadvantaged students, and low interest rates have been set for student loans.
- A new accountability system brings together the Ministry of Education, the National Education Council and a newly created Quality of Education Agency (*Agencia de Calidad de la Educación*, 2012), which is in charge of co-ordinating national assessments for schools and students, monitoring national system performance and providing information to stakeholders on performance. The Education Superintendence (*Superintendencia de Educación Escolar*) also initiated inspections in 2012 to ensure that schools meet legal standards.
- A reform of the school leadership role as part of the Law of Quality and Equity in Education (*Ley de Calidad y Equidad de la Educación*, 2011) requires competitive and open selection processes, offers higher salaries and more assistance for professional development, and grants more flexibility in firing teachers.
- Modifications made in 2012 to the laws regulating financial aid to students at the tertiary level added a subsidy to private student loans (*Crédito con Aval del Estado*, CAE) so that effective real interest rates of student loans are capped at 2% and loans are income contingent. The Scholarship for Tertiary Education (*Becas de Educación Superior*) programme expanded previous scholarship programmes to cover all students with satisfactory educational performance belonging to the lowest 60% of household income distribution.

Spotlight: Raising standards for teachers and school leaders

Chile has developed a national framework defining standards for the teaching and school leadership profession to provide clarity on expectations for the profession and to guide teacher training, recruitment and evaluation in a decentralised environment.

The Good Teaching Framework (*Marco para la Buena Enseñanza*, 2008) provides a clear and concise profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. It identifies four domains: preparation for teaching, creation of an environment favouring the learning process, teaching that allows the learning process of all students, and professional responsibilities. Within each domain, it describes criteria and performance levels (outstanding, competent, basic or unsatisfactory).

The Good School Leadership Framework (*Marco para la Buena Dirección*, 2005) provides both a description of the skills and competencies needed for good school leadership in Chilean schools and a reference for professional development of school leaders. It covers four areas: leadership; curricular management; management of the school environment and coexistence; and resource management. Each of these areas includes a set of criteria on which to focus professional development.

The detailed policy profile is available at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-19-en>

CZECH REPUBLIC

Context

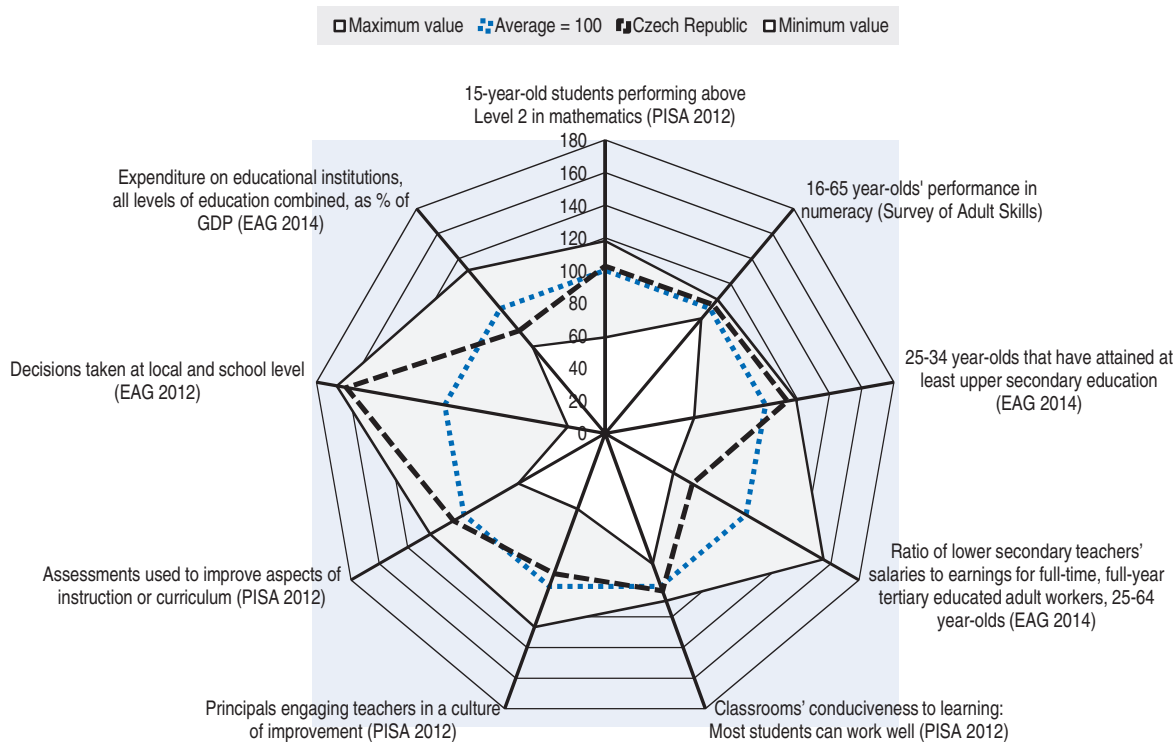
Students: The Czech Republic performs above the OECD average in science in PISA 2012, with performance in mathematics and reading around average. Performance has remained unchanged in reading and science across PISA cycles and has decreased in mathematics. The impact of socio-economic background on students' academic performance is around the OECD average, and student performance varies highly between schools. Early childhood and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 4, and efforts to improve equity include improving enrolment in ECEC to reach the OECD average for 3-4 year-olds. Different approaches to student selection, such as school choice, academic streaming and early tracking (at age 11), and differentiation of educational pathways can hamper equity if not managed carefully. Upper secondary attainment rates in the Czech Republic are above the OECD average. Enrolment in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is one of the highest among OECD countries, while students in the apprenticeship track do not feel well prepared for the labour market. In addition, tertiary attainment rates are below the OECD average. Literacy skills are high among 16-65 year-olds compared to other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, and even higher among 15-24 year-olds. Unemployment is below the OECD average.

Institutions: Czech compulsory (basic) schools have one of the highest levels of autonomy among OECD countries in allocating resources, such as hiring and dismissing teachers, and in the use of curriculum and assessment. Lower secondary education teachers in the Czech Republic undergo five years of pre-service training. The organisation of a teaching practicum is at the discretion of training institutions. Teaching time is above the OECD average in primary education and below the OECD average in secondary education. Conditions for teachers have been improving, with class size below the OECD average. With the economic crisis, the teaching profession has become a more attractive alternative for tertiary-educated people looking for employment, although teachers still earn less than the OECD average at primary and secondary levels, and about half of the average salary for an individual with tertiary education in the Czech Republic. A lower proportion of teachers in the Czech Republic than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Schools are evaluated through well structured, evidence-driven external inspections.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between central authorities and schools. The government sets priorities and defines national programmes and reforms, while municipalities are responsible for organising pre-primary and compulsory education. At the lower secondary level, schools have great autonomy, with most decisions taken at the school or local level. Fourteen regional governments steer upper secondary and tertiary professional education and its objectives within their region. Expenditure in


education is lower than the OECD average, despite spending increases on tertiary education, and the financial crisis has affected education funding, particularly for non-teaching staff in small schools. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is one of the lowest among OECD countries, with a higher share of funding from public sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.6. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Czech Republic**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Czech Republic Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 and *Education Policy Outlook: Czech Republic* (OECD, 2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171637>

Key issues and goals

Students: The Czech Republic faces the challenge of raising overall student performance and reducing the proportion of those who are underperforming. Almost one in four students underperformed in PISA 2012 and did not achieve the level considered necessary to participate effectively in society (Level 2). To better prepare students for the future, it is key to help students effectively develop the skills needed in the labour market. This requires focusing on improving the quality of the education provided at tertiary level, rather than only increasing enrolment.

Institutions: Progress can also be hampered by a lack of systemic support to ensure the capacity of teachers and school leaders to address diverse student needs and to provide more inclusive education, and also by a lack of clarity to guide schools. Another issue is the introduction of a career progression system for teachers and leaders associated with pay levels, as well as integration of an evaluation and assessment framework including developing national standardised tests, while limiting their undesired effects.

System: The Czech Republic considers its key issues to adopt and implement its strategy for 2020 priorities and making better use of existing information about the impact of policy changes for the improvement of education outputs. Developing professional capacity across the education system (e.g. teaching, leadership, evaluation, and assessment) is also seen as important to foster education quality, along with improving the efficiency of overall school funding and transparency of the system, and promoting better financing of the education of disadvantaged students.

Selected policy responses

- The Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Educational System (2011-15) aims to improve the quality and efficiency of the education system by targeting a wide array of areas, including ECEC, VET; and evaluation and assessment.
- The *Innovation of the Framework Educational Programme of Pre-Primary Education* (2012) puts emphasis on care and education of 2-year-olds in nursery schools (*materšské školy*) and the interrelation with the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Education that deals with preparedness of children for primary education.
- A National Institute of Education (NUV) has been created (2011) to guide and provide support to schools. Selected policy initiatives aim to promote more inclusive education, address diverse student needs, improve the teaching profession and better align education qualifications to those in the labour market.
- The Strategy Czech School Inspection (2014-20) aims to strengthen external evaluation for school improvement.
- *Standardised tests in grades 5 and 9* (2011) of basic education have been implemented in three curricular areas: Czech language, foreign languages and mathematics. The Czech Republic aims for the tests to provide feedback to students, inform parents and teachers on student learning and school quality and evaluate the work of schools. Results will be published at the school level to allow between-school comparisons, and monitor the performance of the Czech school system as a whole and across regions. Test results might serve as a basis for enrolment in a higher level of education.
- With the *Operational Programme Research, Development and Education* (*Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání*, 2014-20), the Czech Republic aims to contribute to a structural shift in the economy towards one based on an educated workforce and to produce high-quality research. The four priority areas of this programme are: 1) strengthening the capacity for quality research; 2) developing higher education institutions and human resources for research and development; 3) promoting equal access to quality pre-school and primary and secondary education; and 4) providing technical support.

Spotlight: Tackling equity in education

The Czech Republic has made decreasing the inequality in the education system one of its three key priorities in the *Education Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2020* (2014). Czech authorities and policy makers aim to focus on equal access to education as well as to ensure that students' personal or social circumstances do not hinder their educational achievement.

The government has also introduced multiple policies to support students, particularly those who might be at risk of low performance. Inclusive Education Support Centres (2009-10), a follow-up to a 2006 programme, aimed to assess the conditions for inclusive education in compulsory education and provide support to schools to better address individual learning. As part of the *Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme* (2007-13), school counselling centres were developed to manage school choice, to strengthen support for students in compulsory education, and to help them when deciding on an educational pathway.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-20-en>

DENMARK

Context

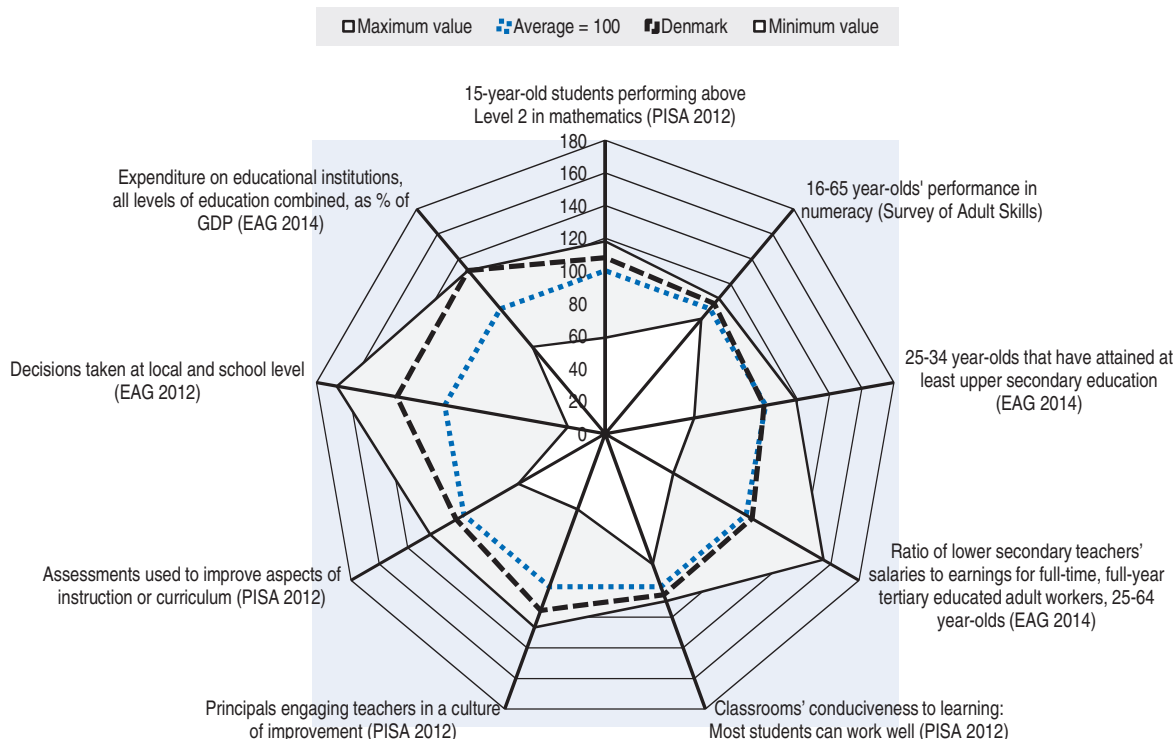
Students: Denmark's performance on PISA 2012 is higher than the OECD average in mathematics and around the OECD average in reading and science. PISA results have decreased in mathematics across PISA cycles, and remained unchanged in reading and science. The impact of students' socio-economic background on mathematics performance is similar to the OECD average, while immigrant students are at higher risk of poor performance. The education system has a number of features that promote equity, including an early starting age in early childhood education and care (age 1), an above-average proportion of students enrolled in early childhood education, low grade repetition and comprehensive schooling until age 16. Upper secondary attainment rates are around the OECD average and graduation rates are above average, as are enrolment rates for upper secondary vocational education and training (VET), but dropout from VET is also high. Tertiary attainment rates are above the OECD average and education is accessible to all. In the Survey of Adult Skills, adults (16-65 year-olds) in Denmark scored above average in numeracy and below-average in literacy skills compared to participating countries, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) scoring around the average in literacy and above average in numeracy. Unemployment rates are below the OECD average.

Institutions: Students and teachers report positive learning environments. Schools in Denmark report autonomy over resource allocation above the OECD average and autonomy over curriculum and assessment around the OECD average. At lower secondary level, teachers follow a pre-service teacher training programme of four years, including a mandatory teaching practicum. At upper secondary level, it is a six-year training programme, also including a teaching practicum. Teachers are trusted professionals with fewer teaching hours in primary and secondary education than the OECD average, above average salaries, and class size at around the OECD average at primary and secondary levels. At the same time, teachers receive less feedback and fewer professional development opportunities than the OECD average. Compared to the TALIS average, a higher proportion of teachers in Denmark would choose to work as teachers again, while a below-average proportion of teachers consider that the teaching profession is valued in society. School principals in Denmark are less active as instructional leaders than on average across OECD. A national framework for evaluation and assessment is being developed, guided by national objectives for student achievement, but schools and municipalities need further support to build their capacity to analyse and use data for improvement.

System: Governance of the education system in Denmark is shared between central and local authorities. The Ministry of Education sets national priorities, and most education decisions in primary and lower secondary schools (*Folkeskole*) are carried out by the 98 municipalities. Most decisions at lower secondary level are made by the school or local level, and upper secondary schools and post-secondary educational institutions are self-

governing. Denmark invests a substantial amount of public resources in education and prioritises funding to meet local needs. Indeed, spending on education institutions (for all levels of education combined) is the highest among OECD countries as a percentage of GDP, combined with one of the highest shares of funding from public sources among OECD countries.

Figure 12.7. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Denmark**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Denmark Snapshot is based on *Education Policy Outlook: Denmark* (OECD, 2014). More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171645>

Key issues and goals

Students: Denmark's education performance can be nurtured by maintaining equitable practices and supporting performance for students with immigrant background and low performers. Strengthening the quality of VET to improve completion rates is also important.

Institutions: Some important objectives for Denmark include ensuring that teachers and principals have quality support, feedback and professional development opportunities, and that principals take on a more pedagogical role. Completing a framework for evaluation and assessment and using the results in schools are also considered priorities.

System: Effective steering can be enhanced by setting clear education objectives to guide a decentralised municipal environment. Other key issues include building the

capacity of municipalities and schools to implement national strategies at the local level and optimising resources in a decentralised context.

Selected policy responses

- In 2010, Denmark introduced a mandatory assessment of language development for all 3-year-olds to diagnose possible language problems before children start school.
- Several reforms in progress aim to help reduce dropout among VET students, by providing increased flexibility across the system and allowing students completing an upper secondary vocational programme to access higher education. A new policy agreement, *Better and More Attractive Vocational Education and Training Programmes (Bedre og mere attraktive erhvervsuddannelser, 2014)*, aims to provide a more attractive supply of VET programmes.
- Efforts to improve schools include a major reform of teacher education (2012) to develop a bachelor of education programme (2013) based on modules, with greater autonomy for colleges to deliver the programme.
- In 2011, the government introduced a platform (*A Denmark that Stands Together*) designed to improve educational outcomes for all Danish students and to clarify national priorities. It sets specific targets for 2020, including achieving upper secondary completion rates of 95% and tertiary enrolment and completion rates of 60%.
- National tests from Years 2 to 8 were implemented in 2010.

Spotlight: Improving Danish public schools (Folkeskole)

The reform of the *Folkeskole* is in the process of being implemented in Denmark to raise standards for Danish public schools, based on an *agreement by the different political parties* in 2013. Most of the necessary legislation for its implementation has been passed in 2014 by the Danish Parliament.

Operative targets are to have at least 80% of students achieving good national test scores in mathematics and reading; to gradually increase the number of high performers, to gradually reduce the number of low performers, and to improve student well-being.

To meet these objectives, the reform includes the following objectives:

- to modify the school day in terms of distribution of learning times, by having more subject-divided lessons and assisted learning, introducing daily physical activity, opening up schools to their communities, and collaborating with associations for selected activities
- to clarify and simplify the Danish Common Objectives for teaching of individual subjects to support better teaching and learning
- to advance provision of elective subjects by one year to Year 7, and to make them mandatory and delivered by municipalities
- to raise the stakes of the public school leaving examination for entry into post-compulsory education
- to deliver additional funding to ensure that teachers have appropriate training and continuous professional development and to allow schools to have additional pedagogical staff to support schools and classroom progress
- to create a national body of 40 learning consultants to deliver advice to municipalities and schools.

The detailed policy profile is available at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-21-en>

ESTONIA

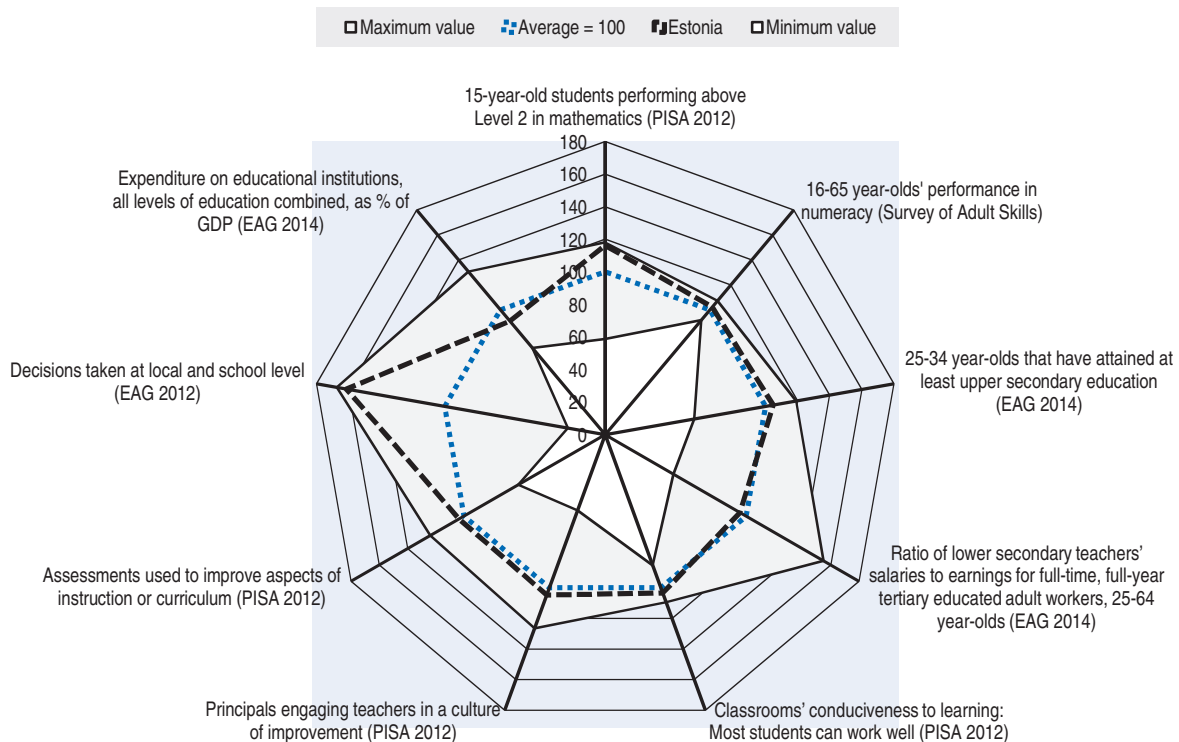
Context

Students: Students in Estonia perform above the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2012 and their socio-economic background had less impact on performance than in other OECD countries. Performance in reading increased across PISA cycles, while performance in mathematics remained unchanged. Estonia has a comprehensive schooling system from age 7 to 17 which covers all compulsory education and is integrated within a single structure. Grade repetition is low, tracking starts at age 15, and school choice is possible. Estonia's enrolment rates in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) programmes are below the OECD average. Attainment rates are high in upper secondary education and around the OECD average in tertiary education, VET included. In the Survey of Adult Skills, Estonia showed high proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy among 16-65 year-olds compared to their peers in other countries participating in this survey, and even higher results among 16-24 year-olds. However, unemployment rates are above the OECD average.

Institutions: Schools in Estonia have autonomy above the OECD average, including the capacity to make decisions on curriculum and to hire and dismiss teaching staff. Lower secondary teachers are required to have five years of initial teacher training, including a mandatory teaching practicum, and follow continuous professional development. Primary and secondary education teachers have below-average class size and teaching time. Their salaries are lower than the OECD average, despite a significant increase since 2000. A lower proportion of teachers in Estonia than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Teacher appraisal is used for career advancement and is moderately used to determine the need for professional development, but there is no appraisal system for school leaders. The assessment of the education system on a system level is carried out yearly by the Ministry of Education and Research.


System: In Estonia, governance of the education system is shared between central and local authorities, with schools having a high level of autonomy on resource allocation. The state sets national standards and establishes principles of education funding, state supervision and quality assessment. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is managed by local authorities, and most of the decisions in lower secondary education are taken at the school level. Estonia's expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) is below the OECD average, with a higher share of public funding than the OECD average. Estonia had one of the greatest increases in expenditure per student among OECD countries during 2005-11 at the tertiary level.

Figure 12.8. Selected indicators compared with the average: Estonia



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Estonia Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171658>

Key issues and goals

Students: A priority reported by Estonia is ensuring that all students have access to a basic school close to home and an upper secondary school in the closest regional centre offering high-quality study choices that meet the students' needs. Estonia aims to further develop the skills required by today's labour market in both VET and higher education. This includes strengthening apprenticeships and practice in the work place, in collaboration with employers.

Institutions: Estonia reports a lack of attractiveness of the teaching profession, with teachers' salaries still considered uncompetitive and insufficient practical training in teacher training programmes. Moreover, no systematic appraisal mechanisms are used to reward the performance of school leaders.

System: Other important issues in Estonia include guaranteeing funding of salaries for non-teaching staff in general education institutions and defining the responsibility of the national and local governments in securing the salaries.

Selected policy responses

- The *recent amendment to the Pre-school Act of 2000 (2010)* (covering children from 1.5 to 7 years of age) introduces an obligation for local governments to provide childcare services where there is a shortage of places in municipal care centres. The cost for parents will be capped at 20% of the minimum wage (the same rule applies to pre-school institutions). The new act also aims to ensure that children from the same family can access the same institution. Presently, around one-third of local governments have shortages, mainly for the group up to 3 years of age, and the same principle applies to major urban areas.
- Estonia aims to continue modernising VET programmes by focusing on key competencies and workplace practice. Estonia is reforming its VET system with the implementation of the *Vocational Educational Institution Act (2013)*, which sets the legal framework to improve the quality of teaching and practical training in VET, implement distributive leadership in VET institutions and modernise the funding structure and infrastructures. The *Vocational Education Standards (2013)* aim to create an output-based curriculum, introduce new courses in upper secondary VET, create conditions to intensify and shorten studies, and create a new unit of calculation of course credits.
- A multi-actor working group is developing a new continuous professional development system for teachers that will be driven by teachers' needs for professional development. The new system will be based on the *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-20*, and expected to start in 2015.
- The *Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2014-20* addresses obstacles to lifelong learning and proposes strategic measures in five areas: 1) changing the approach to learning and teaching; 2) raising the status of teaching profession and developing school leadership; 3) improving the match between lifelong learning opportunities with the needs of the labour market; 4) applying modern digital technology in learning processes; and 5) creating equal opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone.
- A higher education reform that introduces means-tested financial support for students and ensures the right of free education for all full-time students was implemented (2013). As part of this reform, legislative changes were made in the *University Act (Ülikooliseadus)* and *Professional Higher Education Act (Rakendusõrgkooli seadus)* to introduce free education for full-time students starting with the academic year 2013/14. A new performance-based funding system for Higher Education Institutions has also been introduced (2013), that puts more emphasis on the quality and internationalisation of the system.
- Starting with the academic year 2013, efforts have been made to increase teachers' salaries, changing the calculation base from contractual hours to full-time employment pay.

Spotlight: Reorganising the school networks

Reorganising the school networks (*koolivõrgu korrastamine*) has been high on the policy agenda since 2004/05. During the analytical phase, school-related commutes of all students have been mapped to answer questions such as: 1) how close to their home is the upper secondary school they attend; 2) whether or not they prefer studying in larger cities; and 3) how the institutional set-up of a school influences what students it recruits. In 2012, basic principles that emphasise the separation of basic and upper secondary schools were prepared for legislation. Amendments to the *Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act* were passed in 2013. Based on the legislation, the central government intends to establish state-owned upper secondary schools in each county. The reform aims to improve students' learning environments and optimise the use of educational resources. The reform is still in the implementation phase, as it involves extensive negotiations with local authorities that have responsibility for managing schools.

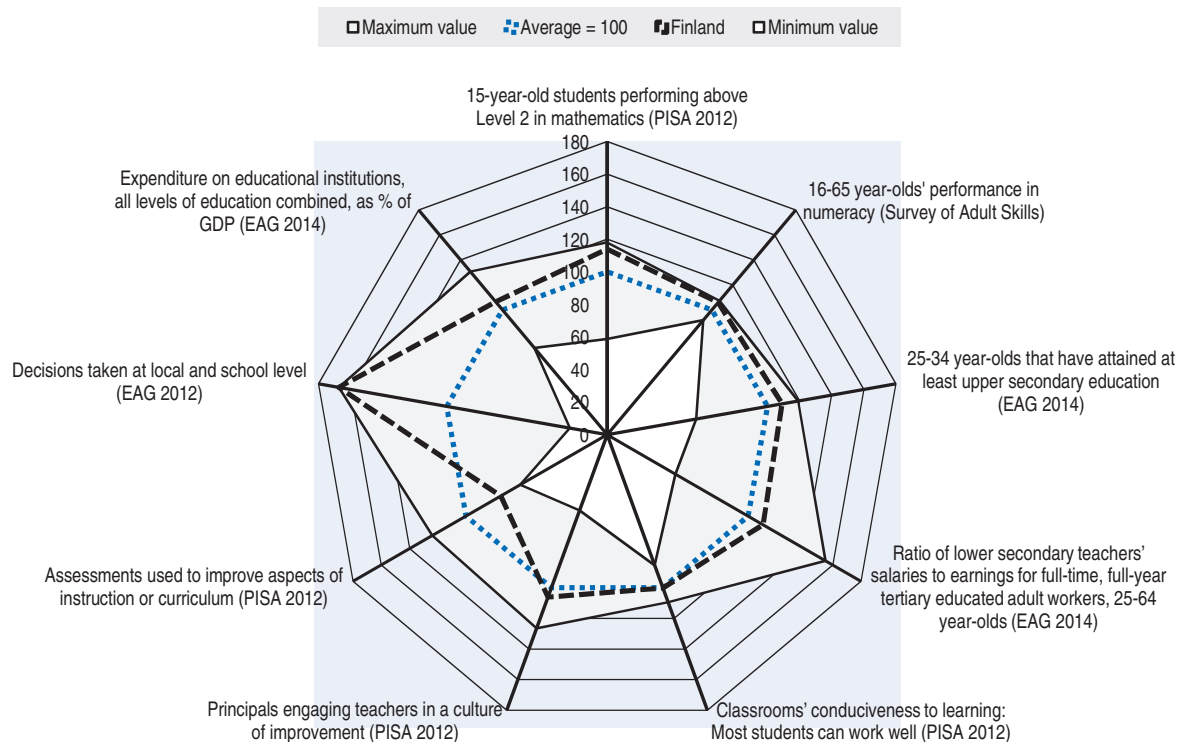
FINLAND

Context

Students: Finland remains among the top performers in PISA 2012, with decreasing performance in mathematics, reading and science across PISA cycles. Students' socio-economic background has low impact on Finnish educational performance. Finland has nine years of basic education (comprehensive school) with focus on equity and on preventing low achievement, and offers flexibility at upper secondary level between general and vocational education and training options that both lead to tertiary education. Education is currently compulsory from ages 7 to 16 and will be extended to age 6 to 17 in 2015. Attainment rates in upper secondary and tertiary education are higher than the OECD average, with one of the highest enrolment rates in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) in OECD countries. School dropout is lower in Finland than in other EU countries, and is higher among people with an immigrant background. Adults (16-65 year-olds) in Finland scored among the top skilled across participating countries in the Survey of Adult Skills, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) scoring higher than all adults in Finland and young adults in other countries. In the context of the economic crisis, unemployment remains below OECD average.


Institutions: Schools in Finland have average autonomy over the use of curriculum and assessment compared to other OECD countries and a below-average level of autonomy over resource allocation. Teachers are trusted professionals required to have a master's degree that includes research and practice-based studies. In primary and secondary education, their salaries are slightly above the OECD average, and their teaching time is below average. A much higher proportion of teachers in Finland than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Finnish society and its education system place great importance on their schools and day-care facilities and trust the proficiency of their school leaders, teachers and educational staff, with no national standardised tests or high-stakes evaluations.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between central and local authorities. The Finnish Government defines and sets educational priorities, while municipalities (local authorities) maintain and support schools and day-care centres and also have significant responsibility for organising education, funding and curriculum and for hiring personnel. A national Education and Research Development Plan outlines education policy priorities every four years, and guides the government when preparing and implementing education policies. Social and political agreement on the value of education has provided stability on the structure and key features of the education system. Decisions in schools are made by either the local government or the school, depending on how decision-making is organised in the municipality. Finland's expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) is above the OECD average, with one of the highest shares of public funding among OECD countries.

Figure 12.9. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Finland**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Finland Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Finland* (OECD, 2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171661>

Key issues and goals

Students: Finland's high education performance is supported by system-level policies that encourage quality and equity. These can be continued and complemented with further focus on reducing recent inequities in specific groups, as large performance gaps are seen between boys and girls and between native students and students with immigrant background. Demographic changes imply a smaller proportion of younger people in Finland, and there have been some mismatches between supply and demand of study places and labour market needs.

Institutions: Finland aims to strengthen the capacity of school leaders and teachers to deliver quality education in all schools and to ensure that all players in the education system have the capacity to use evaluation and assessment to improve student outcomes.

System: Ensuring capacity to deliver high-quality education across all municipalities and improving efficiency of funding in tertiary education are key system-level goals for Finland.

Selected policy responses

- A shift in perspective is the transference of early childhood education and care services from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2013).
- *Education and Research 2011-2016: A development plan* aims to increase participation of students with immigrant background in preparatory education to improve their opportunity to participate in upper secondary education.
- A *curriculum reform* is being developed from pre-primary through upper secondary education, to be implemented from 2016. The reform aims to adapt the curriculum to the new needs for skills and competences, strengthen the inter-disciplinary approach and provide educators with digital resources.
- Efforts are being made to ensure post-basic qualification completion and employment for youth, including the introduction of the *Youth Guarantee* (2013).
- The Ministry of Education appointed an *Advisory Board for Professional Development of Education Personnel* (2008) to examine and improve professional development and the changing needs of teachers.
- The *Osaava Programme* (2010-16), a national fixed-term programme for continuing professional development (CPD), aims to ensure systematic CPD of staff in schools. The programme supports education providers to systematically and continually develop the skills and knowledge of their staff according to locally identified needs. Participants in Osaava and other government-funded CPD increased from 30 000 in 2009 to almost 70 000 in 2013.
- *Quality Criteria for Basic Education* (2009), were developed to provide clear criteria, raise quality and facilitate evaluation. Starting in 2014, evaluation activities will be merged into the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre.
- Since 2013, a general reform of the Finnish municipality structure has been prepared to secure high-quality and equitable education services and consolidate local self-government.
- In 2013, a *structural policy programme* was introduced to optimise expenditure, which will have implications, among others, on the provision of local governments' obligations and services, such as secondary education.

Spotlight: Nurturing excellence in teachers

One of the factors adduced to explain Finnish success in education is the quality of its teachers. A reform at the end of the 1970s strengthened teacher education and made it highly selective. Teacher education moved from teachers' colleges into universities, and primary school teachers were required to have a master's degree. At present, teacher education is provided by nine universities, of which eight have teacher training schools. According to selected evidence, only about 10% of candidates who apply to primary teacher studies are accepted. Applicants for teacher education must have passed the Finnish matriculation examination (or a foreign equivalent) or completed a three-year vocational education programme. The student selection process for primary teacher education involves two stages: 1) an examination to assess applicants' academic learning skills; and 2) a combination of written questions and aptitude tests to assess applicants' skills, motivation and commitment.

Primary school teachers major in education, and they may specialise in teaching one or several subjects in their minor subject studies. Upper grade teachers major in specific subjects and do their pedagogical studies over a five-year programme or as a separate module after graduation. With strong theoretical and practical content, teacher education is research-based, with emphasis on developing pedagogical knowledge. Teachers are trained to adapt their teaching to different learning needs and styles of students. There is also emphasis on teaching practicum which includes a minor portion of basic teaching skill practice in front of peers in student groups, and a more significant portion of required teaching practice at teacher-training schools run by the university or at affiliated schools. In addition, other teacher groups, such as pre-primary teachers and vocational teachers, are required to have a tertiary education degree.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-22-en>

FRANCE

Context

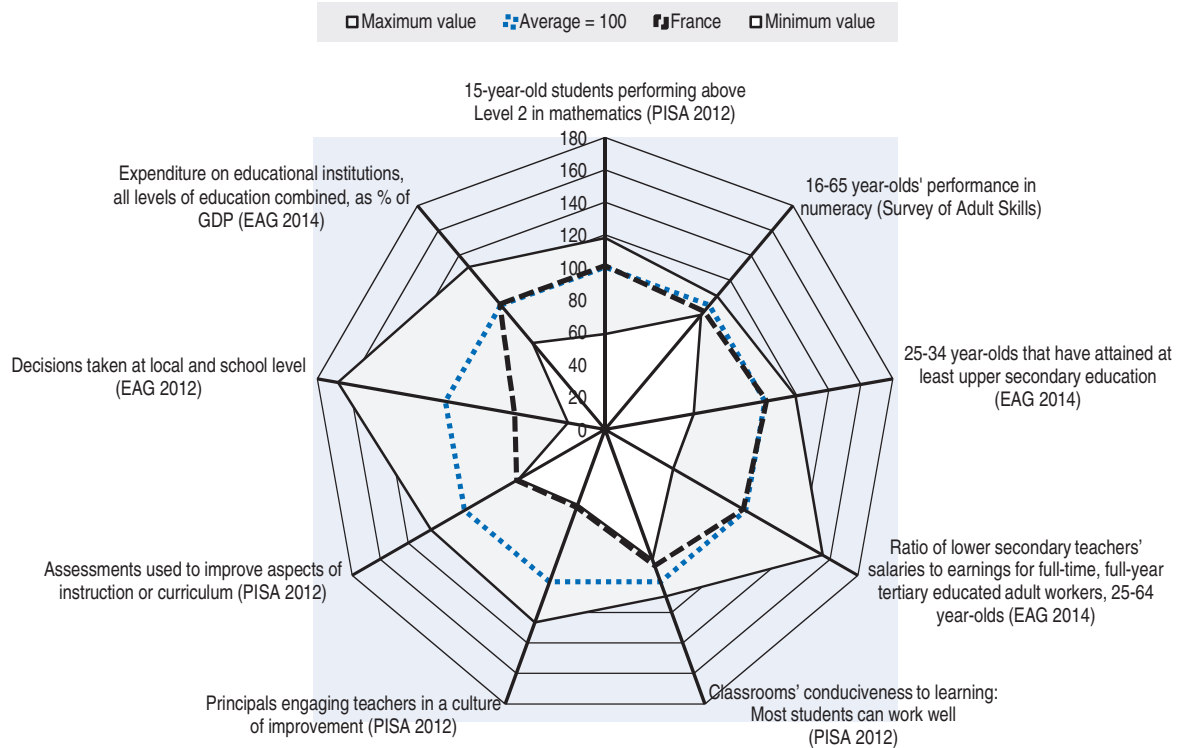
Students: France performs above the OECD average in reading in PISA 2012 and at the OECD average in mathematics and science, with unchanged performance in reading and science and decreasing performance in mathematics across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on the performance of 15-year-olds in mathematics is above the OECD average. Pre-primary education usually starts at the ages of 2 or 3 and lasts three years. Education is compulsory from age 6 to 16, and student tracking starts after lower secondary education. Although there has been some improvement, grade repetition rates in France are above the OECD average, which may hinder equity. Attainment rates in upper secondary education are comparable to the OECD average, and enrolment rates in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) are at the OECD average, with ensured transition from VET to tertiary education. At the tertiary level, attainment rates are also around the OECD average. Proficiency in literacy of young adults (aged 16-24) is higher than for all adults (aged 16-65) and slightly below the average for countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills. Unemployment rates are around the OECD average.

Institutions: Autonomy over curriculum and assessment of schools in France is at the OECD average, and schools have one of the lowest levels of autonomy among OECD countries over resource allocation, such as hiring and dismissal of teachers. Students in PISA consider their classrooms less conducive to learning than the OECD average. Lower secondary teachers receive five years of pre-service training. A teaching practicum is now compulsory at least during the fifth year. Teaching conditions in primary and secondary education include salaries below the OECD average, class size above the OECD average, below-average teaching time in secondary education and above-average teaching time in primary education. A lower proportion of teachers in France than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. The evaluation and assessment approach is relatively recent, unlike monitoring and certification practices. Several methods exist in France to assess and evaluate not just schools, but also teachers and school principals as well as students. These methods are integrated to some extent into an overall consistent evaluation and assessment framework to improve practices.

System: The central government steers the education system in France, defines educational policies and curricula and is responsible for recruitment, training and management of school leaders and teachers in state education and in private education operated under contract. Schools, local authorities and central government share schooling decisions in secondary education. Most of the funding for educational institutions comes out of public funds and is relatively transparent and consistent. France's


expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is around the OECD average, with one of the highest shares of public funding among OECD countries.

Figure 12.10. **Selected indicators compared with the average: France**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The France Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: France* (OECD, 2014) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: The performance of France could be increased by reducing inequalities between students from different socio-economic backgrounds. Improving mechanisms for guidance and transition between education and the labour market is also important.

Institutions: Other challenges for France include fostering quality teacher training and adequate learning environments that can give school leaders and teachers more opportunities to improve their students' learning. Promoting consistency and continuity of the variety of system evaluation measures is also considered a challenge for France.

System: Reducing the compartmentalisation and complexity of the system can help improve performance in tertiary education. Another priority is ensuring that the allocation of resources is sufficient to meet the specific needs of certain education areas or institutions.

Selected policy responses

- Since 2011, priority education for disadvantaged students and school is mainly based on the Network for Educational Success (*Réseau de réussite scolaire*, RRS, 2006) and the Primary and Secondary Schools for Ambition, Innovation and Success programme (*Écoles collèges lycées pour l'ambition, l'innovation et la réussite*, Éclair, 2011), where one-third are classified as of educational priority. RRS and Éclair promote continuity of learning throughout compulsory education.
- The reforms of VET at upper secondary level (2009) aimed to raise the level of qualification of young people, better integrate them into the labour market or tertiary education and reduce the number of school-leavers without any formal qualifications. At tertiary level, the law of 22 July 2013 reaffirmed the importance of measures to promote integration in the labour market. Experience in work environments (apprenticeships, placements, etc.) has been made compulsory in vocational bachelor's and master's degree courses. An awareness of entrepreneurship was also introduced into the curricula in general. The law aims to double the number of interns by 2020.
- The National Council for the Evaluation of the School System (*Conseil national d'évaluation du système scolaire*, CNESCO, 2013) aims to: 1) produce evaluations and evaluation summaries; 2) provide methodological expertise on existing evaluations; and 3) promote an evaluation culture for education professionals and general public.
- The University Communities (*Communautés d'universités et établissements*, ComUE, 2013) aim to structure and simplify tertiary education. Site contracts (about 30) will be signed between the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and groupings of tertiary education institutions. These site contracts are an attempt to target the governance level considered an appropriate scale for structuring and implementing coherent local policies, thus reinforcing universities' national and international visibility.

Spotlight: Introducing a global school reform

The law on guidance and planning for the reform of schooling in France (*Refondation de l'école de la République*, 2013) aims to raise students' knowledge, skills and cultural levels and to reduce social and territorial inequalities. The law includes: prioritising primary school to develop basic skills and reduce inequalities; introducing digital tools in schools; developing new curricula; ensuring learning progression from pre-school to lower secondary school; enabling students to succeed in secondary education and make a successful transition to working life; involving school partners; and improving the evaluation of the education system. Other key elements include the following:

An amendment to the school reform law (*Amendement au projet de loi sur la refondation de l'école de la République*, 2014) states that grade repetition should only be used in exceptional cases.

The Priority Education Networks (*Réseaux d'éducation prioritaire*, REP, 2014) aim to develop adequate learning environments for students from low socio-economic background. The REP also intend to train and retain quality teaching and non-teaching staff working in REP schools.

Spotlight: Introducing a global school reform (cont.)

The reform of teacher training (2013) aims to strengthen the professional aspect of training, retaining the requirement for a master's degree. It has created the Institution for Initial Teachers Training and Education (*Écoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Éducation*, ESPE), which organise initial teacher and education personnel training, combining theoretical and practical training. Teachers in primary and secondary schools must have a master's degree and pass a competitive exam to become civil servants. The ESPE participate in continuing training and aim to develop innovative teaching methods through an ongoing link with research and internationalisation.

The redistribution of learning time (*Rythmes scolaires*, 2013) in primary education aims to achieve more balanced learning time across the week. As part of this reform, the learning time also increased from 4 to 4.5 days per week and a maximum of 6 hours per day, to arrange for extracurricular educational activities and more personalised support to students. The number of school days increased from 144 to 162 days a year.

The detailed policy profile is available at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-23-en>

GERMANY

Context

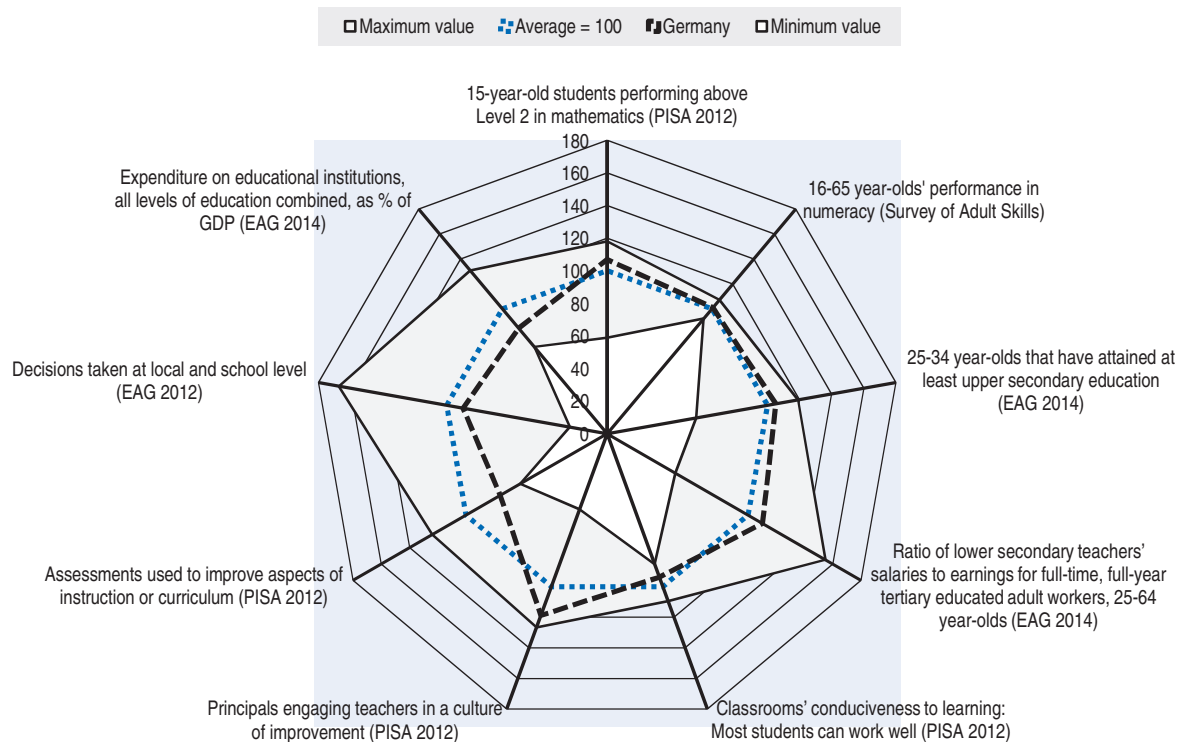
Students: Germany's performance in mathematics, science and reading in PISA 2012 is above the OECD average, with overall improvements in reading and mathematics and unchanged performance in science across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on students' mathematics performance has decreased to around the OECD average. Germany has a high proportion of children enrolled in early childhood education compared to the OECD average, while system-level policies such as early tracking (mostly at the age of 10, one of the earliest among OECD countries) and a relatively high rate of grade repetition may hinder equity if not managed carefully. In the system of schools of general education, there are measures for permeability between educational tracks, such as allowing for students to gain access to an upper level school (*Gymnasium*) through achievement in other secondary school forms. The well-developed dual system, offering students both vocational and academic education, eases integration into employment. Attainment rates in upper secondary education are above the OECD average, and enrolment rates in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) are around average. At tertiary level, attainment rates, which are below the OECD average, have increased since 2000. In the Survey of Adult Skills, adults (16-65 year-olds) in Germany performed at around average skills' proficiency in numeracy and below average in literacy compared to other participating countries, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) scoring higher than other adults in Germany and at around the average for young adults in participating countries. Labour market perspectives are positive compared to most OECD countries: unemployment is among the lowest, and the proportion of 15-29 year-olds who are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) is below average.

Institutions: Compared to other OECD countries, German schools have below-average autonomy over curriculum and assessment and over allocation of resources, such as hiring and dismissing teachers or deciding teachers' salaries. German students' views on whether learning environments are conducive to learning are close to the OECD average. In recent years, school leaders have increasing autonomy, and their use of instructional leadership approaches is above the OECD average, according to school principals' reports in PISA 2012. Lower secondary teacher pre-service training lasts 6.5 years including a mandatory teaching practicum. The teaching workforce is ageing, with a higher proportion of teachers above the age of 50 than the OECD average. Teachers' salaries are among the highest across OECD countries, and teaching time and class size in primary and secondary schools are above average. School supervisory authorities perform external school evaluations that are taken into account for implementation of school improvement measures. Also, there are national standards for education and evaluation to facilitate comparability.

System: Germany has a regional education governance system, with responsibilities shared between the Federation, the *Länder* and local authorities, and co-ordination ensured

through several bodies. Schooling decisions are mainly made at the *Länder* level, while VET is a joint responsibility of the Federation and the *Länder*, with strong engagement of social partners. Expenditure on education institutions as percentage of GDP (for all educational levels) is below the OECD average, with a higher share of public funding than the OECD average. Vocational secondary programmes receive large funding contributions from the private sector.

Figure 12.11. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Germany**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Germany Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Germany* (OECD, 2014) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171687>

Key issues and goals

Students: Germany faces challenges to support students with disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds and to continue reducing the impact of socio-economic background on student outcomes while raising performance in academic and VET provision.

Institutions: New initiatives are advisable in the field of teaching and teacher training to support school improvement, particularly considering the high proportion of older teachers and the potential impact on teacher replacement and teacher training when they retire.

System: Other challenges for Germany relate to setting national priorities while responding to *Länder's* needs, continuing to ensure investment in education, and focusing on policies that help bring greater equity to the system.

Selected policy responses

- The National Integration Plan (2007) was created to improve equity and boost participation and success of students with a migration background. In collaboration with civil society stakeholders, it was transformed into the *National Action Plan on Integration (NAP-I)* (2011).
- The *Recognition Act* (2012) and the *Länder Recognition Acts* (2014) facilitate the recognition of qualifications gained abroad for the professional integration of foreigners.
- Efforts are being made to support school improvement through the *Quality Offensive in Teacher Training* (2013). The goal is to achieve sustainable improvement in the process of teacher training, including career entry and further learning. This policy also aims to contribute to an expanded recognition of course achievements and certificates throughout the country, offering more flexibility to students and teaching postgraduates.
- In 2006, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK*) adopted a *comprehensive strategy for educational monitoring* including four interconnected areas: 1) international comparative studies of student achievement; 2) central assessment of the achievement of educational standards (the basis for comparison between *Länder*); 3) comparative studies in order to review the efficiency of individual schools, within the *Länder*; and 4) joint education reporting of the Federation and the *Länder*. The latest reform implemented under this strategy is *Educational standards for the Allgemeine Hochschulreife* in German, mathematics and in English/French (2012).
- An enforceable legal entitlement to an ECEC place has been extended to children age 1 and 2 (*KiFöG*, 2013). Germany has targeted equal access to early childcare and education through the introduction of an enforceable right to a place in ECEC settings for 1-2 year-old children, extending existing provisions for children from age 3. Implementation of the law was backed up through targeted financial investments by the Federal Government, the *Länder* and municipalities and through regular monitoring.
- The federal investment programme *The Future of Education and Care* (2003-09) aimed to further develop all-day schools, with EUR 4 billion provided to 8 262 schools. Objectives included improving quality of schools and teaching, and decoupling social background from competence acquisition. More than 50% of total support was invested in primary schools, and the *Länder* continue to support all-day schools with own programmes.

Spotlight: Responding to transition problems from compulsory education to VET

The dual vocational system is a pillar of education in Germany that contributes to above-average attainment rates in upper secondary education. It offers students both knowledge and practical skills at the same time: students in the dual system typically spend 3-4 days in a training firm and 1-2 days at school. Low unemployment rates may also be explained by the strengths of the dual system. Some pending issues remain in the transition from compulsory education to VET as well as from VET to tertiary pathways. The government has implemented a number of initiatives to tackle these challenges, including the following:

- The *National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany (2004-14)* aims to provide in-company training as well as additional efforts from the public sector in VET. New partners were included such as the Standing Conference KMK and the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. Their goals are to improve the maturity of students in two strands of lower secondary schools (*Hauptschule* and *Realschule*) and to provide young people in the transition system with qualification opportunities leading to career prospects.
- The Educational Chains initiative, leading to vocational qualifications or *Bildungsketten* (2010), includes several actions and measures, including a career start coaching programme, analysis of potential, a career orientation programme, and VerA (preventing training dropout). The package provides preventive support, starting at Grade 7 with a vocational orientation programme, to create occupational perspectives, avoid early dropout, and ensure a better transition into VET and into the labour market. Under the VerA programme, older experienced people are engaged to provide orientation to youth. The federal government, the federal employment agency and the *Länder* are jointly focussing their activities with a view to successfully supporting young people.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-24-en>

GREECE

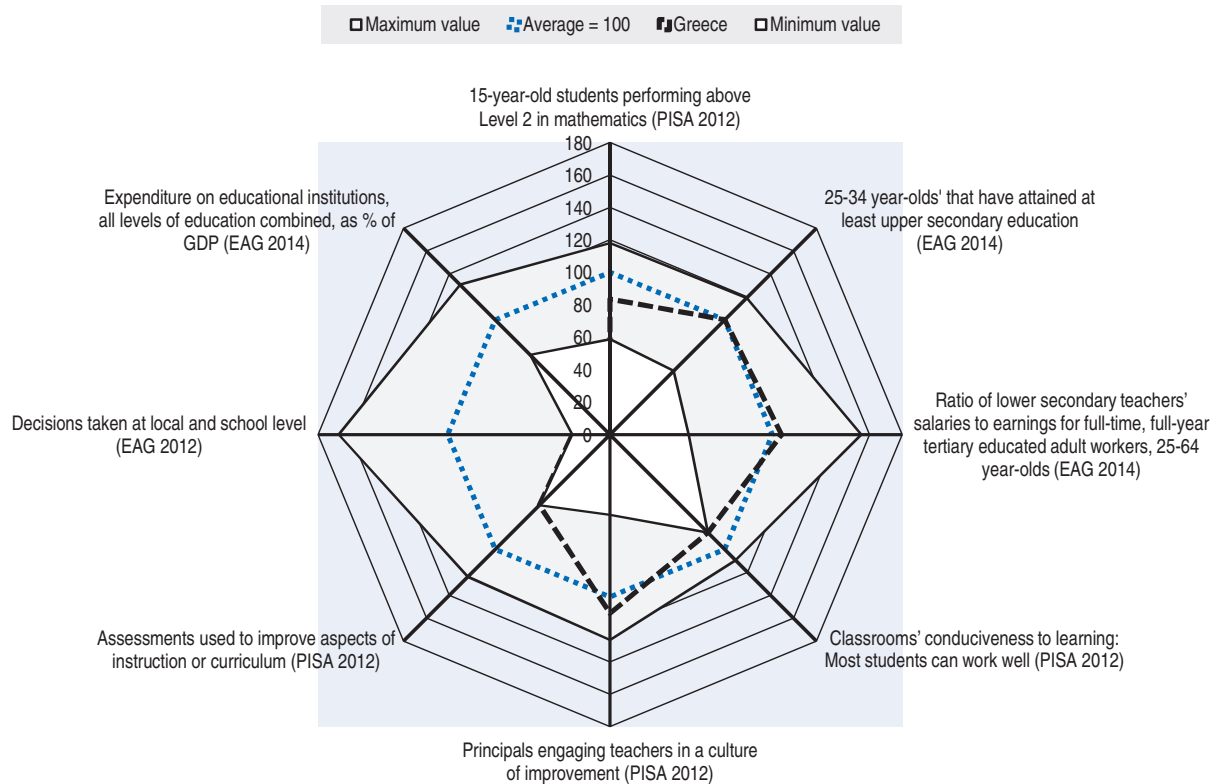
Context

Students: Greece performs below the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2012 and has achieved improvements in mathematics across PISA cycles, while science and reading performances remain unchanged. The impact on PISA performance of students' socio-economic backgrounds is comparable to the average of OECD countries. Some system-level policies may help increase levels of equity: early childhood education usually starts at age 4 (although with low enrolment rate); education is compulsory between ages 5 and 14-15; grade repetition is low; school choice is limited; and tracking is delayed until age 15. Attainment rates in upper secondary education are around the OECD average, and enrolment rates in upper secondary VET education are below average. In a context of high unemployment rates, which have more than doubled since 2008 for 25-34 year-olds, Greece also struggles with tertiary-level attainment rates that are below the OECD average.

Institutions: Autonomy over curriculum and assessment in Greek schools is below the OECD average, with the lowest level among OECD countries, as there is little flexibility within the compulsory curriculum at either primary or secondary levels. There is also a below-average level of autonomy for allocation of resources such as hiring and dismissal of teachers, which are almost exclusively decided by regional or national education authorities. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of four years including a mandatory teaching practicum. Conditions for primary and secondary teachers include below-average class sizes and teaching time in primary and secondary education. Teachers' salaries are below the OECD average and were significantly affected by the economic crisis. Furthermore, evaluation and assessment are not well-developed in Greece. Until 2013, there were no evaluation and assessment systems at primary and secondary levels.


System: Education in Greece is highly centralised: the main responsibilities in all education sectors lie with the national Ministry of Education. In the context of decentralisation reforms, the Regional Directors' roles are reinforced to respond to local system needs. Private expenditure on education concerns private schools, private tutorial institutions and private instructors. At the tertiary level, the budget and the financial reports of higher education institutions are approved by the Council of each institution.

Figure 12.12. Selected indicators compared with the average: Greece



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Greece Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: Greece identified a need to support vulnerable social groups in compulsory education and ensure more effective access to education for children with disabilities and Special Educational Needs (SEN). It also reported that attention is required to strengthen the role and effectiveness of VET and ensure quality and equity in higher education.

Institutions: Greece envisages improving the selection process, qualifications and mobility for teachers. Other reported issues of prime interest include strengthening the role of teachers, establishing rules for teachers' merit in education, and ensuring quality assessment in primary and secondary education.

System: In tertiary education, key issues reported include ensuring more transparency in the admissions system and improving governance in a context of declining budgets at all levels of education due to the economic crisis.

Selected policy responses

- Greece set up Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP) to improve access to education in disadvantaged socio-economic areas by providing additional funding and human resources to participating schools (*Law on Development of Lifelong Learning*, 2010).
- The *In-Service Education and Training of Teachers* (INSET, 2012) aims to provide training opportunities for teachers in the implementation of new curricula in compulsory education; teacher training methods to organise and implement Experimental Actions and Projects; training for teachers specialised in ICT, drama, music, art or intercultural education; induction of newly appointed and substitute teachers; and the general use of ICT.
- The Law on Organisation and Operation of the Institute for Youth and Lifelong Learning and of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance and Other Provisions (2013) sets up the legal framework to give accreditation for instructors and students in the field of non-formal education and informal learning.
- The Law on the Structure, Operation, Quality-Assurance of Studies and Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions (2011) introduces a time limit in the duration of studies to increase graduation rates.
- A central Directorate of Economic Affairs in the *Ministry of Education* (Ministerial Decision no.110101/H/22-08-2013) was established to explore the most effective and efficient use of the budget allocated to education.

Spotlight: Promoting quality assurance in primary and secondary education

A main step towards creating a system for quality insurance in primary and secondary schools is the establishment in 2013 of the Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE) for the evaluation of educational work. The ADIPPDE is administratively autonomous and supervised by the Ministry of Education. Its missions are to monitor, study and assess the implementation of education policy in primary and secondary education; to evaluate the quality of the educational work of school and of other education decentralised services; and to supervise appraisal for primary and secondary education teachers.

Furthermore, the Institute of Educational Policy has been established, operating at the system level to promote evaluation and monitoring of the education system (*Law 3966/2011*). Evaluation and assessment in Greece are based on self-evaluation. Greek legislation sets the development of the Evaluation of Education Practice (EEP) and determines the purpose, stages, goals and supervision structure of EEP (Ministerial Decision 3 0972/G1/5-3-2013, 2013). Finally, the Decree on Teacher Appraisal identifies the bodies, procedure and criteria for evaluation and promotion of teachers (*Presidential Decree 152/2013*, 2013).

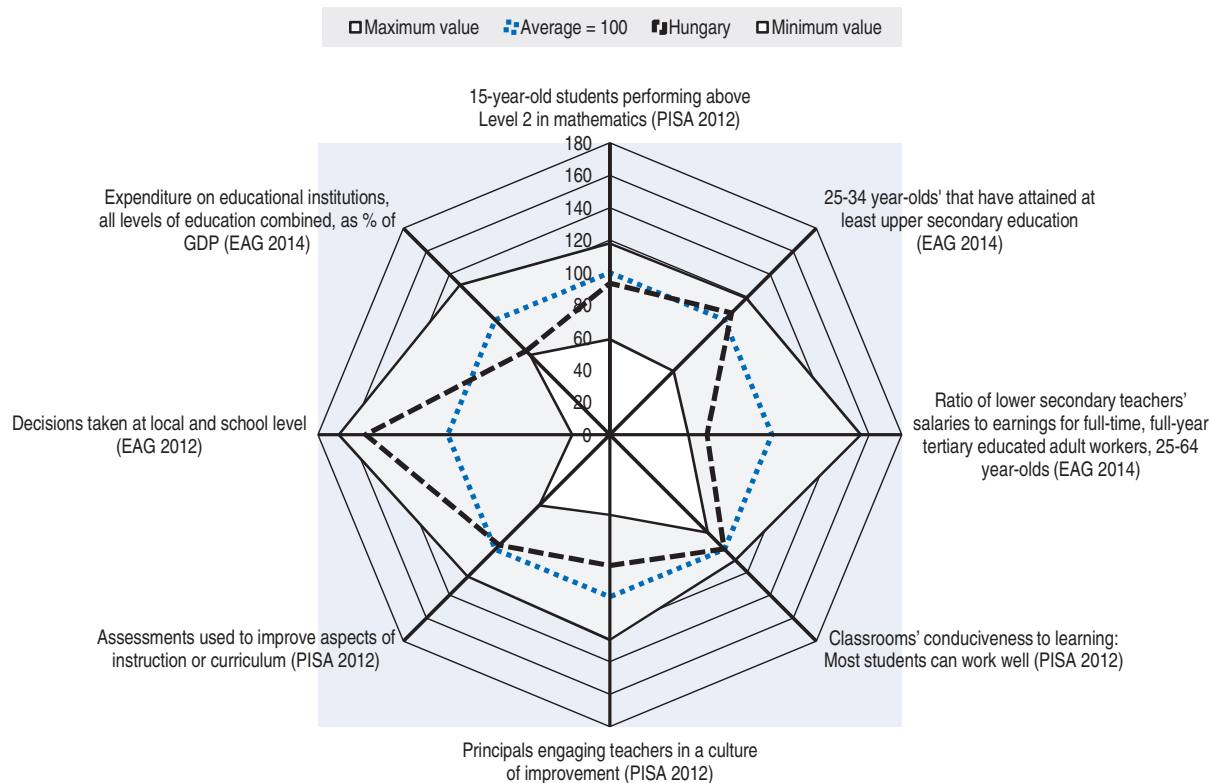
HUNGARY

Context

Students: Hungary performs below the OECD average in PISA 2012, with increased performance in reading, unchanged performance in science and decreased performance in mathematics across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on mathematics performance in Hungary was among the largest in OECD countries, with high variance between schools (school selection is made based on student records). Hungary has some system-level policies that can promote equity in education. Pre-primary education usually starts at age 3, and an above-average proportion of 3-4 year-olds is enrolled. Education is compulsory from ages 5 to 16, with comprehensive schooling typically from age 6-7 to 14-15, and grade repetition is low. However, tracking starts at ages 10-11 (one of the earliest among OECD countries), and school choice may hamper equity. Attainment rates at upper secondary level in Hungary are above the OECD average, but enrolment in vocational education and training (VET) upper secondary programmes is below average, even though transition to tertiary education is ensured. Also, tertiary education attainment in Hungary is below the OECD average, and unemployment is higher than the average in OECD countries.


Institutions: Autonomy over resource allocation in Hungary's schools, such as hiring and dismissing of teaching staff, is above the OECD average, and autonomy over use of curriculum and assessment is around the OECD average. The development of external control mechanisms and a nationwide system of supervision is in its initial phase. Lower secondary teachers in Hungary undergo five years of pre-service training, including a mandatory teaching practicum. Average class size, teaching time in primary and secondary level and teachers' salaries are below the OECD average. School assessment comprises both self-evaluation and external evaluation, and school maintainers (individuals who run the school and include the new Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre, independent maintainers and local governments for kindergartens) are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the pedagogical work of schools and their professionals.

System: The central government is in charge of the governance of the education system. Until 2011, most schooling decisions in lower secondary education were taken at school level but responsibilities of the central government have been strengthened in primary and secondary education in recent years. However, non-state (denominational, foundational and private) education institutions are not affected by the state maintenance which has been effective for public education institutions since January 2013 (except for kindergartens). Non-state institutions are under legal control of county governmental offices. The Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for the overall education system, whereas school-based VET and adult training is within the competence of the Ministry for National Economy. Expenditure on educational institutions for all educational levels combined represents a smaller- than-average share of GDP compared to other OECD countries.

Figure 12.13. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Hungary**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Hungary Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: Hungary targets reducing inequities in students' knowledge and skills and broadening access to higher education. Another key issue reported is meeting labour market needs. To face this challenge, Hungary considers it important to increase the share of VET programmes that directly satisfy labour market demands.

Institutions: Hungary reports the challenge of an ageing teaching workforce. To this end, priorities include attracting a younger teaching workforce while improving pedagogical practices and teacher training. Hungary aims to improve the structure of upper secondary final examinations and the general quality of Hungarian higher education. Interlinking the systems of external school assessment and teacher appraisal is also an issue of interest.

System: Hungary considers further rationalising the supply of tertiary education as a key reform. The country also considers it of prime interest to implement new financial regulations for public education and to reform the public funding system, introducing quality-based state support according to the needs of higher education institutions.

Selected policy responses

- The *Decree on the National Core Curriculum (2012)* develops curricular regulatory instruments while the *Act on Textbook Provision of National Public Education (2013)* provides free new textbooks in primary education and for disadvantaged students in secondary education.
- The *National Public Education Act (2011)* transfers teacher employment status to the state level for public institutions to make the teaching profession more attractive and increase the quality of teaching. A new system of teacher career management and wage scales was introduced in 2013. Since then, teacher salaries have risen and further rises are expected until 2017. The *Decree on Teacher Training System (2012)* reintroduces an undivided teacher training programme and increases the duration of in-school teaching practice from half a year to one year. Furthermore, to improve educational outcomes, the *National Public Education Act (2011)* sets the regulatory framework for quality teaching by defining teachers' tasks, rights and obligations.
- As part of the *Decree on the Admission Procedure in Higher Education (2012)*, Hungary is gradually raising the minimum admission requirements to universities between 2013 and 2016. Additionally, in 2013, the quota system for selection of applicants was replaced by minimum score requirements per study programme and admission based on programme capacities (*Decree on National Higher Education Excellence, 2013*). In addition, the *National Higher Education Act (2011)* introduces new short-cycle higher education programmes as an effort to better meet the demands of the labour market. Hungary also aims to widen the partnership between tertiary education institutions and the industrial sector by introducing practical training at business partners' enterprises in the curricula of specific programmes.
- The central state has taken over the maintenance of schools and pedagogical institutions from local governments. To achieve this task, it has established the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre, and has set up 198 school districts with the responsibility of maintaining educational institutions.
- As part of the *National Higher Education Act (2011)* and the *Decree on National Higher Education Excellence (2013)*, Hungary aims to switch from direct public funding of higher education institutions (also known as normative funding) to a funding system based on state-financed scholarships. This reform aims to create an equality-based support allocation model for higher education institutions and faculties satisfying pre-defined quality criteria.
- System-level reforms have been adopted between 2011-13 in VET, better matching skills with labour market needs, strengthening the professional content of teaching/learning at secondary level, and providing larger workplace training and tools for a higher stakeholder engagement (*Act No. CLXXXVII of 2011 on VET*).

Spotlight: Providing various forms of support to students in need

Hungary developed target programmes providing financial and pedagogical support as well as mentorship from educators, such as the *Provisions Scholarship Programme (Útravaló)* and the *Arany János Talent Fostering Programme (2000)* to alleviate the financial burden of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds in secondary education.

In tertiary education, students who do not receive a state scholarship are eligible for a state-subsidised student loan at a fixed interest rate of 2% to cover their study-related expenses as part of the *Tied Student Loan (2012)*.

ICELAND

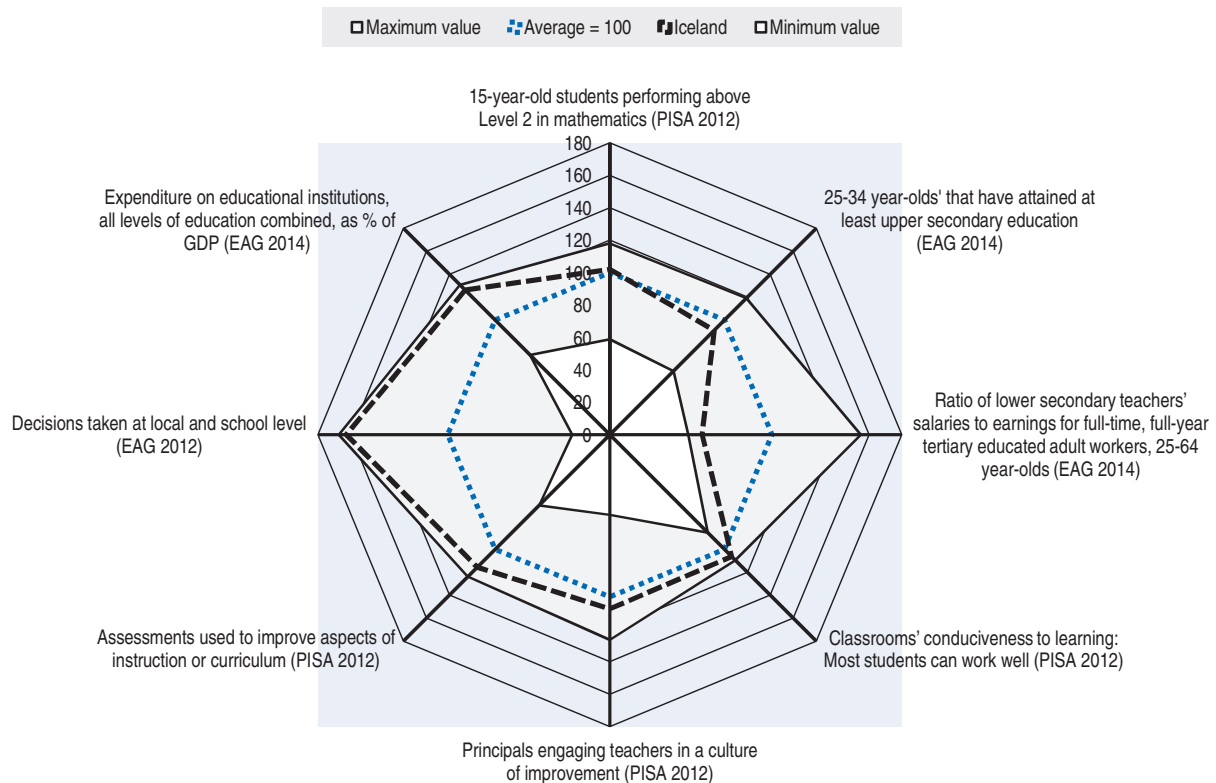
Context

Students: Iceland performs at around the OECD average in mathematics in PISA 2012, with below-average performance in science and reading, and decreased performance in all three assessment areas across PISA cycles. Students' socio-economic background in Iceland had one of the smallest impacts on mathematics performance among OECD countries. Pre-primary education usually starts at age 2 and an above-average proportion of 3-4 year-olds is enrolled. School is compulsory and comprehensive from age 6 to 16, which covers primary to lower secondary levels (among the longest periods of comprehensive schooling in OECD countries). Tracking starts at age 16, and selection mechanisms such as school choice may hamper equity. Attainment in upper secondary education and enrolment in vocational education and training (VET) programmes at upper secondary level are below the OECD average. Re-entry to general upper secondary is assured, demonstrated by a high proportion of students (particularly in VET) over age 20 with labour market experience. Transitions between upper secondary vocational programmes and higher education are sometimes obstructed or difficult to navigate. Attainment in tertiary education is around the OECD average, and unemployment is below average.

Institutions: Autonomy over resource allocation and curriculum and assessment in Iceland's schools is above the OECD average on issues such as hiring and dismissing teachers as well as establishing student assessment policies. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of five years, including a mandatory teaching practicum. Teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include below-average class size and below-average teaching time in primary and secondary education. A lower proportion of teachers in Iceland than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Evaluation and assessment in Iceland emphasises improvement more than accountability, and Icelandic students take national tests in Grades 4, 7 and 10.


System: Governance of the education system is shared between central and local authorities. The Icelandic Parliament is responsible for the school system and sets the basic objectives and administrative framework. Municipalities are responsible for pre-primary and compulsory education, and most schooling decisions in lower secondary education are taken at school level. The central government steers upper secondary schools and higher education institutions. Expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is one of the highest among OECD countries, with a higher share from public sources than the OECD average. Also, student loan funds are available for tertiary and upper secondary VET students.

Figure 12.14. Selected indicators compared with the average: Iceland



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Iceland Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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Key issues and goals

Students: Iceland reports an aim to improve literacy in compulsory education and, in particular, to raise literacy and educational attainment among immigrant students. Iceland has also set as a goal to make its education system more inclusive from pre-primary to upper secondary level, and intends to increase the proportion of students entering VET and the apprenticeship system.

Institutions: Iceland also recognises the need for improving teacher education and professional development. Other priorities include implementing the new system of student assessment introduced by the new National Curriculum Guidelines, as well as strengthening and financing external evaluation at all school levels.

System: Iceland is considering merging universities and increasing co-operation among municipalities. According to Iceland's reports, the country faces the challenge of providing funding to respond to a large increase in its tertiary education student population and an expansion of postgraduate programmes, in a context where budget cuts have adversely affected implementation of new legislation and national curriculum guidelines.

Selected policy responses

- *New National Curriculum Guidelines* for pre-primary, compulsory and upper secondary education (2011-13) and a *National Qualification Framework for Higher Education* (2007) have been defined to ensure the quality of education.
- The Council for Teachers' Education and Professional Development, with representatives from the teachers' union, teacher training institutions and the Ministry of Education, was established (2012).
- The Association of Municipalities and the Ministry of Education set a formal co-operation agreement on the financing and execution of external evaluation in compulsory education (2011).
- A Quality Council for universities was established (2012).

Spotlight: Engaging the community to re-think Icelandic schools

A community-based approach was used to think about quality in Icelandic elementary schools as part of the government's *2020 – Moving Iceland Forward initiative* (2010). National assemblies of citizens discussed ideas to improve quality in elementary schools and sent their recommendations to the *Moving Iceland Forward steering committee*. It resulted in *Iceland 2020 – Defining a vision and objectives for education and other public policy areas*.

IRELAND

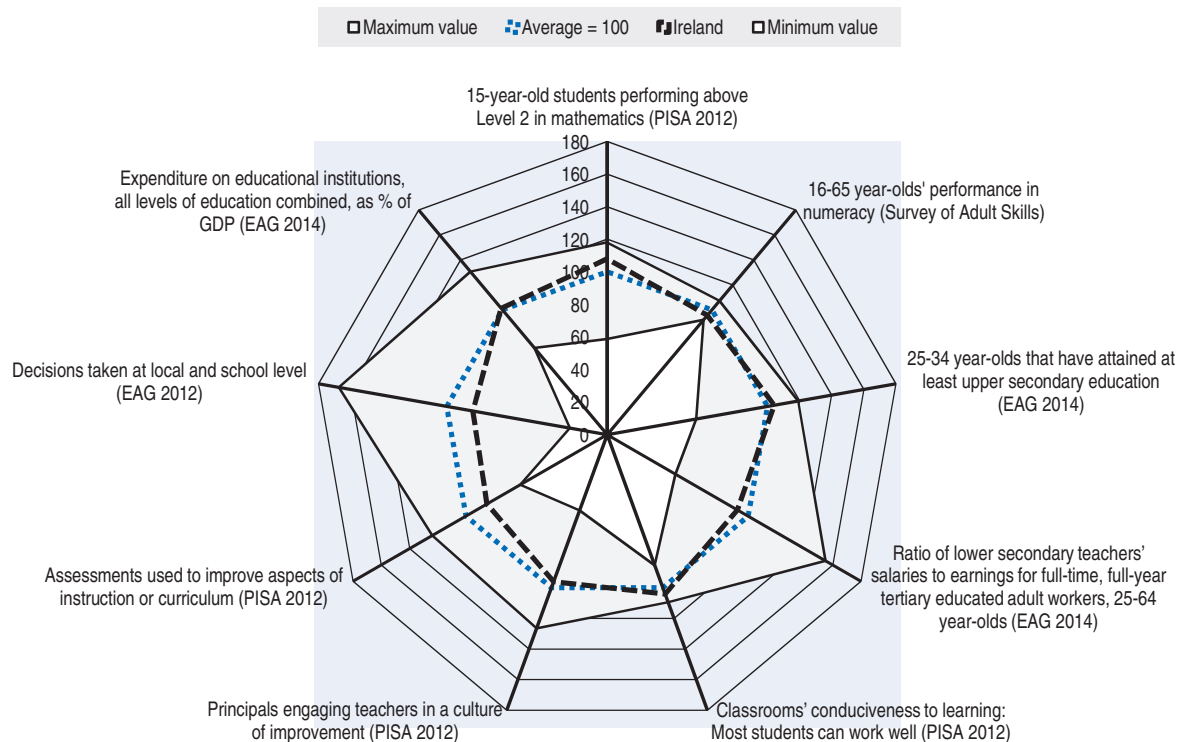
Context

Students: Ireland is a high performer in PISA 2012 in mathematics, reading and science, with improvement in science, unchanged performance in mathematics and decreased performance in reading across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on Irish students' performance in mathematics in PISA 2012 is around the OECD average. In recent years, the percentage of students with immigrant background increased. Some aspects of Irish education contribute to a high level of equity. Children aged 3-4 are provided with a free year of pre-primary education, and students aged 4-6 can enrol in either pre-primary or primary school. Education is compulsory from age 6 until age 16, with low grade repetition compared to the average among OECD countries, and tracking starting at age 15. Academic selection of students for admission to schools is not allowed. Attainment rates in upper secondary education are around the OECD average. The enrolment rate in vocational education and training (VET) upper secondary programmes (limited to a narrow set of occupations) is comparatively low, even though transition from VET to other educational pathways is ensured. Tertiary education attainment is above average, and proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy among 16-65 year-olds and 16-24 year-olds are slightly below the average of their peers in countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills. In the context of the economic crisis, unemployment is above average.

Institutions: Autonomy over the use of curriculum and assessment in Irish schools is around the OECD average, and autonomy over resource allocation, such as hiring and dismissing teaching staff, is below average. Teachers in Ireland need to have a credential or license in addition to pre-service training (five years for lower secondary teachers), as well as a mandatory teaching practicum. In primary and secondary schools, their teaching time is longer than in other OECD countries. The Inspectorate undertakes external school and system evaluations, using various sources of information, including standardised tests and examinations focused on student achievement.

System: The school system is steered by schools and the central government through the Department of Education and Skills. Schools are locally owned and managed by private (mainly religious) organisations, and universities are autonomous. In the context of the economic crisis, the government has been assessing how to reallocate resources to ensure sustained investment in education. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher share of public funding than the OECD average. Ireland had also one of the greatest increases in expenditure per student among OECD countries during 2005-11 at the tertiary level.

Figure 12.15. Selected indicators compared with the average: Ireland



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Ireland Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Ireland* (OECD, 2013) and OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171727>

Key issues and goals

Students: A challenge for Ireland is helping all students from different socio-economic and increasingly diverse immigrant backgrounds to reach their potential. Ireland has had to cope with many difficulties during the economic crisis, including an increase in youth unemployment.

Institutions: Irish school leaders and teachers need to meet the particular challenges of learning environments in small schools and to deliver quality education across all schools. Schools need the capacity to raise performance and deliver quality education for all students, with special attention to diversity and students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. School self-evaluations, teacher appraisals and assessments for improvement can be strengthened. An integrated evaluation and assessment framework can help improve teaching and student outcomes.

System: Ensuring that those working at the local and school level can respond to national education objectives is a key goal for Ireland. Due to the economic crisis, Ireland has had to deal with significant budget cuts in education. Therefore, it is seen as important to maximise resources to ensure that budget cuts do not affect the quality and equity of the system.

Selected policy responses

- The *National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among children and young people 2011-2020* (2011) aims to improve literacy and numeracy standards among children and young people.
- *Initial Teacher Education Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (2011), developed by the Teaching Council, aims to clarify the inputs (or characteristics) of initial training programmes, the processes that student teachers should follow in these programmes, and the expected outputs of these programmes.
- *School Self Evaluation: Guidelines for Primary School* (2012) and *School Self Evaluation: Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools* (2012) were introduced to improve the quality of learning.
- The Further Education and Training (FET) Sector in Ireland is undergoing significant reform. SOLAS (*An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna*, 2013) is the new national FET Authority. SOLAS provides oversight and funding of the FET programmes, with 16 Educational and Training Boards (ETBs, 2013) established to replace 33 Vocational Education Committees.
- *Higher education reforms* (2011) aim to ensure efficient funding. These reforms include a gradual increase of student tuitions between 2011 and 2015. In addition, a mean-tested grant and a new *scholarship scheme* aim to temper the effect of the tuition increase on students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Spotlight: Improving opportunities for disadvantaged students

In 2005 the Department (then called Education and Science) developed *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) as an on-going national policy for educational inclusion. The plan consists of a standardised system to identify each school's level of socio-economic disadvantage (based on its community) and an integrated School Support Programme that provides schools and school clusters or communities with additional resources and support, depending on their level of disadvantage. The key initiatives of DEIS include:

- early childhood education for disadvantaged communities
- targeted student-teacher ratio to reduce class size in disadvantaged primary schools
- access to teachers/co-ordinators in rural primary schools
- professionalising school leaders and teachers as well as access to an administrative principal
- measures to target deficits in literacy and numeracy
- additional funding for school books, based on level of disadvantage
- support for school library and librarians for post-primary schools with high levels of disadvantage
- access to Home, School, Community Liaison services and to the School Completion Programme
- measures such as guidance and counselling to increase attendance, retention and attainment
- more curriculum choice
- improved access to higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The independent government-funded Educational Research Centre evaluated the programme in 120 DEIS schools first in 2007 and again in 2010. The findings show an overall improvement in reading and mathematics in both urban and rural schools, with rural students improving more than their urban peers. Evaluations by the Inspectorate confirmed the positive effect of DEIS in primary schools. The Department points to positive outcomes of DEIS post-primary schools, with an increase in completion rates from 68.2% for 2001-07 cohorts to 80.1% for 2006-12 cohorts. Further evaluations are planned to understand the specificities of the policy that are contributing to the positive outcomes.

The detailed policy profile is available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-25-en>

ISRAEL

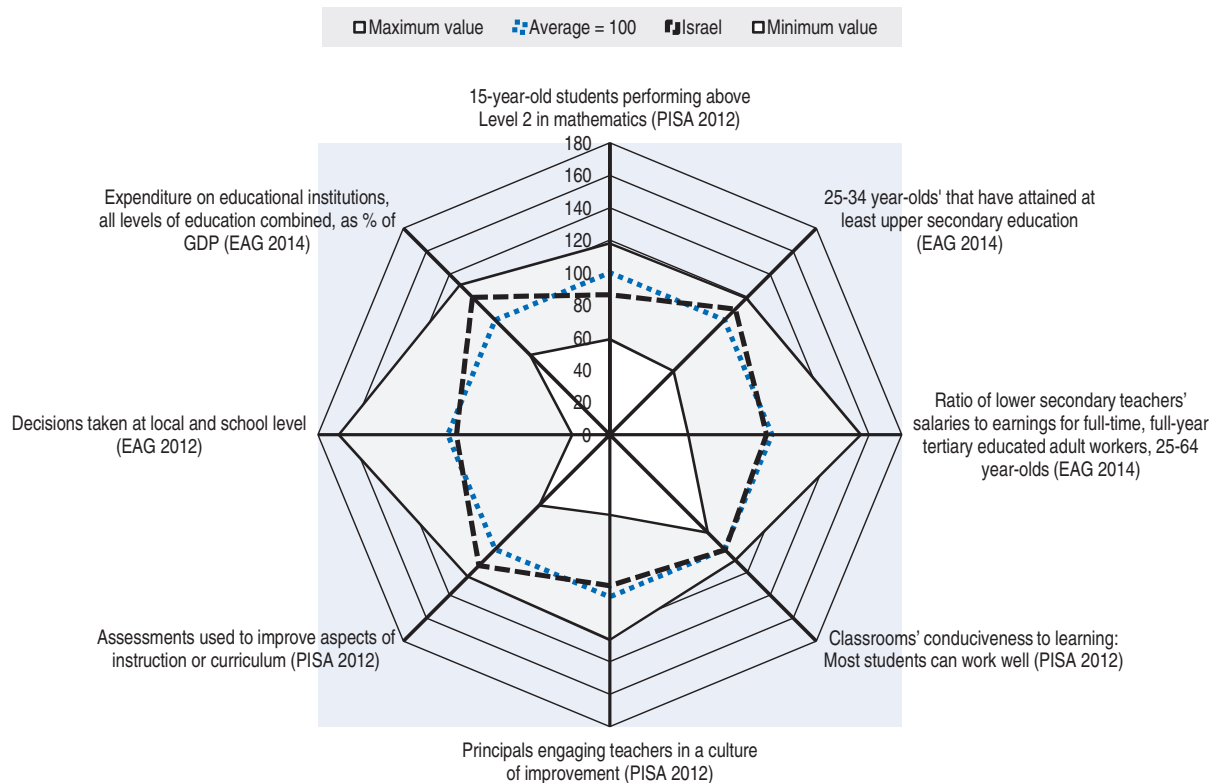
Context

Students: Israel's performance in PISA 2012 is below the OECD average, with one of the highest improvements among OECD countries in mathematics, reading and science across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on students' performance in mathematics is around the OECD average, and Israel has strong differences in mathematics performance between and within schools and across socio-economic groups. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 3, with the enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds above the OECD average, and education is compulsory from age 5 to 18. Israel has a heterogeneous education system. From primary to post-secondary level, students are generally sorted into six education streams of schools, three for the Hebrew-speaking community (secular, religious and ultra-orthodox) and three for the Arabic-speaking community (for Arab, Druze and Bedouin minorities). Ability grouping and school choice are also common among a majority of 15-year-olds. The enrolment rate in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is lower than average, and Israel has above-average upper secondary and tertiary education attainment. In the context of the economic crisis, unemployment remains below the OECD average.

Institutions: Autonomy over curriculum and assessment in Israel's schools is around the OECD average, and autonomy over resource allocation is below the OECD average. School principals must have a special tertiary-level degree authorised by the Institute of Israeli School Principals. Lower secondary teachers must follow a four-year pre-service teacher training programme, including a mandatory teaching practicum. Teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include above-average class-size compared to other OECD countries, lower salaries (with some increases since 2000), above average teaching time in primary education and below-average teaching time at secondary level. A higher proportion of teachers in Israel than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. The evaluation and assessment framework is well-structured and uses both internal and external tools. Two central external student assessments are the *Meitzav* (system-level evaluation in Grades 2, 5 and 8) and the *Bagrut* (upper secondary exit examination and matriculation exam).

System: The education system in Israel is steered by the central government. While school autonomy has increased, the Ministry of Education determines education policy, especially in primary and secondary schools. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher share of private funding than the OECD average.

Figure 12.16. Selected indicators compared with the average: Israel



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Israel Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171731>

Key issues and goals

Students: Israel has large gaps in educational performance among student population subgroups, with a heterogeneous system and a relatively large dispersion of socio-economic-cultural background of students between and within schools. While aiming to promote cultural diversity and recognise students' gaps, tracking, grouping and school choice practices might widen inequities and contribute to the social segregation of students if not well-managed. Other points of interest reported by Israel include strengthening VET in upper secondary education.

Institutions: Israel sees the need to ensure quality education in a school system that has grown significantly, with changes in the composition of the student population. The country considers that this requires expanding and ensuring the quality of the teaching force, ensuring equity in the conditions of education delivery, and adapting the curriculum and teaching practices to the needs of the 21st century.

System: Some actions reported by Israel to help reduce achievement gaps include expanding the pedagogical and financial autonomy of schools, while providing support and capacity-building to carry out these tasks successfully.

Selected policy responses

- The *New Horizon Programme (Ofek Hadash)* (2007) lengthens teachers' work-week in primary and lower secondary schools for working in small groups with underperforming students, in exchange for increased teacher pay (with higher starting salaries, although flatter salary structures). The programme defined a separate and more generous pay scale for school principals and greater autonomy (for example, for hiring teachers, granting tenure and promotion or starting the process to fire teachers). With this reform, teachers' salaries after 15 years of experience had an annual increase of 7.9% in primary education and 8.5% in lower secondary education between 2010-11 (the second highest increase among OECD countries). An *evaluation* conducted three years after its inception found that this programme is well implemented in schools and has wide acceptance among teachers and principals, and that the individual hours with students are perceived as effective to foster student improvement. At the same time, teachers reported that these hours take place during the school day, with teachers feeling overstressed, and teachers and principals are still reporting a lack of adequate physical conditions and autonomy.
- The *New Horizon Programme* introduced school-based assessment co-ordinators in schools. Their role is to assist schools to establish a culture of assessment for learning at school as an everyday process by helping schools to define their information needs, establish a variety of instruments to measure student learning and improvement, and interpret data from internal and external assessments. School-based co-ordinators should have teaching experience and a master's degree in measurement and assessment (or in another field as long as they have completed an academic specialisation in measurement).

Spotlight: Attracting university graduates to the teaching profession

Some programmes have sought to attract university-level graduates into the teaching profession in general and to science areas in particular. In *Academics for Teaching* (2008), participants undergo an intensive teacher-training programme (no tuition fees and a monthly allowance) and teach full-time with a commitment to teach for three years. They receive a normal teacher's salary in addition to a supplement, and after the three years they can enrol, for free, in a master's degree in return for an additional two years' commitment. Other programmes to attract individuals to the teaching profession are *Outstanding Achievers for Education* (to attract students with good performance at the tertiary level, 2009), *Teach First* (to promote teaching as an interim career move following graduation from university, 2010), *Educational Pioneer* (to encourage those already working with youth in other contexts to become teachers) and the *Atidim* programme (to encourage English and science teachers to work in remote and disadvantaged areas, 2002).

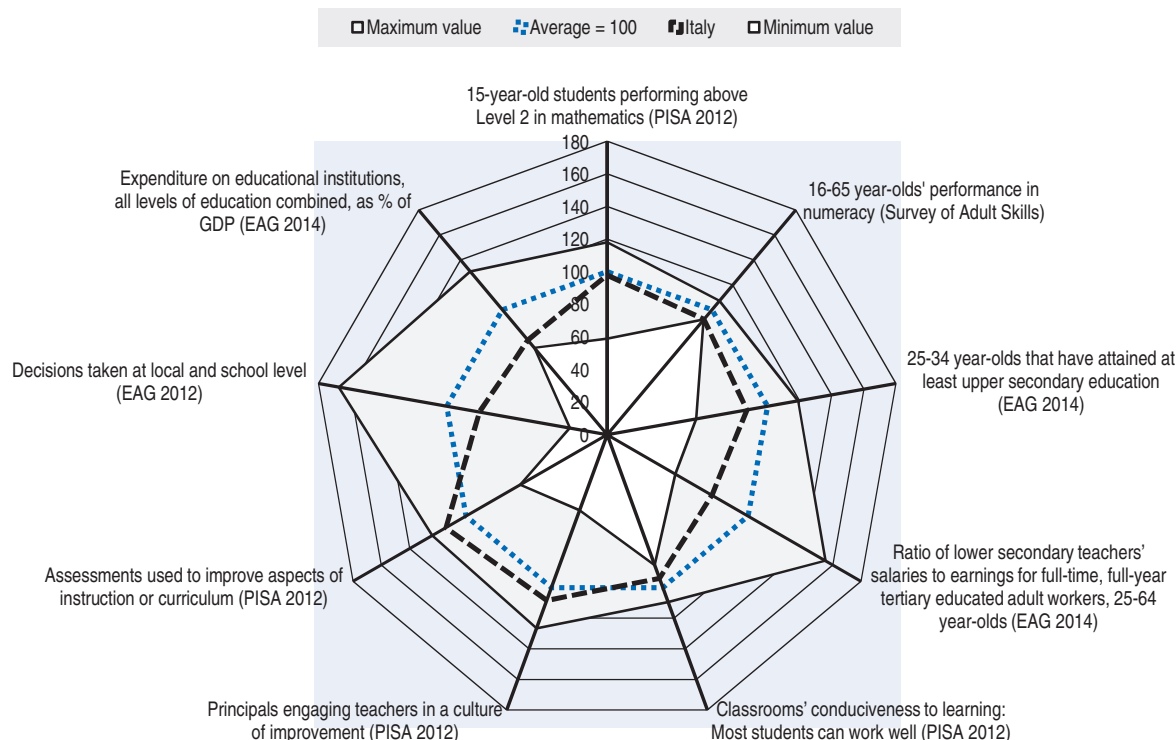
ITALY

Context

Students: Italy's performance in mathematics, reading and science is below the OECD average in PISA 2012. There have been increases in mathematics and science performance across PISA cycles, while reading performance remains unchanged. Students' socio-economic background had less impact on mathematics performance than in other OECD countries. Enrolment of 3-4 year-olds in pre-primary education is above the OECD average, and education is compulsory from age 6 to 16, covering primary, lower secondary and the first two years of upper secondary education. Large regional performance differences remain, and students with immigrant background score lower than their peers with no immigrant background. If not managed carefully, some system-level policies, such as student tracking from age 14 (one year before the OECD average) and high grade repetition rates, may hinder equity. Attainment rates are lower than the OECD average in upper secondary and tertiary education, especially in the southern regions, although more students enrol in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) than the OECD average. The Survey of Adult Skills shows that skills in literacy and numeracy among young adults (16-24) are higher than among 16-65 year-olds but lower than their peers in other countries. Labour market demand for employable people with high technical skills remains unmet, while both overall unemployment and unemployment for tertiary educated individuals are higher than the OECD average.

Institutions: Italian schools have one of the lowest levels of autonomy among OECD countries over resource allocation (such as in hiring and dismissal of teachers) and an above-average level of autonomy over curriculum and assessment (such as in establishing student assessment policies and choosing textbooks). Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of six years including a mandatory teaching practicum, and to pass a competitive examination to enter the teaching profession. In the last ten years, there has been about a 90% turnover in school headship through new recruitment procedures. The country has one of the highest proportions of teachers aged 50 or older among OECD countries. Teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include below-average class size, teaching time and salaries. Compared to the TALIS average, a higher proportion of teachers in Italy would choose to work as teachers again, while a lower-than-average proportion of teachers consider that the teaching profession is valued in society.

System: Responsibility for education is shared between the central government and regions. The central government is responsible for governance of the education system, setting nationwide minimum standards and central principles. Most schooling decisions in lower secondary level are taken at the central and school levels. The state allocates funds to schools, taking into account, among other factors, the student body, human resources and type of school. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is below the OECD average, with a higher share of public funding than the OECD average.

Figure 12.17. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Italy**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Italy Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171744>

Key issues and goals

Students: Italy reports the challenges of reducing regional disparities in core skills performance, supporting students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, reducing early school leaving and ensuring completion of compulsory education. Another issue identified by Italy is reducing youth unemployment and skills mismatch by tackling unmet labour market demand for higher technical skills.

Institutions: In recent years, an important issue for Italy has been turning aging and historic infrastructure into safe and stimulating learning environments. Other issues of prime interest are creating an evaluation culture, setting up a national school evaluation system and developing national education standards.

System: Some current issues include co-ordination between the state, regions and local authorities, as well as enhancing school autonomy. Italy is also trying to identify the means to increase spending efficiency, and aims to reinforce monitoring and evaluation processes to guarantee financial accountability in public spending.

Selected policy responses

- Italy reformed its *national curriculum for ISCED* levels from early childhood to lower secondary education in 2012 (Ministerial Decree No. 254/2012).
- A reform of upper secondary education, which started in 2010 and is expected to be completed by 2014/15, aims to reorganise and simplify pathways at upper secondary level, which have increased over past decades. The reform limits the types of paths, based on identified needs at national and regional levels. Upper secondary VET comprises technical institutes and vocational programmes, with some autonomy over curriculum to better meet local requirements related to employment. All programmes last five years (two two-year cycles and one final year).
- New post-secondary VET pathways were set up, such as the Higher Technical Institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori*, ITS 2011). Also, an *agreement* between the state and regions (2010) aims to ensure alignment to the minimum performance levels laid down in Legislative Decree n. 225/2005 and coherence between the state vocational education system and the regional vocational training system.
- Following a comprehensive reform of tertiary education (law No. 240/2010), a new quality assurance and accreditation system for institutions and study programmes has been implemented. The system is divided into three steps: 1) an *ex ante* accreditation, 2) a periodical accreditation and 3) a periodical evaluation. Law 240/2010 also aims to fully integrate doctoral training in the degree structure. The law also defines standards and criteria for institutions to set up a doctoral programme and Ministerial Decree 45/2013 defines accreditation and quality assurance criteria for doctoral programmes.
- Initial training of school leaders also underwent reform, and compulsory initial training is now provided by the National School of Administration (2013). Also, a comprehensive reform of initial teacher education (Ministerial Decree 249/2010) from pre-primary to upper secondary education at levels 0-3 is taking place to enhance regular initial teacher training (e.g. selection of candidates, quality of training and accreditation).
- Italy set up performance-based funding in tertiary education. The Operating Fund (*Fondo di finanziamento ordinario*, FFO) provides a lump sum to universities (86% in 2013), and the rest (13.5% in 2013) is granted according to regular on-time student enrolment and research results. The Multiannual Planning Fund (*Fondo per la Programmazione*) supports initiatives that contribute to the Ministry's Multiannual Strategic Plan (law No. 240/2010).

Spotlight: Setting a National Evaluation System

The new National Evaluation System (SNV, 2013) is composed of the *National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training system* (INVALSI, 2004), the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Research in Education (INDIRE) and the Inspectorate. Schools are considered important contributors to the evaluation process. The regulation will be implemented as from 2014 and will build on the success of the pilot project VALES where schools voluntarily participated in an evaluation process of school leadership and performance.

The school evaluation process will take place in four phases: 1) the school will self-evaluate; 2) with the help of a co-ordinated team, the school leader will complete the school self-evaluation report setting out the school's evidence-based evaluative judgements about its strengths and areas for improvement; 3) the report will inform the work of a visiting team of experts that will carry out the external evaluation, with findings used by the school to inform the school improvement plan and develop improvement targets with support of INDIRE or other qualified institutions; and 4) publication and dissemination of the results. The school self-evaluation report and improvement targets will provide the basis for evaluation of school leaders. The INVALSI has also achieved a complete roll-out of standardised tests in foundation skills in primary and lower secondary education (Grades 2, 5, 8, and 10), as part of the National Assessment System (2008). Implementation in Grade 6 has recently been suspended (2013), while implementation of a standardised test for Grade 13 is not yet operational.

JAPAN

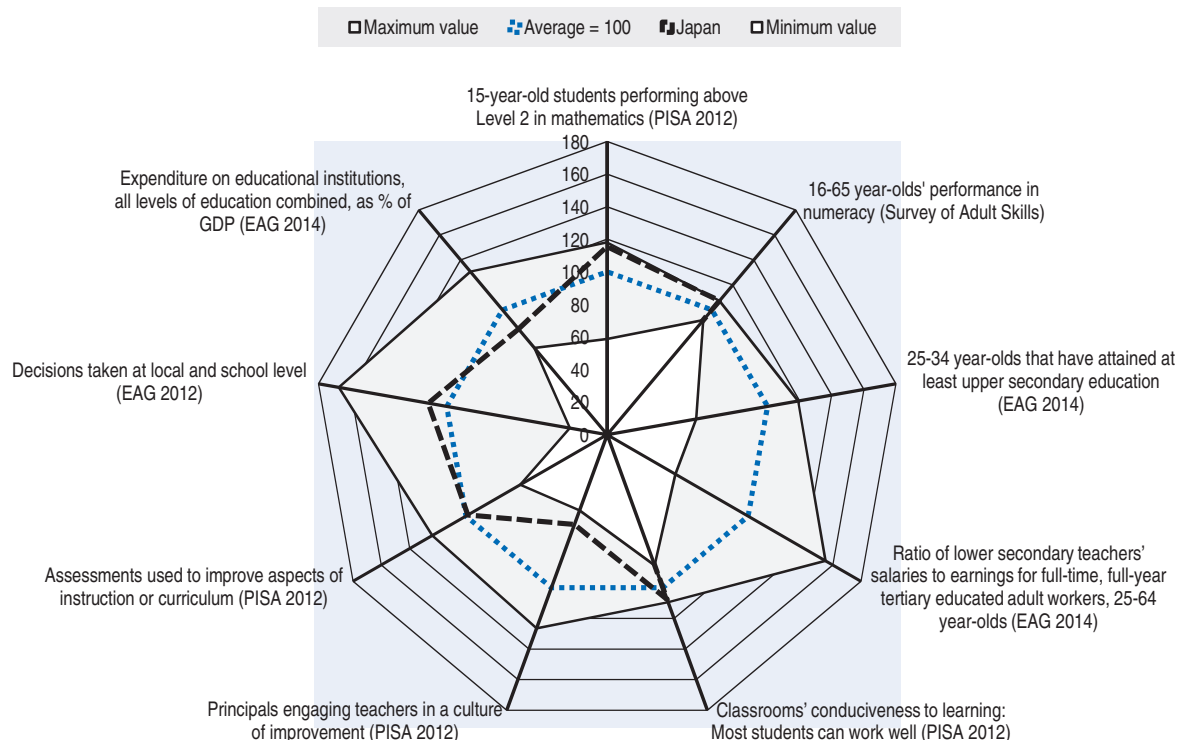
Context

Students: Japan is among the top PISA 2012 performers in mathematics, science and reading, with improvements in reading and science and unchanged performance in mathematics across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on student performance is below the average across OECD countries. Japan has several policies that promote equity in education. Pre-primary education usually starts at age 3, and the number of 3-4 year-olds enrolled is above the OECD average (although enrolment is mainly in private institutions). Compulsory education lasts from age 6 to 15, covering primary and lower secondary levels. School choice is limited, with late tracking starting at age 15 and no grade repetition. Japan also has an above-average attainment rate in upper secondary education, although fewer students than the OECD average are enrolled in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET). Tertiary attainment is above average, with a large proportion of adults graduating from more technical tertiary programmes. According to the Survey of Adult Skills, adults (16-65 year-olds) have high literacy and numeracy skills compared to other countries, and literacy skills are even higher among 16-24 year-olds. Moreover, unemployment remains below the OECD average.

Institutions: Autonomy over allocation of resources such as hiring and dismissal of teachers is below the OECD average in Japanese schools, but they have the highest level of autonomy among OECD countries regarding curricula and student assessment policies. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of four years including a mandatory teaching practicum. Primary and lower secondary teachers in Japan have below-average teaching time, combined with above-average class sizes. Japanese lower secondary teachers also work the longest hours among countries participating in TALIS. A lower proportion of teachers in Japan than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. School assessment is organised at the local level through teachers' self-evaluation and assessment of the school by the local community.

System: Central and local authorities are responsible for decision-making on the education system in Japan. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is the main body in charge of education, with most of the decisions on lower secondary education taken at regional or local levels of government. Most schooling decisions in lower secondary education are taken by regional and local governments and schools. The share of GDP devoted to educational institutions (all education levels combined) is below the OECD average, with a higher share of private funding than the OECD average. With the high number of students entering higher education in Japan, the country is experiencing an increasing demand for public loans and scholarships.

Figure 12.18. Selected indicators compared with the average: Japan



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Japan Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171754>

Key issues and goals

Students: Japan reports as issues of key interest continuing to train future skilled workers in a context of globalisation and a decreasing working-age population. Additionally, Japan sees transitioning from school to work as increasingly difficult, resulting in high rates of highly educated young people neither in employment nor in education or training. To face these challenges, increasing the responsiveness of higher education to the demands of a globalised world is among Japan's reported priorities.

Institutions: Japan reports that it aims to secure talented, motivated and resourceful teachers to increase education quality and provide students with skills to face the globalised market. Other key goals identified by Japan for education improvement include developing school management and evaluation of the education system, providing support and feedback in the process of increasing school autonomy, and improving communication with parents and local communities on school activities.

System: Japan reports high interest in engaging local communities in children's education. Regardless of the financial situation of local governments, Japan aims to maintain equal opportunities and ensure standards of compulsory education for all, as well as to secure funds to achieve the targets and carry out measures introduced by the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education (2013).

Selected policy responses

- The Project for *Promoting Educational Activities through Co-operation among Schools, Families and Communities* (2007) provides educational activities thanks to volunteers with rich social experience.
- Based on the Career and Occupational Education in Schools for the Future report by the Central Council of Education (2011), MEXT proposed *guidelines for developing VET education in Japan*.
- MEXT is mobilising budget and systemic resources to support top Japanese universities to compete internationally as part of the Initiative for Emerging Global University (2014). Japan aims to double the number of Japanese students overseas by 2020 as part of the *Japan Revitalisation Strategy*. Examples of initiatives undertaken include a new system where public and private sectors co-operate to assist Japanese students studying abroad, and *Go Global Japan* (2012), in which MEXT supports universities in providing students with strong foreign language and communication skills.
- The government formulated the 300 000 International Students Plan (2008) to increase the number of overseas students in Japan to 300 000, and is currently promoting acceptance of high performing overseas students in Japanese universities. The Japan Revitalisation Strategy will also aim to increase the number of overseas students in Japan.
- The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education (2013) sets direction for investment. Using benchmarks from OECD countries, the plan outlines measures to secure financial resources to achieve established targets and reforms. The plan also clarifies the progress evaluation process.
- MEXT enhanced the *scholarship loan programme* for students in higher education and introduced an interest-free scholarship loan with an income-contingent repayment policy (2012) to improve access to higher education.
- After the earthquake in 2011, the OECD Tohoku School project was created to support local innovations to foster resilience, creativity and 21st century skills in the 100 students from the region. The project was operationalised by Fukushima University, in support of the OECD. It was seen as a good example of transforming education by project-based learning with a real life issue and with bottom-up initiatives, leadership and ownership. The project will aim to go global and explore how local innovations can be born to find solutions to challenges in the world of 2030.

Spotlight: Setting curriculum guidelines

The Ministry of Education (MEXT) revised the Course of Study (学習指導要領), which serves as the fundamental standards for school curriculum (in 2008 for elementary and lower secondary schools and in 2009 for upper secondary schools) to increase children's fundamental knowledge, skills, and capacity to think and communicate. The revision came as a response to studies, including PISA, showing declining results for Japanese students in reading comprehension, application of knowledge and skills, desire to learn, study and lifestyle habits, confidence in themselves and the future, and physical strength.

The idea of fostering a *zest for life* is central to the revised guidelines. Students are expected to acquire solid fundamental knowledge and skills, to develop the ability to think, make decisions and express themselves, and then to use these skills and abilities to solve problems. The guidelines strengthen the curriculum in languages, mathematics and science, and increase study hours in class. They also aim to nurture a sound mind and fitness by enhancing moral and physical education.

KOREA

Context

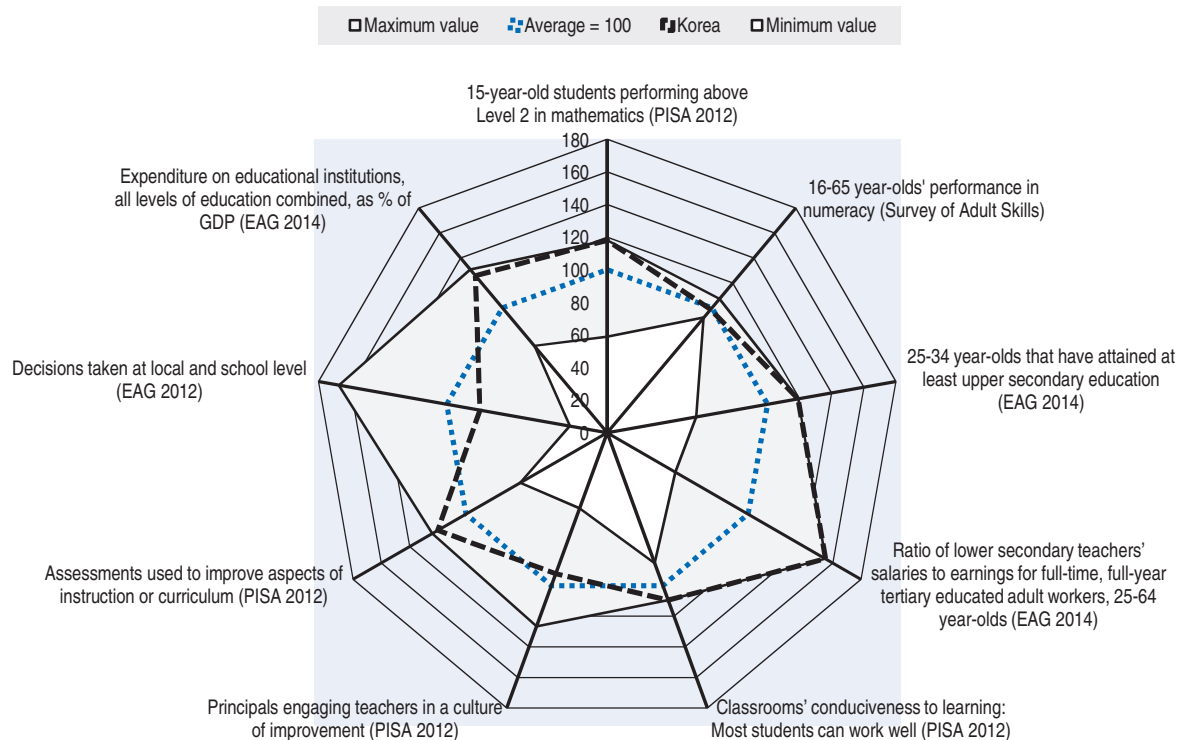
Students: Korea is one of the OECD's top performers in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2012, with improvements in science and reading and unchanged performance in mathematics across PISA cycles. Students' socio-economic background had less impact on 15-year-olds' performance in mathematics in PISA 2012 than in other OECD countries. Korea had one of the strongest relations between mathematics performance and student perseverance among participant countries in the OECD. Education usually starts at age 3, with above-average enrolment rates in pre-primary education (mainly private), while compulsory education covers primary and lower secondary levels from age 6 to 14 (one of the shortest periods in OECD countries). Tracking starts at age 14 (one year before the OECD average), and grade repetition is very low. Korea has some of the highest attainment rates in upper secondary and tertiary education for 25-34 year-olds among OECD countries. The enrolment rate in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is below average, and the post-secondary education system is well developed, allowing post-secondary VET students to enter a university degree programme. Literacy skills among 16-65 year-olds in Korea are high compared to the average of countries participating in the Survey for Adults Skills, and even higher among 16-24 year-olds, while numeracy skills are around average for 16-65 year-olds and above average for 16-24 year-olds. Unemployment rates were among the lowest in OECD countries, but Korea's employment rate for population with at least upper secondary education is also comparatively lower. This suggests a labour force that is not being fully used.

Institutions: Autonomy over resource allocation in Korean schools is below the OECD average and autonomy over curriculum and assessment is among the highest levels in OECD countries. To teach at lower secondary level, teachers undergo a four-year pre-service training including a mandatory teaching practicum, and pass a competitive examination to enter the teaching profession. Primary and secondary teachers have above-average class size (among the largest in OECD countries) and below-average teaching time. Compared to the TALIS average, a higher proportion of teachers in Korea consider that the teaching profession is valued in society, while a lower proportion of teachers would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. The scope of the evaluation and assessment framework scope is broadening from student assessment to overall evaluation of the system. Teacher appraisal aims to support continuous professional development, and school evaluation includes internal and external (local and national) evaluations.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between central and local authorities. The Ministry of Education and municipal and provincial offices provide primary to upper secondary education, while higher education is provided by the Ministry of Education and councils for university and university college education. The share of GDP devoted to educational institutions (for all education levels combined) is among the

highest in OECD countries, with one of the highest shares of private funding among OECD countries, mainly as a result of contributions of households. Korea also had one of the significant increases in expenditure per student among OECD countries during 2005-11, for all education levels.

Figure 12.19. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Korea**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Korea Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171764>

Key issues and goals

Students: Korea reports working to further improve equity in education attainment. It aims to increase the percentage of resilient students (students of disadvantaged socio-economic background who achieve high performance), from 2.5% in 2012 to 10% in 2017. The country also faces a considerable expansion of the private education sector (mainly through tutoring or private institutions called *hagwon*), which may affect student motivation, increase the financial pressure for households and be a source of inequities in access to further education. Another priority reported is preparing occupational skills standards to achieve a stable qualification and training system at the national level, as well as preparing a career development system for lifelong learning. To better prepare students for the future, Korea also aims to develop programmes to improve entrepreneurship and research.

Institutions: Korea reports efforts to provide an education environment where students are less stressed and develop their full potential beyond cognitive skills, according to their individual needs and motivations. Korea also considers it important to keep

teachers' and principals' knowledge and professional skills updated to help them face emerging needs in today's knowledge society and digital age. In addition, Korea reports working to provide a coherent and well-aligned evaluation system.

System: Korea aims to better co-ordinate overall education spending and budgeting plans (distributed at different government levels) to make more efficient use of resources. It also reports that it aims to ease financial burdens on students from disadvantaged backgrounds for entrance into tertiary education, through different criteria.

Selected policy responses

- In 2014, after-school childcare has been extended and implemented until 5 p.m. daily for all elementary students in Grades 1 and 2 whose families demonstrate their desire to receive the service. Also, children from multicultural, single-parent, or low-income families who are in need of additional care are receiving childcare service until 10 p.m.
- In addition to after-school childcare that is available to 3-5 year-olds, the *Nuri* curriculum (integrated curriculum at early childhood education and nursery) has extended its programme time by up to five hours and the government is providing support for tuition.
- Korea is developing a *National Competency Standard* (2013) to identify and standardise the competencies needed to successfully perform a job. Also, the *Learning Account* (2009) is a system which can accumulate and manage a person's learning experiences, providing credits and qualifications for career development.
- Korea launched the National Teacher Professional Development and Evaluation System (NTPDES) (2010) to improve teacher effectiveness.
- As part of aforementioned policy, Korea is also broadening its evaluation and assessment framework (2010) to encompass the whole education system (student assessment, school evaluation, teacher appraisal, evaluation of principals, evaluation of local education authorities, evaluation of research institutes and evaluation of educational policies). Data collection and management as well as statistical surveys of education are provided by the National Education Information System (NEIS), and the School Information Disclosure System. Measures are being taken to link the systems so policy makers can better understand what is happening at schools rather than looking at the outcomes of educational administrative bodies. Moreover, efforts are being made to link data collection/management systems with the evaluation systems.

Spotlight: Introducing test-free semesters in lower secondary education

The government will also introduce *test-free semesters* for lower secondary students by 2016 to reduce student stress related to tests and help them acquire life values and engage in various activities, including career search. Korea had defined 42 schools with test-free semesters by the end of 2013. In 2014/15, test-free semesters will be open to any school that wishes to adopt this policy, and will be required by all middle schools by 2016. Middle schools will only have three national test subjects (Korean/Literature, English, mathematics), and elementary schools will no longer administer achievement tests. Local education offices will aim to create simpler academic evaluations.

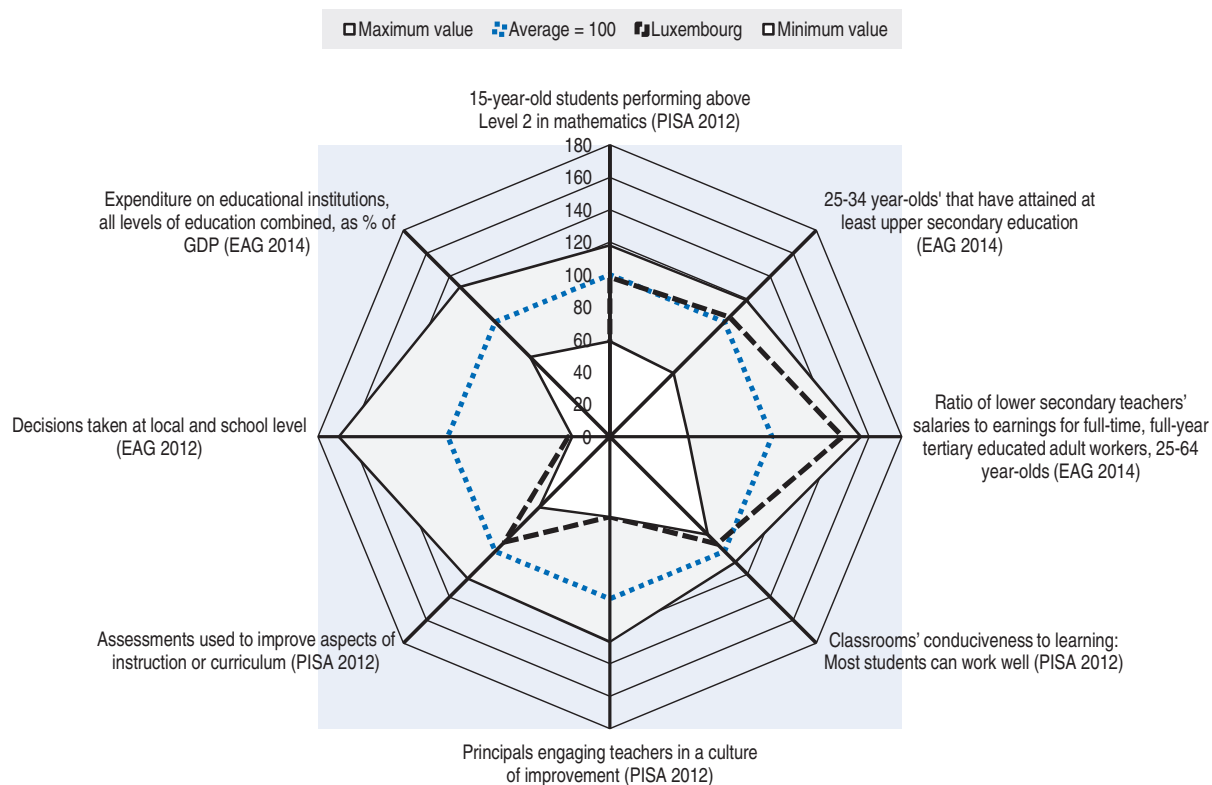
LUXEMBOURG

Context

Students: Luxembourg performs slightly below the OECD average in PISA 2012, and the impact of socio-economic background on mathematics performance is above the OECD average. Across PISA cycles, Luxembourg has achieved improvements in reading, while performance in mathematics and science has remained unchanged. Luxembourg has some policies that foster equity. Pre-primary education usually starts at age 3, and the enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds is above average. School attendance is compulsory from age 4 to 16, including primary, lower secondary and parts of pre-primary and upper secondary levels. Student selection mechanisms, high repetition, school choice and early student tracking at age 13 may hamper equity if not managed carefully. Attainment rates in upper secondary are around the OECD average, and Luxembourg has an above-average enrolment in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) programmes that grant access to higher education. Current reforms aim to make the compartmentalised VET system more permeable. A larger proportion of students than the OECD average attain tertiary education. Once students reach the labour market, there is low unemployment.

Institutions: Autonomy is below the OECD average in Luxembourg schools for both resource allocation (including hiring and dismissal of teachers) and for deciding on curriculum and assessment. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher-training programme of 6.5 years including a mandatory teaching practicum, pass a competitive examination to enter the teaching profession, and have continuing education. Teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include a comparatively low class size, teaching time above the OECD average and the highest salaries among OECD countries. The education system lacks a framework setting out clear purposes and responsibilities for evaluation and assessment.

System: The central government is in charge of education. The Ministry for Education and Vocational Training is responsible for planning and managing school education and sets out the priorities for educational policy. Most schooling decisions in lower secondary education are taken by the central government.

Figure 12.20. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Luxembourg**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Luxembourg Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171774>

Key issues and goals

Students: Luxembourg reports as a key target giving students the time to develop the required competences and attain their maximum potential, regardless of their starting point. Other priorities include adapting elementary education to the needs of a modern, changing society and adapting vocational education to the labour market's skills demand.

Institutions: Luxembourg also considers it important to increase school autonomy and enhance the use of school success plans (*Plans de réussite scolaire*). Other issues of interest include encouraging parents' involvement and developing new approaches to evaluation and assessment reports.

System: Luxembourg aims to increase schools' autonomy to adapt teaching methods to student needs. Other key issues reported are the sub-national distribution of decision-making and co-operation, as well as Luxembourg's aim to provide funding to achieve the missions of elementary and secondary education as set by the laws on compulsory education (2009).

Selected policy responses

- The *Compulsory Education Reform (2009)* sets new learning cycles. The traditional organisation by academic years has been replaced by two-year learning cycles. Their structure aims to help teachers to adapt the learning setting to their pupils' individual rhythms and needs, and give pupils more time to develop the required competences. Additionally, this reform:
 - enlarges school autonomy, allowing individual initiatives and choice of didactic material, with each school expected to set up a school success plan defining the institution's objectives according to its pupils' needs and characteristics
 - seeks parental involvement, introducing standards on information for parents, including regular individual meetings between teachers and parents
 - provides a new approach to evaluation, with pupils evaluated both during and at the end of a cycle and learning achievements of each pupil documented in a portfolio to track their progress.
- The state and the business sector collaborate in the Committee for Vocational Training to ensure that VET programmes meet job market needs. Curricula are set up by National Training Commissions, which include representatives of secondary schools and representatives from the business sector (*Vocational training reform, 2008*).
- The financing rules on separately-managed state bodies (*services de l'Etat à gestion séparée*) apply to secondary schools. Their resources comprise a state subsidy, the balance carried over from the previous year, income from services provided or other operating revenues and donations and legacies (*Loi portant sur l'organisation des lycées et lycées techniques, 2004*).
- The Secondary School Report (*Rapport-Lycée*) set up by the Agency for Quality, is used to monitor quality and results in secondary schools (*Loi portant sur organisation des lycées et lycées techniques, 2004*).

Spotlight: Promoting partnership to improve school administration

As part of the Compulsory Education Reform (2009), school administration is ensured by a partnership of municipal authorities, teaching staff and parents. The reform introduced School Committees of elected members from their teaching staff to be set up by each school. The Committees issue proposals on school organisation and budget, set up the school success plan and determine the needs for teacher training. Parents' representatives meet the School Committee at least three times a year to discuss or organise joint events.

The Municipal Council decides on organisational issues and provides funds for school infrastructure. The Municipal School Commission is the platform for co-operation among schools, parents and communal authorities. It gives its opinion on school success plans and budget proposals, monitors implementation of the success plans and organises extracurricular activities. The National School Commission is the platform for co-operation at the national level. It develops proposals for reforms, research and teacher training for the Minister of Education. Schools are supervised by inspectors appointed by the Ministry. The inspector co-ordinates activities of the School Committees' presidents, runs the Commission for School Inclusion (CIS) and issues instructions to the multi-professional teams.

MEXICO

Context

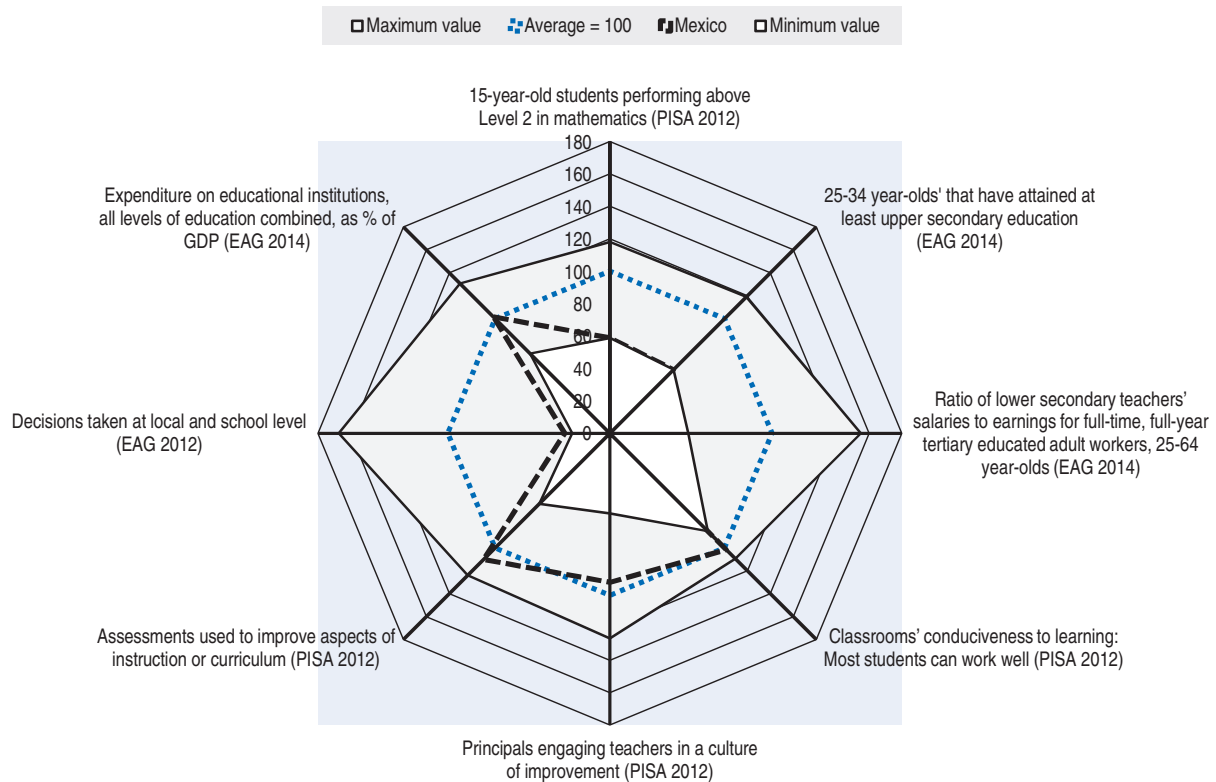
Students: Mexico is among the few countries with improvements in both equity and quality in PISA 2012. Although its performance remains below the OECD average in mathematics, science and reading, Mexico has achieved improvements in mathematics and reading, and unchanged performance in science across PISA cycles. The socio-economic background of students and schools had less impact on their performance in PISA 2012 than the OECD average, demonstrating improvements in equity of learning opportunities. Early childhood and education and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 4-5 and the enrolment rate of 3 and 4 year-olds in early childhood education is below the OECD average. Education in Mexico is compulsory from age 4 to 15. Grade repetition is high, and there is a gap with other OECD countries in upper secondary and tertiary attainment, enrolment, graduation and performance. New upper secondary programmes provide learning opportunities in remote regions and the technological baccalaureate has been reformed. Enrolment in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is among the lowest across OECD countries, with weak links between VET and employers, and low investment from firms in this sector. Unemployment is low compared to the OECD average. One-quarter of 15-29 year-olds were not in education and not employed in 2012.

Institutions: In Mexican schools, levels of autonomy over curriculum and assessment and over resource allocation are below the OECD average. Lower secondary teachers in Mexico undergo four years of pre-service training including a mandatory teaching practicum. Working conditions for primary and secondary teachers in Mexico include teaching time and class size above the OECD average. Also, a higher proportion of teachers in Mexico than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Some key issues regarding school improvement remain, including the process of selecting teachers and assigning them to schools, balancing formative and summative appraisal in their evaluations, improving the quality of teacher training programmes and of teaching in the classroom, as well as reviewing the incentives to improve performance.

System: Governance of the education system in Mexico is shared between central and regional authorities. Within the federal system, the government has been prioritising education and setting objectives through agreements and pacts with the states and main stakeholders. As all 31 states operate education services and administrative norms vary from state to state, there is a need to strengthen capacity to ensure a successful implementation of policies. The National Union of Education Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*, SNTE), with leaders in each state, plays a role in education


policy issues, which is being rebalanced with the state. Most decisions in lower secondary education are taken by the central or state governments. Expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher share of private funding than the OECD average.

Figure 12.21. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Mexico**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Mexico Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Mexico* (OECD, 2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171786>

Key issues and goals

Students: Mexico is working to increase education performance and attainment in compulsory education. Large performance and completion gaps persist, especially for indigenous and low socio-economic status populations. System-level policies should focus on improving educational success of students from diverse backgrounds and delivering quality education across all schools, including upper secondary and VET.

Institutions: Mexico is also revising evaluation and assessment practices, especially regarding student assessment and teacher appraisal. Mexico sees as key issues raising the quality of teaching, professionalising school leaders, and providing transparency in governance and funding across the system.

System: Balancing central and regional governance and ensuring effective engagement of stakeholders are key issues. Mexico faces challenges for achieving transparent and equitable funding of students and schools.

Selected policy responses

- Efforts to improve quality and coverage in ECEC include creating care centres in urban areas for children of low-income working parents (2007), organising a national system of day-care centres and creating a framework syllabus to help ECEC institutions develop a curriculum.
- Mexico made upper secondary education compulsory in 2012 (aiming for universal coverage by 2022).
- A National System of Upper Secondary Education (*Sistema Nacional de Bachillerato*, 2009) aims to improve academic guidance and education offer and provide a monitoring system and mechanisms to deliver this level of education.
- The Dignified Schools Programme (*Programa Escuelas Dignas*, 2013) intends to improve the infrastructure of schools, focusing on seven key criteria including safe learning environments, sanitary learning environments, and adequate furniture and equipment. The programme operates in three steps: 1) diagnosing the school's infrastructure and resources; 2) allocating funds on a case-by-case basis to help schools comply with at least three of the seven criteria; and 3) providing compliant schools with a certificate from the National Institute for Educational Physical Infrastructures (INIFED). The school community is then responsible for maintenance.
- School participation councils (*Consejos Escolares de Participación Social*, 2009) have been promoted to ensure parental and society engagement in education, increasing from 4% to 44% between 2009 and 2010. School councils are composed of parents, school principals, teachers, union representatives, former students and community members.

Spotlight: Expanding coverage and improving teaching and learning in schools

A constitutional reform in Mexico (2012) set out commitments on education to increase education coverage in upper secondary (80%) and tertiary education (40%); to improve teaching and learning conditions by providing more autonomy to schools and establishing full-time schools; to create a teacher professional service; and to promote system improvement with more transparency and consolidation of the evaluation authority. As part of this constitutional reform, various initiatives have been introduced.

New legislation to consolidate a professional teacher service (2013) aims to bring together and update different components of the teaching profession. Some new policies promoted are: 1) introducing an induction process in the first two years of teachers' practice; 2) establishing the main lines of a teacher evaluation process for all teachers; and 3) establishing new horizontal incentive mechanisms to include or replace the different voluntary programmes currently available (e.g. *Carrera Magisterial* and the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality).

Spotlight: Expanding coverage and improving teaching and learning in schools (cont.)

To enter the profession, teacher candidates will pass a public selection process (*concurso*). Teachers will be assigned a mentor for the first two years and will require a positive evaluation to be confirmed in their post. To assess competence and support development, a new mandatory evaluation system has also been introduced for teachers, school leaders and supervisors. A teacher's first or second unsuccessful evaluation will lead to individual coaching and a third will mean dismissal. The National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (*Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación*, INEE) will define the precise formative evaluation tools.

The law also aims to professionalise school leaders by introducing a transparent selection and recruitment process and an induction process during the first two years of practice. Public selection processes (*concursos*) will be organised, with candidates who have a minimum of two years teaching experience and specific profiles determined by INEE and local and federal authorities. Under this law, school leaders will be confirmed in their post only after positive evaluation. New technical assistance to schools is also being introduced to support teachers in evaluation practices. This will be provided by school leaders, supervisors and pedagogical advisors (*Asesores Técnico-pedagógicos*, ATP).

The detailed policy profile is available at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-26-en>

NETHERLANDS

Context

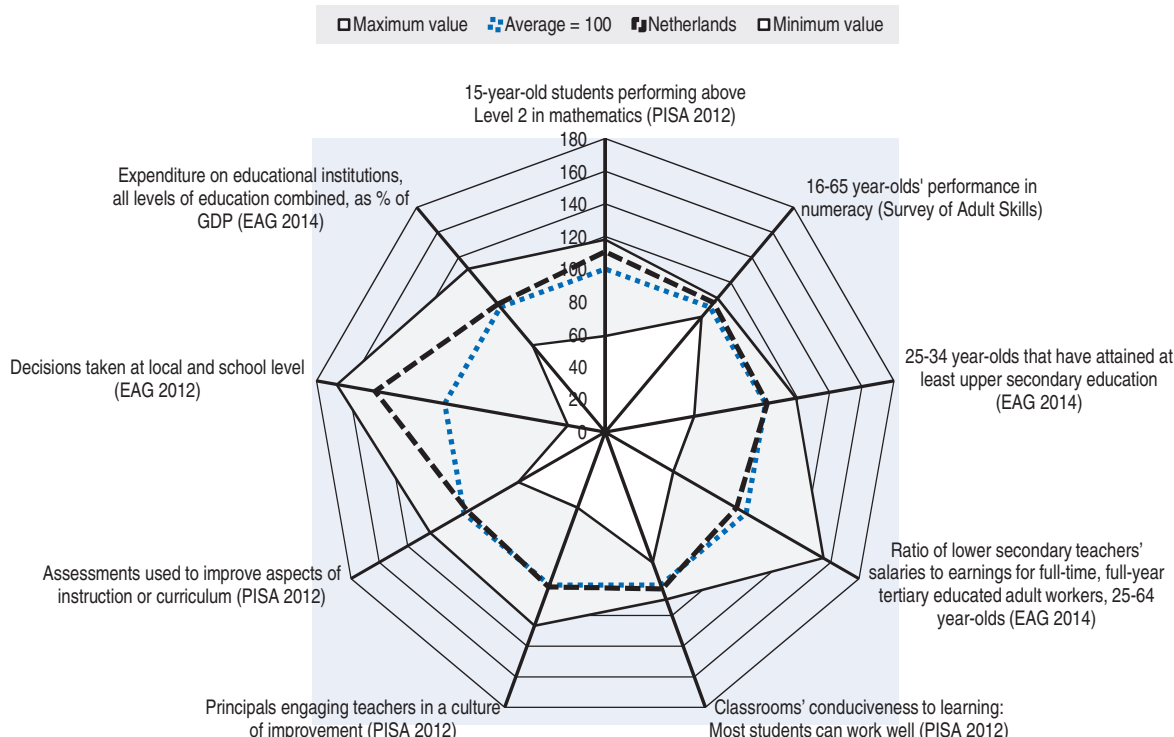
Students: The Netherlands is an overall high performer in PISA 2012, with decreased mathematics performance and unchanged performance in reading and science across PISA cycles. Students' socio-economic background had a lower impact on performance than the OECD average in PISA 2012. The Netherlands has a differentiated structure of secondary education, which sorts students from age 12 into seven possible programmes (the highest number of programmes among OECD countries). Early childhood education and care (ECEC) usually starts at ages 3 or 4. Policies aiming to increase participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds include above-average enrolment of 3-4 year-olds and almost universal enrolment of 4-year-olds in ECEC. Targeted funding for schools with specific needs is available through the government or municipalities. The Netherlands is also focusing on further stimulating excellent and highly talented students and already high-performing schools. Attainment in upper secondary education and tertiary education in the Netherlands is around the OECD average. Flexibility in upper secondary education and guidance and counselling can support Dutch students' transition into post-secondary education and the labour market. Adults (16-65 year-olds) in the Netherlands have higher-than-average literacy and numeracy skills according to the Survey for Adult Skills, and results are even higher for younger adults (16-24 year-olds). Labour market perspectives are positive, with unemployment below the OECD average.

Institutions: Schools in the Netherlands have some of the highest autonomy levels over curriculum and assessment, in particular in determining course content and allocation of resources (such as selecting teachers to hire). To teach at lower secondary level, teachers undergo four years of pre-service training including a mandatory teaching practicum. Dutch teachers' salaries are above the OECD average, but lower than other tertiary educated employees in the country. Primary and secondary teachers have teaching time above the OECD average. A higher proportion of teachers in the Netherlands than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. An increased focus on the use of evidence from assessment and evaluation resulted in better educational practices.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between the central government and the schools. The system combines centralised norms and policies with school autonomy over administration and school management, which is characteristic of Dutch education. Centralised output norms provide broadly-formulated attainment targets. In addition, for some subjects (e.g. language and mathematics) more specific subject-oriented norms are provided. Supervision is also centralised. Most decisions in primary and secondary education are taken at the school level, and the Ministry of


Education, Culture and Science provides funding to all education levels, with equal funding for public and private schools. Expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is above the OECD average, and the share of private funding is a higher than the OECD average.

Figure 12.22. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Netherlands**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Netherlands Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171798>

Key issues and goals

Students: Policies aim to maintain and improve student performance and focus extra efforts to stimulate already high performers in a context of increasing diversity. The Netherlands also aims to reduce performance gaps across schools, stimulate equity and reduce dropout. System-level characteristics include early tracking, while aiming to ensure flexibility in catering to the needs of individual students.

Institutions: The Netherlands sees growing student diversity, which requires teachers to be able to adapt their practice to meet the needs of underperforming students and high performers. Therefore, professionalisation of teachers and school leaders is seen as a major priority through access to quality initial and continuous training. Another priority concerns strengthening the steering capacity and responsibility of school boards to address student needs and develop positive learning environments. The government is

targeting a large group of Dutch schools that have been performing adequately for some time, yet have not demonstrated a clear drive to improve their performance. Results from school, teacher and student assessments also need to be better used to improve schools and student learning.

System: The Netherlands considers that new demands and challenges make it necessary to improve the transparency and accountability of its schools and school boards. Given its high level of school autonomy, the Netherlands aims to ensure that school boards and school leaders have the capacity to effectively implement national education policy consistently across schools, as well as to use resources more efficiently while ensuring quality education.

Selected policy responses

- In higher education, two main policies have been introduced. The Quality in Diversity in Higher Education law (*Wet Kwaliteit in verscheidenheid hoger onderwijs*, 2013) advances the deadline for applications to enter higher education to May 1st and sets study checks to help prospective students make an informed decision about their future education. Activities in these study checks include online questionnaires, interviews with prospective students, and attending a lecture or a seminar. *Performance agreements 2012-15* setting goals for 2015 have also been signed with all higher education institutions, which will be evaluated on the basis of these agreements.
- Aiming to improve the teaching profession and promote the excellence of education, the Netherlands has recently introduced a comprehensive strategy called the Teachers' Programme (*Lerarenagenda 2013-2020*, 2013). The seven main points of the programme are: 1) attracting high performing students into teacher training programmes; 2) improving teacher pre-service training programmes; 3) providing attractive and flexible development pathways; 4) developing support for teachers at the start of their careers; 5) developing schools as learning organisations by engaging teachers, school leaders and school boards; 6) helping all teachers maintain and develop their skills and qualifications; and 7) sustaining a strong professional organisation that represents teachers.
- The National Agreement on Education (2013) with different education stakeholders comprises common goals on quality improvement that are worked out in specific sub-agreements on five themes: 1) contents and quality of education; 2) attracting the best teachers to education; 3) labour conditions; 4) relationship between the education field and the national government; and 5) governance of and within education.
- The Vocational Professionalism Agenda (2011) aims to improve secondary vocational education by reducing and condensing most four-year courses into three years, increasing classroom hours, improving the transition to higher professional education and improving quality at this level.

Spotlight: Increasing student retention

The *Drive to Reduce Dropout Rates (Aanval op schooluitval, 2002)* was introduced in conjunction with the Europe 2020 Strategy with the goal to reduce to less than 35 000 the number of students dropping out of school by 2012. The target has been revised to aim for a maximum of 25 000 students by 2016. By 2012-13, provisional results showed that the number of early school leavers had been reduced to 27 950.

This policy is based on six key points: 1) focusing on the transition between pre-vocational and vocational education; 2) improving the special needs facilities in schools; 3) offering tailored programmes to students who prefer to work; 4) improving information and career guidance and counselling to students; 5) offering more attractive sports and cultural activities; and 6) providing programmes for 18-23 year-olds who drop out.

To accomplish these goals, the government partnered with regions, local authorities, employers and other key stakeholders, created a system of data collection and analysis (Education Number 2008-11) to understand the students and the strategies being used to prevent dropout, linked school funding to the reduction of early school leavers, and funded programmes and facilities, particularly for students who had difficulty attaining a qualification.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-27-en>

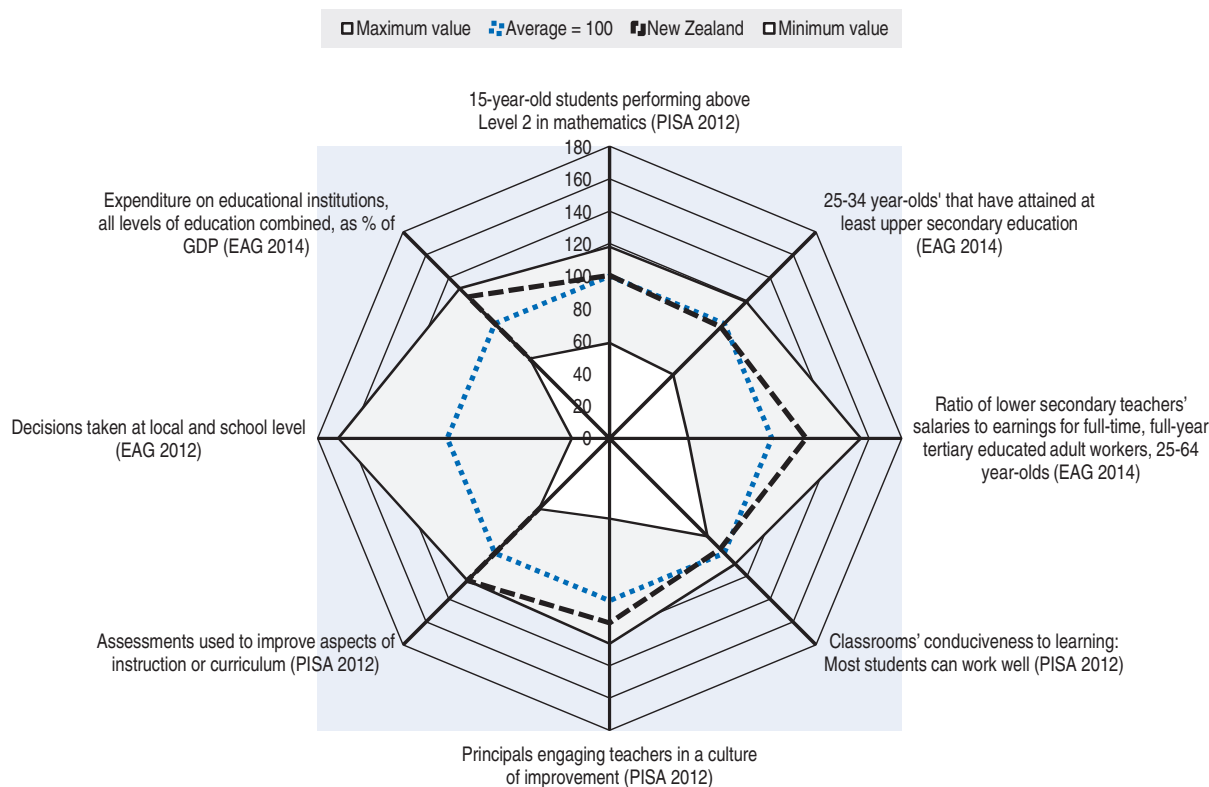
NEW ZEALAND

Context

Students: New Zealand has remained a top PISA performer since 2000, with students performing above the OECD average in reading, science and mathematics. The country experienced an overall decline in performance across PISA cycles, and the impact of student socio-economic background on performance is higher than the OECD average. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 3 with above-average enrolment rates of 3-4 year-olds. New Zealand has an inclusive ECEC curriculum, compulsory school from age 5 to 18, comprehensive schooling until the age of 16, low levels of grade repetition, flexible options in upper secondary education, and flexible strategies to promote education success of Māori and Pacific Islanders. Upper secondary education attainment rates are around the OECD average in New Zealand, and tertiary education attainment rates are above the OECD average. Many vocational education and training (VET) programmes are offered in post-compulsory education. Labour market perspectives for students are positive, and unemployment is below the OECD average.


Institutions: The highly devolved self-governing school system gives school leaders and teachers much autonomy over curriculum and assessment and resource allocation compared to the OECD average. This requires capacity and professional development to meet responsibilities and use evaluation and assessment tools effectively to improve student learning. Teachers in primary and secondary education have above-average salaries and teaching times.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between the central government and schools. There is no middle-level school administration in New Zealand. Schools and universities are among the most autonomous across OECD countries. Schools are managed by school boards with a focus on student achievement. The role of government education agencies has been refocused to support education system leaders, such as teachers and education providers. The government sets annual objectives in a Statement of Intent for its central education agencies, and the Ministry of Education develops a national policy framework. Funding aims to support free schooling, and although tertiary study involves costs to the student, financial support is available. A part of the funding that tertiary institutions receives depends on student achievement. Expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is one of the highest among OECD countries, with a higher share of private funding than the OECD average.

Figure 12.23. **Selected indicators compared with the average: New Zealand**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The New Zealand Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 and *Education Policy Outlook: New Zealand* (OECD, 2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171805>

Key issues and goals

Students: The average impact of socio-economic background on student performance is above the OECD average, and large performance and completion gaps persist within the student population according to gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity. Māori and Pacific Islanders students represent more than one-third of the student population, and diversity of the student population is increasing, while they face lower outcomes and may be less likely to complete their secondary education. Key targets for New Zealand are ensuring that students are fully engaged in learning, motivated for educational success, supported at all levels of their education and have clear pathways to further education, training and employment.

Institutions: To improve the learning environment, New Zealand aims to raise the status of the teaching profession, to strengthen teacher and principal appraisal, and ensure that schools have incentives to co-operate and share resources where there is a clear educational benefit. Additionally, national standards and other achievement information can be used to better inform student progress and teaching practice.

System: Important goals for New Zealand are ensuring the capacity of school boards of trustees to lead education policies, ensuring effective governance of tertiary education institutions by having people with appropriate governance skills, and ensuring efficient targeted funding to students from low socio-economic backgrounds at all levels of education.

Selected policy responses

- An *Early Learning Taskforce* (2013) is working to provide connections between early childhood services and communities to improve access to services for families who are not participating in early childhood education.
- *Positive Behaviour for Learning* (2009) provides programmes and initiatives for schools, teachers and parents to help address problem behaviour, improve children's well-being and increase educational achievement.
- The *Youth Guarantee* (2010) aims to enable students in upper secondary to acquire key skills to attain the National Certificate in Educational Achievement and transition into tertiary education and/or employment. As part of the *Youth Guarantee*, the *Achievement 2013-17 programme* partners with secondary schools to support students at risk of failing the test. The Youth Guarantee also creates vocational pathways with more options and seeks a greater integration of core curriculum subjects with industry recognised pathways.
- The *New Zealand Qualifications Framework* (2010) has been followed with a review to reduce duplication and proliferation of certificate and diploma qualifications and to ensure easy understanding for students and employers.
- The *Education Amendment Act* (2013) aims to reinforce the central role of schools' boards of trustees to ensure student achievement. The proposed creation of an independent *Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand* (EDUCANZ, 2013) aims to provide a focal point for stronger professional leadership in teaching.
- New Zealand has defined *National Standards* (2010) and the *National Curriculum* (2007) to clarify learning objectives and expectations and to provide support to improve performance. The country is also developing a *Student Achievement Function* (2011) to support schools. Additionally, the *release and use of public achievement information* and data on labour market outcomes have empowered students, teachers and communities by engaging them more in the learning process as well as providing important information on achievement.
- The *Tertiary Education Strategies* (TES) set the government's five-year direction and priorities in tertiary education. The most recent *Tertiary Education Strategy* (2014-19) aims to promote a more outward-facing and engaged tertiary education system, where there is a strong focus on achieving better outcomes for students.

Spotlight: Meeting educational targets

Better Public Services targets (2012) set ten challenges, including three in education: 1) participation of 98% in early childhood education in 2016; 2) about 85% of 18-year-olds achieving a national certificate Level 2 or equivalent in 2017; and 3) increasing attainment of advanced trade qualifications, diplomas or degrees for 25-34 year-olds. These targets provide a focus for the education sector and have been used in budget and strategic planning processes. Funding is prioritised in the budget to ensure achievement of targets. The targets aim to point to new ways of working, including involvement of other government agencies. The *Better Public Services targets* have also sought innovative ways of working with parents, families and communities, particularly with the early childhood and upper secondary school targets. The target achievement progress is being monitored with an emphasis on service quality. It is expected that the focus on targets will lead to long-term sustainable improvements to student achievement as new practices are developed in and adopted across the education system.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-28-en>

NORWAY

Context

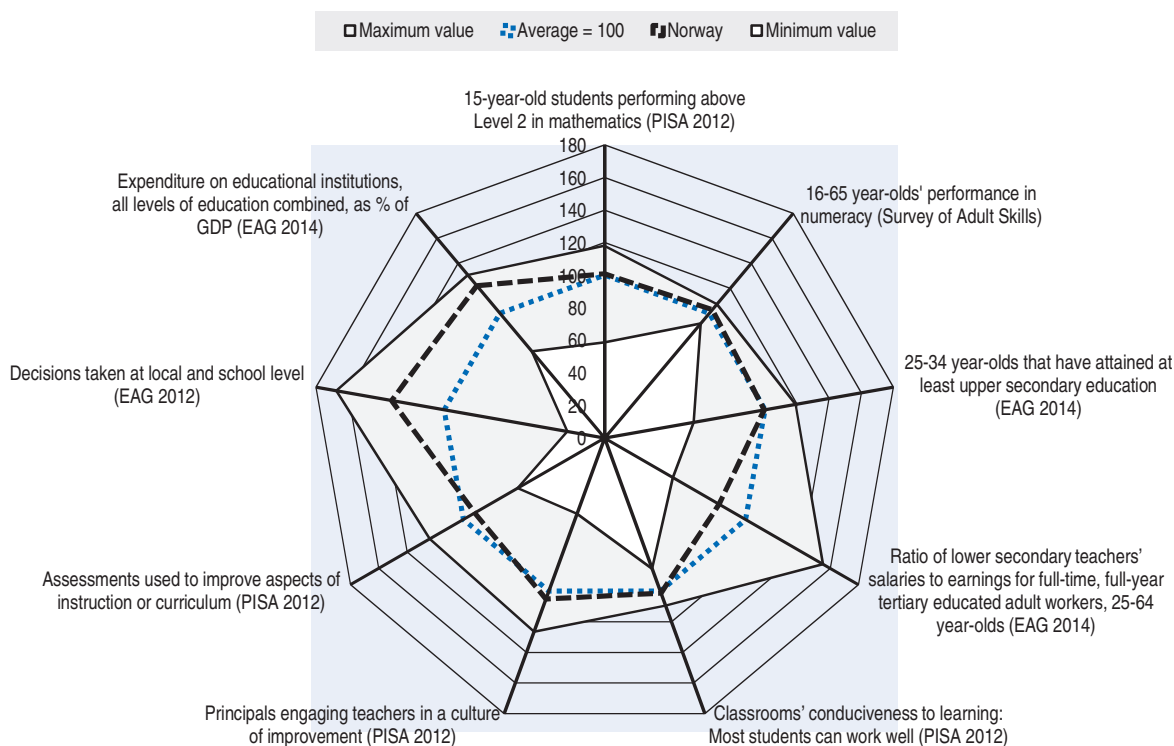
Students: Norway performs above the OECD average in reading, at around average in mathematics and below the OECD average in science in PISA 2012, with the lowest impact on socio-economic factors on students' performance among OECD countries and unchanging performance across PISA cycles. Some system-level policies help enhance equity in Norway. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 1 (the earliest age across OECD countries), and the enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds in ECEC is above the OECD average. Norway has comprehensive and compulsory education from age 6 to 16. At upper secondary level, attainment rates are around the OECD average, and there is a strong supply of upper secondary vocational education and training (VET), with an above-average enrolment rate. Tertiary education attainment rates are higher than the OECD average, resulting in a highly skilled workforce. Adults (16-65 year-olds) have above-average proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy compared to other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) scoring lower than the average and, unlike the situation in most other countries, lower literacy skill levels than the adult population as a whole. Norway has the lowest rate of unemployment among OECD countries.

Institutions: In Norway, schools' autonomy over resource allocation (such as hiring and dismissal of teachers) is around the OECD average, while autonomy over curriculum and assessment is below average. Learning environments in schools are less positive than the OECD average, according to views of students at age 15. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow four years of pre-service training including mandatory teacher training. In secondary education, teaching time is lower than the OECD average, while in primary education it is higher than the OECD average. In both primary and secondary education, salaries are above average, and class size is on average smaller than in other OECD countries. A lower proportion of teachers in Norway than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Also, school leaders focus more on administrative than pedagogical tasks. When appraisal takes place, it often leads to opportunities for professional development activities or a role in school development initiatives. Norway has developed a multi-faceted system for evaluation and assessment in schools, including quality assessment, which can be completed and made more coherent to support effective evaluation and assessment practices. The *Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)*, an independent government agency, provides quality control for tertiary education.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between the central government and local authorities. Norway's central government sets the goals and framework, while municipalities run primary and lower secondary schools and counties run upper secondary schools. Municipalities also fulfil the right to a place in pres-school for all children from age 1. Lower secondary schooling decisions are mostly taken at the local level, with just a few


decisions taken at the state level, while tertiary institutions are mostly autonomous in their decisions, including those on how they allocate resources. Norway has generous funding at all levels of the education system. Public education is free, except at pre-primary level where parents pay fees. Expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all educational levels combined) is one of the highest among OECD countries.

Figure 12.24. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Norway**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Norway Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Norway* (OECD, 2013) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171813>

Key issues and goals

Students: Norway faces the challenge of ensuring that students remain in school until the end of upper secondary education. Continuing to promote equity while fostering student motivation and excellence is also of high interest.

Institutions: Efforts have been made to improve learning conditions for students by enhancing pedagogical support and strengthening assessment.

System: Norway aims to ensure capacity-building and consistent implementation across all municipalities. Optimising resources and policy implementation strategies in a context of decentralised decision-making is also key. Norway also needs to improve the coherence and responsiveness of its skills system, focus on developing relevant skills to achieve its economic and social goals, and on activating and using these skills effectively.

Selected policy responses

- Norway has carried out multiple efforts in ECEC, such as providing the legal right for all children to a place in ECEC from age 1 (2009).
- Efforts have been made to improve the quality of teachers, notably through the GNIST initiative (GNIST is Norwegian for spark). This national partnership between the Ministry of Education, the main stakeholders and municipalities/counties (2009-14) aims to increase the quality and status of the teaching profession, teacher education, and school leadership. A yearly teacher recruitment campaign is an important component. Also, the *National Guidelines for Differentiated Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education Programmes* for Years 1 to 7 and Years 5 to 10 (2010 and 2013) aim to support implementation of the new teacher education reform.
- Efforts to strengthen assessment have been made since the launch of the *Knowledge Promotion Reform* (2006), a curriculum complementing the National Quality Assessment System (NKVS, 2004) to support effective evaluation and assessment practices in schools. Furthermore, *Assessment for Learning* (2010), a national programme to improve formative assessment at the school level, is already showing positive results and has been extended from 2014 until 2017.
- The *New Possibilities-Ny GIV initiative* (2010-13) aims to boost the completion rate from 70% to 75%, with specific measures for low-performing students, and to motivate participation in education among 16-21 year-olds who are neither in school nor in employment. An action plan to raise performance in lower secondary education has been launched from the school year 2012/13 to improve mastery of basic skills, boost students' motivation for learning and develop structures for effective implementation.
- The OECD and Norway are collaborating on a cross-ministerial project to build an Effective Skills Strategy for Norway. In 2015 the government will follow up with the implementation process of a Norwegian Skills Strategy based on the strategic approach for developing, activating and using skills that the project has already provided.

Spotlight: Raising performance in lower secondary education

To raise performance in lower secondary education, an *action plan* was developed by 30 key Norwegian education policy makers to work on two basic goals: 1) improving student outcomes in literacy and numeracy; and 2) improving teachers' classroom practices. Four key actions to implement these objectives were also agreed. Defining and communicating the action plan and its strategy for implementation were the first step before implementing the following actions:

1. Define measure and communicate what good literacy, numeracy and classroom practices mean.
2. Identify effective practices for teachers, school leaders and municipalities to improve literacy and numeracy.
3. Develop support strategies for teachers to deliver improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
4. Strengthen school leadership to deliver improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy (define and communicate the role of instructional leaders; provide school leaders with training, support and capacity enhancement; and develop networks for school leaders to share and work together).

This draft action plan has been used by Norwegian stakeholders to guide further discussions and to shape new education policy efforts. Norwegian Education Authorities have launched a strategy for implementing the action plan over the period 2012-17 (*Motivasjon og mestring for bedre læring*, 2012).

The detailed policy profile is available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-29-en>

POLAND

Context

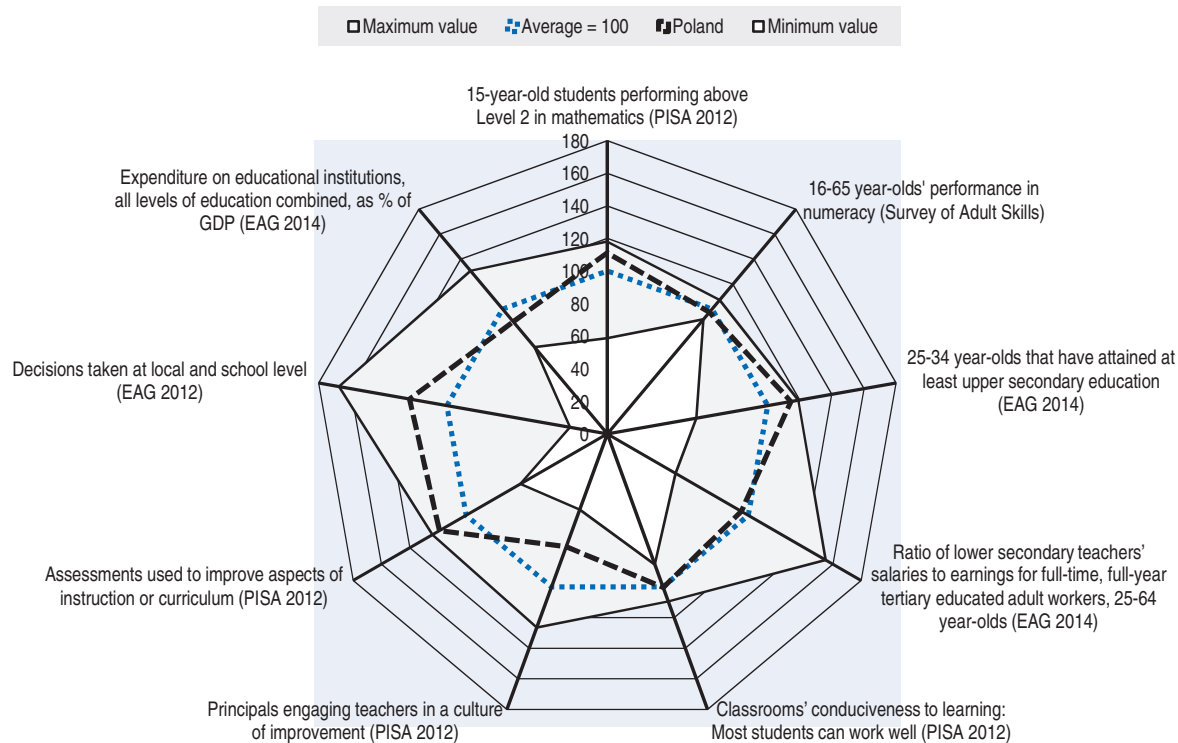
Students: Poland's performance is above the OECD average in PISA 2012, with improvements in mathematics, reading and science across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on students' performance in mathematics is at around the OECD average. Early childhood education in Poland usually starts at age 3. The enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds is below the OECD average, but increases with age from around half of 3-year-olds to most 6-year-olds. Education is compulsory from age 5 to 16, including the final year of pre-primary education, six-year primary education and three-year lower secondary education. Part-time compulsory education, received in school or non-school settings, targets young people aged 16-18. Some characteristics of Polish education include low grade repetition, comprehensive schooling and tracking from age 16. Student selection mechanisms such as school choice and the possibility for schools to apply selective admission criteria can hamper equity, if not managed adequately. The country has one of the highest upper secondary attainment rates in OECD countries and an above-average proportion of students enrolled in the different vocational education and training (VET) programmes, with transition possible to tertiary education. Tertiary attainment is below the OECD average for 25-65 year-olds, while the attainment rate of younger adults (25-34 year-olds) is above the OECD average. Literacy and numeracy skills of adults (16-65 year-olds) in Poland are below the average of countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, but literacy skills of youth (16-24 year-olds) are above average, and their numeracy skills are around average. Unemployment in Poland is higher than the OECD average.

Institutions: The level of autonomy over curriculum and assessment in schools in Poland is above the OECD average, and autonomy over resource allocation is below average. Practically all lower secondary teachers participated in a pre-service teacher training programme of five years including a mandatory teaching practicum, although only tertiary level education (bachelor's degree) is required. Teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include below-average class size, teaching time and salaries. Compared to the TALIS average, a higher-than-average proportion of teachers in Poland would choose to work as teachers again, while a lower-than-average proportion of teachers consider that the teaching profession is valued in society. Schools have a high level of autonomy over hiring and dismissing teachers as well as over curricula and assessments.

System: Governance of the education system in Poland is shared between central and local authorities. The national education policy is developed and implemented centrally. Local authorities run primary and lower secondary schools, while districts run schools above lower secondary level. Schools take slightly less than half of decisions at lower secondary level. Expenditure on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) is below the OECD average, and the share of private

expenditure is slightly below the OECD average. Poland had one of the greatest increases in expenditure per student among OECD countries during 2005-11 at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels of education.

Figure 12.25. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Poland**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Poland Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171823>

Key issues and goals

Students: Poland reports aiming to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children through universal access to good quality early childhood education and care as well as to initial school education, especially for children of disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Promoting VET as an attractive alternative to the academic track at upper secondary education level is also considered important, to ensure that vocational education provides for both good employment perspectives and continuation of education within formal or non-formal/informal frameworks.

Institutions: Poland reports the need to strengthen school autonomy and collaboration (networking) among schools and to support teachers' professional development to enable them to apply innovative practices and provide individualised support to students of diversified background and educational needs. It is also viewed as important to build capacities of local and regional authorities to manage resources efficiently and to use information and data effectively to implement local strategies in line with national policy.

System: Among key issues and goals are facilitating evidence-informed policy development at all levels of administration based on various sources of information (inspection results from school self- and external evaluation, the examination system, statistical data collection and research findings) and further developing the system of validation.

Selected policy responses

- Lowering the age of primary education from 7 to 6 began in 2009 and was made compulsory in 2014, with progressive implementation. By 2015/16, all 6-year-olds are expected to start primary school. Similarly, attending early childhood education became compulsory for 5-year-olds in 2011.
- The Minister of National Education redefined the functions of school inspection (2009) to include evaluation (including self-evaluation), control (compliance auditing) and support (aiming at the professional development of staff).
- The Parliament amended the School Education Act (*Ustawa o systemie oświaty*, 2013) to:
 - introduce a limit of PLN 1 per hour for the fee paid by parents for pre-primary education attended beyond the five free compulsory hours (local governments receive ear-marked grants from the state budget to compensate additional costs)
 - provide that from September 2015, every 4-year-old will have a right to participate in pre-primary education, and from September 2017, every 3-year-old will have a place in a pre-primary education institution.

Spotlight: Shifting to transversal skills and learning outcomes

In 2008, the Ministry of National Education started modification of the national core curriculum for general education and school vocational training programmes. The new curriculum aims to shift from narrow, subject-related requirements (earlier described by the intended content of instruction) to more general, transversal skills and competences defined by learning outcomes. The focus is now on experiments, scientific inquiry, problem-solving, reasoning and collaboration. The learning outcomes determine the examination standards, which also shifted from assessment of knowledge to evaluation of more general skills.

The new curriculum framework for general education sets the same programme requirements for the first grade of all types of upper secondary schools (vocational and general).

In VET, a new classification of occupations was adopted during consultations with social partners. Each occupation is divided into a specific set of partial qualifications which are the subjects of validation and certification through exams organised by the Examination Boards. Partial qualification exams can be taken by students during their studies (not necessarily at the end of the programme) or by adults who gained experience through practice or who have completed out-of-school courses.

The new regulations also increased the autonomy of schools to develop their own sets of programmes instead of referring only to programmes (and textbooks) from the list accepted by the ministry. School principals were granted flexibility in managing the instruction time defined for subjects in the curriculum framework. They are only required to ensure that outcomes defined in the national curriculum are attained.

PORTUGAL

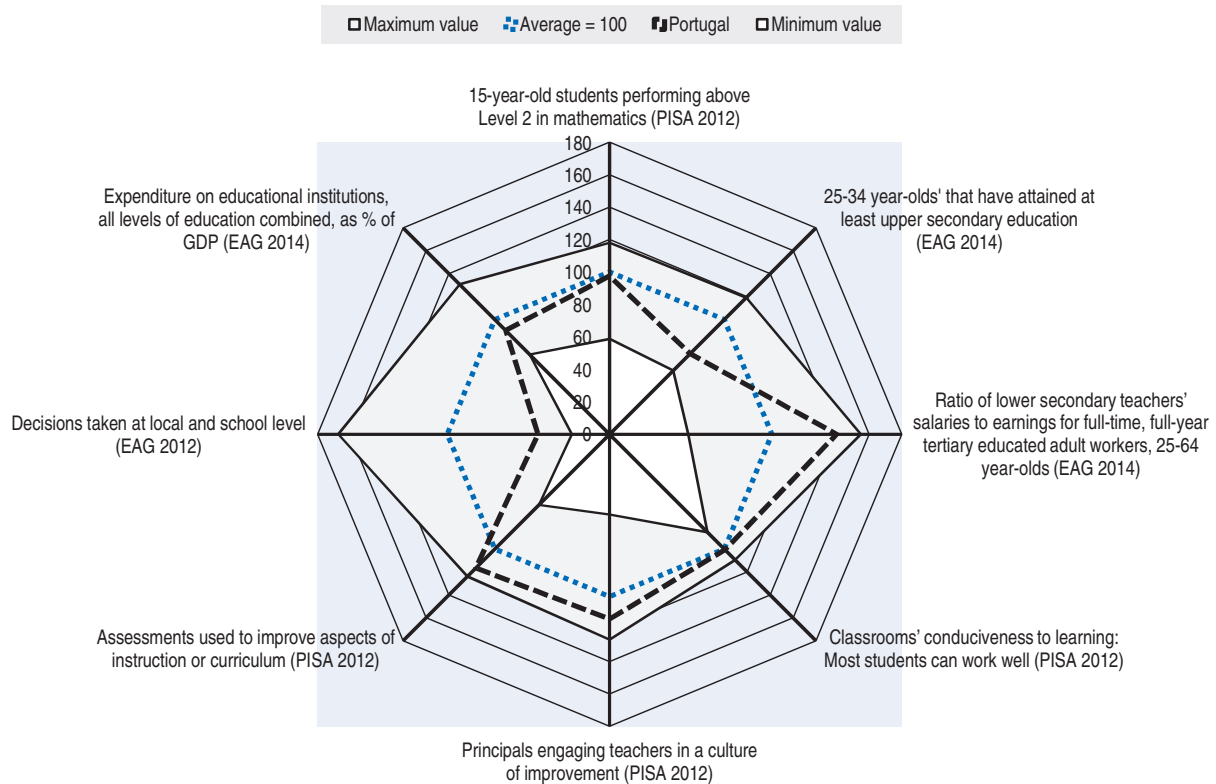
Context

Students: Portugal performs at around the OECD average in mathematics in PISA 2012 and below the OECD average in reading and science, and has made improvements overall across PISA cycles in mathematics, reading and science. The impact of students' socio-economic background on their mathematics' performance in PISA was higher than the OECD average. Portugal has some positive system-level policies. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) usually starts at age 3, and enrolment rates for 3-4 year-olds in early childhood education are above the OECD average. Portugal also has universal enrolment for 5-14 year-olds and recently extended compulsory education to 12 years, from age 6 to 18 (one of the longest periods of compulsory schooling among OECD countries). Some system-level policies may hinder equity, such as above-average grade repetition rates and high dropout rates. Attainment rates at upper secondary and tertiary levels are below the OECD average, and enrolment in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is around average. Portugal has decreased dropout since 2000, while unemployment remains above average and youth unemployment is one of the highest in the OECD area.

Institutions: Schools' autonomy over curriculum and assessment and resource allocation in Portugal is below the OECD average. Lower secondary teachers in Portugal undertake initial training of five years including a mandatory teaching practicum with compulsory continuous training. Working conditions for primary and secondary teachers include teaching time in primary education that is above the OECD average, below-average teaching time in secondary education (with time reductions in some cases for teachers from age 50), and below-average class size. In PISA 2012, school leaders report a level of instructional leadership slightly higher than the OECD average, and they now follow specialised mandatory training. Teacher appraisal is recent and focuses more on accountability for career progression than on improvement purposes. Schools' self-evaluations and external evaluations are also new, and not all schools carry out self-evaluations. Internal student assessments (for all subjects) and external student assessments (for mathematics and Portuguese) are organised in schools. At upper secondary level, external assessments include other subjects corresponding to each student's path and are used for admission to tertiary education.


System: The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for education and science policies, and some decentralising trends are taking place at school and municipality levels. At tertiary level, the Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (*Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior, A3ES*) evaluates the creation of tertiary education graduate programmes, based on EU guidelines. The share of GDP devoted to education institutions (for all educational levels combined) is below the OECD average, with a higher share of public funding than the OECD average.

Figure 12.26. Selected indicators compared with the average: Portugal



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Portugal Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171832>

Key issues and goals

Students: Portugal faces the challenges of ensuring that all students complete compulsory education and increasing attainment rates in upper secondary and tertiary education as well as achieving quality and inclusive education for all students.

Institutions: Portugal needs to continue working on defining more clearly the professional pathways for teachers and school principals, providing relevant training and implementing the reform of the teacher training system. Further developing an integrated evaluation and assessment framework that places students' learning at the centre would also provide clearer information on how schools, leaders and teachers can improve in the classroom, going beyond the objective of accountability.

System: Increasing school autonomy and sub-national levels of governance while optimising the use of financial resources are also of high importance.

Selected policy responses

- The Third Generation of the Education Territories of Priority Intervention Programme (*Territórios Educativos de Intervenção Prioritária*, TEIP 3, 2012) targets geographical areas with socially disadvantaged background population and early school leaving rates higher than the national average. It aims to promote student success by improving quality of learning; tackling disciplinary issues, early school leaving and absenteeism; improving transitions to the labour market; promoting co-ordination among schools, civil society and training institutions; and providing more adaptability to students' needs. TEIP covers 16% of Portuguese schools.
- The network of Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education (*Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional*, CQEP, 2013) was created to bridge the gap between education, training and employment. This network replaced the *New Opportunities Programme* (*Programa Novas Oportunidades*, 2005), which had been adjusted in 2013 (based on an impact evaluation study) to focus more on job market requirements and professional retraining and to align it more closely with the guidelines of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.
- The Reform of School Leadership (2008) modified selection processes and responsibilities for principals, from *primus inter pares* (teachers elected to the position by their peers) functioning mainly as administrators, towards professionally selected and accountable school leaders with clearly identified authority and responsibilities. *Specialised mandatory training for school leaders* (2012) was also reinforced .
- Several measures aim to strengthen the teaching profession, such as: 1) introducing more stringent admission conditions in Teacher Education Programmes (2014); 2) reinforcing the scientific curricula in Teacher Education Programmes (2014); 3) introducing an evaluation exam for teachers with professional qualification and/or fixed-term contracts with less than five years of practice (*Prova de avaliação de conhecimentos e capacidades*); and 4) introducing a lifelong training framework for teachers (2014) that links continuing professional development to career progression and aims to improve teaching quality.
- The Directorate-General for Innovation and Curriculum Development set *evaluation and monitoring guidelines for pre-school education* (2011). An external evaluation of pre-school education was undertaken in 2013 and led to a revision of the curriculum.
- At the tertiary education level, cost revision measures included reduction of operating costs, and revision of the criteria for setting the number of vacancies in public tertiary institutions, while trying to adjust the educational offer to the country's needs (2014). Two public universities in the Lisbon Region, the University of Lisbon (*Universidade de Lisboa*) and the Technical University of Lisbon (*Universidade Técnica de Lisboa*), were merged into a single institution. Finally, to limit the impact of current budget cuts due to the financial crisis on academic research and R&D, Portugal has developed the Graduate Studies Grant Programme (*Bolsas de Formação Avançada*, 2013), managed by the Foundation for Science and Technology.
- The OECD and Portugal collaborate on a cross-ministerial project to build an Effective Skills Strategy for Portugal (2014). It will provide a strategic approach for developing, activating and using skills, and for strengthening the effectiveness of its overall skills system to boost employment, economic growth and promote social inclusion.

Spotlight: Combatting school failure and school dropout

The Programme to Combat School Failure and School Dropout (*Programa de Combate ao Insucesso e Abandono Escolar*, 2012) builds on a series of measures designed to prevent school dropout, by providing extra support to students at risk of failing in primary and secondary education and developing vocational education and training (VET) in upper secondary education as an equal alternative to the general programme. Portugal has aimed to create more vocational courses in secondary education and provide for a coherent national VET strategy to guide students and involve the business sector, mainly through: the reformulation of VET upper secondary syllabi (2013); *Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education* (CQEP, 2013); specific Vocational Programmes (2012) providing pilot vocational courses in primary education (2nd cycle) and lower secondary education (starting at age 13); and Vocational Reference Schools (*Escolas de Referência do Ensino Profissional*, EREP, 2012).

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-30-en>

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Context

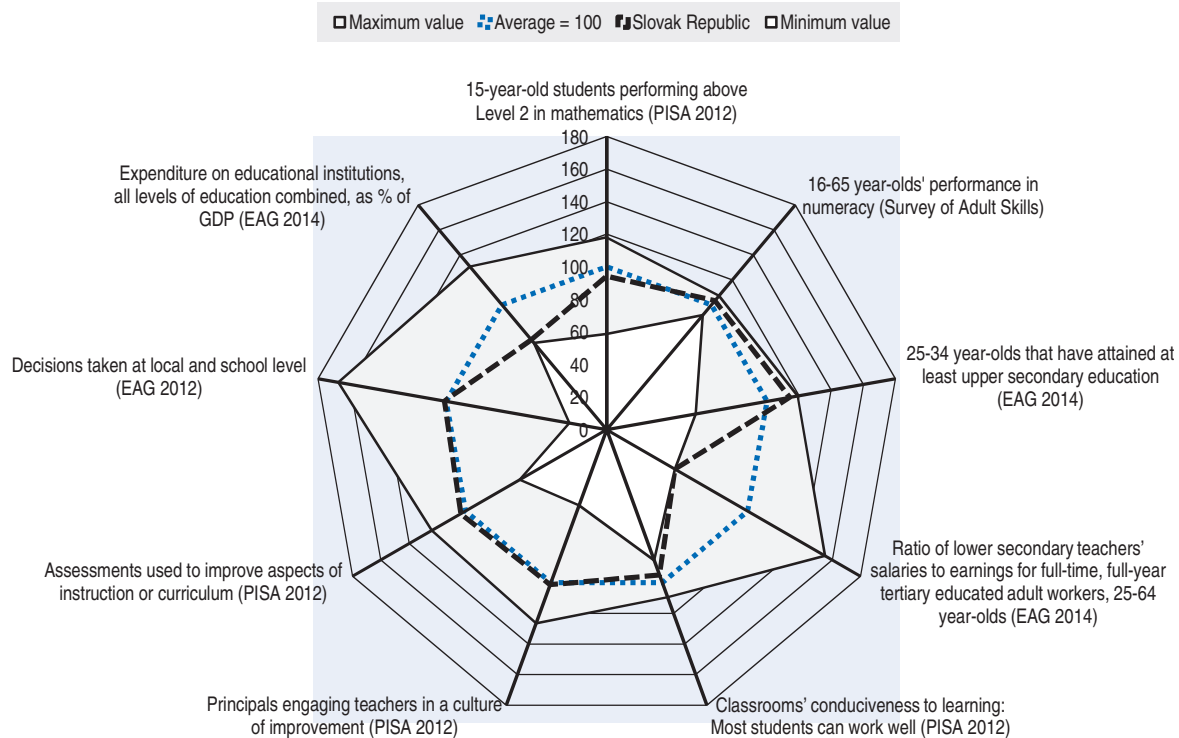
Students: The Slovak Republic performs below the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2012, and performance has decreased in mathematics and science across PISA cycles and remained unchanged in reading. The effect of socio-economic background on performance in mathematics is the highest among OECD countries. Early childhood education usually starts at age 3, and enrolment rates of 3-4 year-olds is at around the OECD average. Compulsory education lasts from age 6 to 16 (10 years) and includes primary and lower secondary education as a single structure and the first year of upper secondary education. The Slovak Republic has low grade repetition rates. Some student selection mechanisms, such as early tracking at the age of 11 (one of the earliest among OECD countries), ability grouping and school choice, could hamper equity if not managed appropriately. The upper secondary attainment rate is one of the highest among OECD countries, and enrolment rates in vocational education and training programmes (VET) in upper secondary education are also high, with transition to tertiary ensured upon completion. Practically no professionally oriented study programmes exist in Slovak higher education. Tertiary attainment rates remain below the OECD average, with large increases since 2000. The literacy and numeracy skills of 16-65 year-olds are above average when compared to other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills. The literacy skills of 16-24 year-olds are slightly lower than average. Unemployment rates are above the OECD average and reached the highest level in OECD countries for those without an upper secondary qualification and those in the 25-34 age group.

Institutions: The level of responsibility for resource allocation in Slovak schools (such as on hiring and dismissing teachers) is above the OECD average, and their autonomy over curriculum decision and assessment has increased to the OECD average. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of five years including a mandatory teaching practicum. Teaching conditions include below-average class size for primary and secondary teachers, with below-average teaching time in secondary education and above-average teaching time in primary education. A lower proportion of teachers in the Slovak Republic than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. There is no coherent school evaluation and assessment system, while there has been an increase in importance of evaluation and assessment in recent years.

System: Governance of the education system is shared between the central government and local authorities. The national Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports develops educational goals, content and methods, while municipalities are responsible for local administration and provide most of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education. Administration of regional education (the name used for pre-primary, primary and secondary education) is a combination of activities by the state administration, regional (municipal) administration and self-governance by schools. Most schooling decisions in lower secondary


education are taken at school level, with the rest taken by the central government. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) is one of the lowest among OECD countries, with a higher share of private funding than the OECD average. The Slovak Republic had one of the largest increases in expenditure per student among OECD countries from 2005-11 at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels of education.

Figure 12.27. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Slovak Republic**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Slovak Republic Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171844>

Key issues and goals

Students: The Slovak Republic reports an aim to ensure better access to quality education for children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Some issues under consideration include increasing the quality of VET to attract more students and to better prepare them for entering the labour market; introducing professionally oriented programmes in Slovak Higher Education Institutions (HEI); and revising the current system of social support for students in tertiary education.

Institutions: The Slovak Republic considers it important to increase teachers' salaries to a competitive level to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession. The Slovak Republic also considers that the current model of HEI self-governance and internal organisation as well as internal and external monitoring and assessment of quality in regional education could be improved. It is also of prime interest for the Slovak Republic to

implement an effective and internationally accepted method of quality assurance in Slovak Higher Education.

System: The Slovak Republic aims to increase the effectiveness and quality of the education system on several fronts, such as improving regional education administration, simplifying higher education legislation, increasing education funding to the average level of OECD countries by 2020, and adjusting the funding allocation system for HEIs to provide adequate incentives for improvement.

Selected policy responses

- The *Education Act (2008)* aims to increase equity and quality of the education system and prepare students for the future.
- The *Pedagogical and Specialised Employees Act (2009)* defines the role, rights and duties of teachers, the qualifications needed to enter the profession and the teachers' appraisal process, and introduces a continuing professional development process. In addition, in recent years, the Slovak government passed decrees to increase teachers' salaries between 2011 and 2013.
- The *Higher Education Act (2012)* was amended and approved by the Slovak Parliament to reorganise the self-governance of HEIs.
- Every year since 2011, the Slovak Republic has been increasing funding of primary and secondary education in the state budget to reach the OECD average level of expenditure in education (Report on the State of Education in Slovak Republic, 2013).
- The *system of funding in higher education* introduced in 2002 and the system of funding in regional education introduced in 2003 are further developed on a yearly basis through an update of the corresponding lower-level legislation.

Spotlight: Promoting a new system for funding higher education

The new HEI financing system was introduced by the Higher Education Act (2002). It sets out two categories of changes in financing HEIs: 1) the overall change of financial management of HEIs; and 2) the change of the allocation of funds from the state budget to HEIs.

New financial management of HEIs includes: 1) introduction of multi-source financing with funds coming mostly but not completely from the state budget; 2) allowing transfer of unspent state subsidies to the following year; 3) subsidies in the form of block grants; 4) the possibility for HEIs to own property; and 5) visualisation of the true economic state of HEIs by introduction of fully accrual accounting, which has enabled the recent start of a full costing project.

A new system of allocation from the state budget to HEIs introduced four kinds of subsidies: 1) for realisation of accredited study programmes, depending on the teaching performance of the HEI; 2) for research, depending on the research performance of the HEI; 3) for further development of the HEI, for accepted development projects; and 4) for social support of students in the form of grants, accommodation, meals, sport and culture.

Some strengths of the system identified by the Slovak Republic are the clear rules and transparency of allocation of subsidies from the state budget; the motivation for HEIs to increase teaching and research activities; the specific and focused support for development in selected areas; the support of access to higher education through the system of social scholarships; and the incentives for students through motivation scholarships.

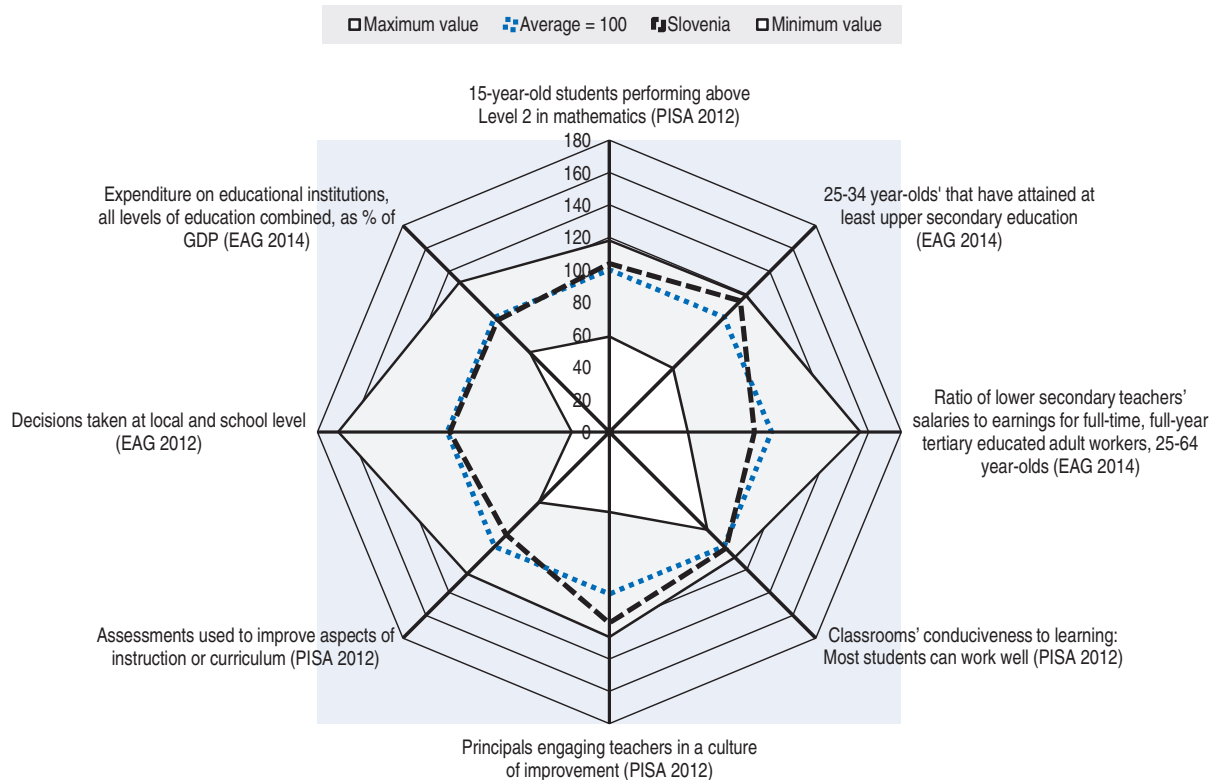
SLOVENIA

Context

Students: Slovenia performs above the OECD average in mathematics and science in PISA 2012 and below the OECD average in reading, with decreased performance in reading and unchanged performance in mathematics and science across PISA cycles. The impact of students' socio-economic background on performance is similar to the OECD average in PISA 2012, with high performance differences between schools. Slovenia has an integrated system of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children age 1 to 6 and the enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds is above the OECD average. Compulsory basic education is organised into a single 9-year structure called basic school, attended by students age 6 to 15. Grade repetition rates are low, and tracking starts at age 15 (the OECD average). Attainment rates in upper secondary education and enrolment in vocational education and training (VET) in upper secondary education are above average. Transitions between general and vocational upper secondary programmes are ensured, as well as access to tertiary education upon completion of an upper secondary VET programme. However, fewer students than the OECD average attain tertiary education. Unemployment in Slovenia is slightly above the OECD average.

Institutions: Slovenian schools have an overall average level of autonomy, with high levels of autonomy over hiring and dismissing teaching staff compared to other OECD countries, but a below-average level of autonomy over curriculum decisions and student assessment. Lower secondary education teachers in Slovenia are required to have five years of pre-service training including a mandatory teaching practicum. Teaching conditions for primary and lower secondary teachers include below-average class size and teaching time. Evaluation and assessment of educational institutions and the education system as a whole are used for improvement purposes.

System: Governance of the education system in Slovenia is shared between the central government and the school level. Municipalities establish public kindergartens, music schools, basic schools, student residence halls and adult education organisations. The central government establishes public upper secondary and tertiary institutions, educational institutions for Special Education Needs (SEN) students and student dormitories. Private kindergartens, schools and tertiary institutions can be founded by domestic or foreign persons or legal entities. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is responsible for drafting, evaluating and implementing regulations, and has authority over pre-school, compulsory basic school, upper secondary, adult and higher education. Most schooling decisions in primary and secondary education are taken at school level. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all levels of education combined) is around the OECD average, with a higher share of funding from private sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.28. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Slovenia**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Slovenia Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171856>

Key issues and goals

Students: Slovenia reports a need to address achievement gaps between specific student-population groups and to improve the responsiveness of the education system to the changing skills requirements of the labour market, economy and society.

Institutions: Slovenia aims to improve the efficiency of school leadership and governance by introducing more flexibility in the organisation of pedagogical work and in the implementation of curricula.

System: Slovenia aims to ensure an effective system of quality assurance in education and to further improve evidence-based policies and implementation processes.

Selected policy responses

- The Kindergarten Act 2008 and the Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act 2012 grants payment to parents with two or more children enrolled in pre-primary education to improve access to ECEC. An amendment to the Kindergarten Act (2010) allows municipalities to provide ECEC in buildings not constructed for this purpose. Also, the Child-minders at Home programme (2008) is a special grant for parents who did not get a spot in public pre-primary institutions. Information on available spots in pre-primary institutions is centralised.
- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, with the help of the European Structural Funds, implemented several programmes to support low-performing students and schools. The measures target mainly students from disadvantaged socio-economic, immigrant or Roma backgrounds. Examples of such programmes include the *Liven Up the School* initiative (Popestrimo šolo, 2011), the *Programme of Education for Professionals' Skills Improvement for the Successful Integration of Immigrant Students in Education* (2013), the *Projects for the Successful Integration of Roma Students in Schools* (2008-15) and the *Project raising the social and cultural capital in areas inhabited by members of the Roma community* (2011-13). This last project introduced methods of work with Roma children, youth and parents in Roma settlements to increase participation and success of Roma children in education. Measures and guidelines also aim for the integration of immigrant children in kindergartens and schools (2012).
- The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities set the *Youth Guarantee* (2014) to guarantee a job, formal education or a training opportunity to any 15-29 year-old registering in Slovenia's Employment service. Slovenia has allocated EUR 157.7 million to this programme. The target population comprises those currently unemployed, as well as 37 000 people in that age range who register annually for this service.
- Slovenia introduced a competence-based approach in VET curricula (2008-11), with a modular structure in teaching and learning, and increased the share of practical training. The updated subject curricula in general upper secondary schools (*gimnazija*) (2008/09) and the updated curricula in basic schools (2011/12) also introduced core competencies in general education. Following the *reform of vocational education* (2008-11), practical training in the work place increased, and 20% of the curriculum can now be designed in co-operation with social partners, particularly local companies.
- Slovenia aims to promote quality across the education system. The *Slovenian Qualification Framework* (SQF), which is in process of being adopted, was developed in reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) with the support of the European Union. At tertiary level, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2010) was established as an independent agency according to Standards and Guidelines in quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. It is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

Spotlight: Using data to monitor and steer education

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport set up a database called the Central Register of Participants in Education Institutions (CEUVIZ, 2011) which compiles individual, school and education outcome data on students in pre-primary, primary and secondary education, as well as short-cycle higher vocational education. CEUVIZ is linked to other databases such as the Ministry's Register of Institutions and Programmes, the Central Population Register, the Register of Social Rights and the Register of Spatial Units. CEUVIZ is used to follow up on key education goals and objectives, make decisions with regard to rights to public funding and provide evidence for scientific research and statistical work. The use of CEUVIZ is restricted to schools and the ministry.

The ministry also established the Electronic Higher Education Information System (Evš, 2012), which includes data on higher education institutions, publicly verified study programmes, students and graduates. The Evš is an analytical tool that facilitates regular monitoring of the system's operations and the development and streamlining of higher education policies. As a central source of data on student status, the Evš also helps to verify the right of students to public subsidies and different forms of financial aid instruments.

SPAIN

Context

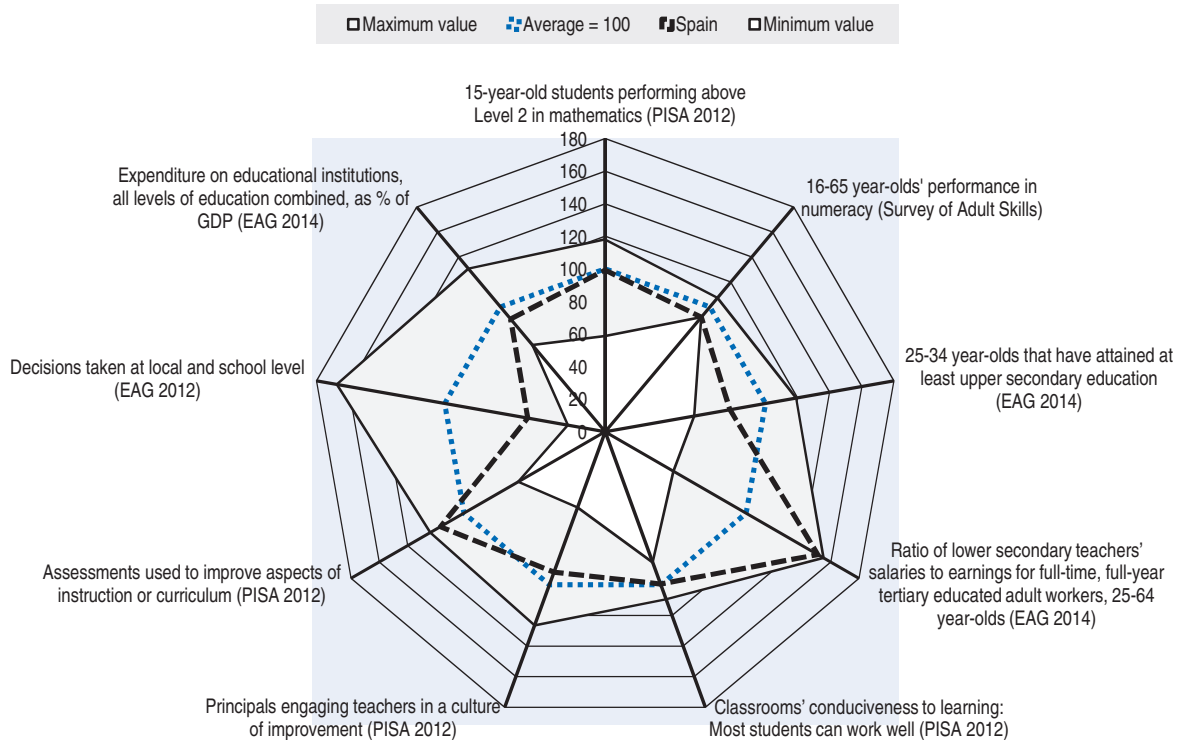
Students: Spain performed below the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science in PISA 2012, with unchanged performances across PISA cycles. The impact of socio-economic background on mathematics performance is at the OECD average in PISA 2012. Early childhood education tends to start at the age of 2 to 3 and the enrolment rate of 3-4 year-olds is above average. School is compulsory from age 6 to 16, and Spain has comprehensive education for all students until age 16. Grade repetition can hamper equity and completion, and dropout rates from upper secondary education are high among students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The attainment rate in upper secondary is below the OECD average, with lower-than-average enrolment in vocational education and training (VET). Tertiary attainment has increased to the OECD average. Spanish 16-24 year-olds are more proficient in numeracy and literacy than the overall adult population (16-65 year-olds) and perform below the average of their peers in other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills. Spain has the highest unemployment rate among OECD countries, and those with lower educational attainment are affected more than in most OECD countries. Also, the proportion of youth that were neither employed nor in education or training in 2012 is above the OECD average.

Institutions: Schools have below-average autonomy over curriculum and assessment and allocation of resources. Spanish learning environments are positive, according to the views of 15-year-olds. Lower secondary teachers undergo a five-year pre-service training including mandatory teacher practicum. The ratio of students per teacher is below the OECD average at all levels of education, and salaries for teachers are competitive in relation to workers with similar experience. At primary and secondary level, teaching time is above the OECD average. Spanish teachers have access to professional development, but appraisal opportunities seem less common than for their counterparts in other countries. Compared to the TALIS average, a higher proportion of teachers in Spain would choose to work as teachers again, while a lower-than-average proportion of teachers consider that the teaching profession is valued in society. Principals are elected or selected from among teaching staff and then follow a short training course. They tend to focus more on administrative tasks than pedagogical leadership. Evaluation and assessment is organised partly at the central government level (in co-ordination with regions) and partly at the regional level.

System: The education system is steered jointly by the national government in agreement with states, with the national level defining the overall framework and guidelines. Education objectives are aligned to EU 2020 priorities. Most schooling decisions in lower secondary education are taken at the regional level and to a lesser extent by the central government, with limited autonomy for individual schools. Also, funding is


determined and mainly distributed by the regional governments. Although public funding decreased due to the economic crisis, expenditure per student continues to be above the OECD average. Expenditure on educational institutions is funded less from private sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.29. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Spain**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Spain Snapshot was produced combining information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Spain* (OECD, 2014) with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171860>

Key issues and goals

Students: Spanish system-level policies, such as grade repetition, have the potential to hinder equity and can contribute to student dropout. High dropout and youth unemployment rates require efforts to consolidate basic skills and better match labour market needs, focusing on quality of education and provision of VET. This includes aligning education and training to promote better links with the labour market.

Institutions: With increased school autonomy, quality of teachers and school leadership can be improved through more targeted initial and continuing training. Schools in Spain also require sustained support to respond to the rapid and large increase in the share of immigrant children they are experiencing. Also important is achieving a balanced evaluation and assessment framework that sets national education goals and standards to help students and teachers to improve.

System: Spain faces a major challenge to continue delivering and raising the quality of education and skills. This is especially important for more disadvantaged groups, because higher education attainment and skills generally translate into higher labour force participation and wages. Spain could also benefit from improving consistency across regions to meet national and regional education priorities, building on evidence of what impacts learning, and reviewing expenditures and allocating funds where most needed.

Selected policy responses

- An annual National Reform Programme (*Programa Nacional de Reformas*, 2012) presents objectives to meet the European Union 2020 strategy and proposes to reduce dropout rates to 15% by 2020.
- The Programme to reduce early dropout in education and training (*Programa para la reducción del abandono temprano de la educación y la formación*, 2008) which provided funding for preventive measures, has shown a small impact on reducing dropout.
- A dual VET system, developed in 2012, combines training with employment in companies. The aim is to provide a professional qualification by harmonising teaching and learning processes between training institutions and workplaces. Basic requirements for the dual system are regulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (*Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte*), with implementation by regional governments. In only one year, the new system has doubled the number of students and companies.
- A measure to respond to the economic crisis (*Real Decreto-ley 14/2012*) addresses the rational use of resources in education, allowing for an increase in teaching hours per teacher, reviewing class size, adjusting education to demand and reviewing university fees. Some of these measures are temporary, and regional authorities can decide on their application.
- The OECD and Spain are collaborating to build an Effective Skills Strategy for Spain (2014). It will provide a strategic approach for developing, activating and using skills to boost employment and economic growth.

Spotlight: Targeting completion and transition

A new reform in process of implementation, the Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (*Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa*, LOMCE, 2013), proposes to introduce greater flexibility in student pathways at age 15 instead of 16, ease the transition into upper secondary vocational education programmes, provide more autonomy to schools and school leaders, and strengthen external student assessments. To raise students' outcomes, LOMCE aims to define core common basic education throughout the country, while taking into account the special requirements of regional governments. Together with evaluations for the entire national territory, the aim is to tackle the large differences among regions. It also introduces a new Diploma on Basic VET, which lasts two years for students between 15 and 17, ends with a professional certificate and gives access to Intermediate Level VET (*ciclos formativos de Formación Profesional*). Students can also take the final examinations to obtain one of the two diplomas in Compulsory Secondary Education (*Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*, ESO).

Spotlight: Targeting completion and transition (cont.)

To enhance quality of schools, LOMCE establishes greater autonomy for schools in schedule, content and pedagogical approach and will allow further autonomy in co-operation with regional administrations. It also modifies the selection process for school leaders to require candidates to have taken a specialised training course, to value previous experience and to consider candidates from any school (in the past, priority was given to internal school candidates). It also introduces external assessments at the end of each stage of education. The tests will be for diagnostic purposes in primary education, and for high stakes in lower and upper secondary education.

Under this reform, students in the last year of lower secondary education can choose either general academic courses or more vocationally oriented courses that combine academics with specific training in one or more professional profiles. At the end of the year, students can take either the academic or the vocational examination, leading to a diploma that will give them access to their chosen pathway, either Baccaalaureate or VET.

The detailed policy profile is available at:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-31-en>

SWEDEN

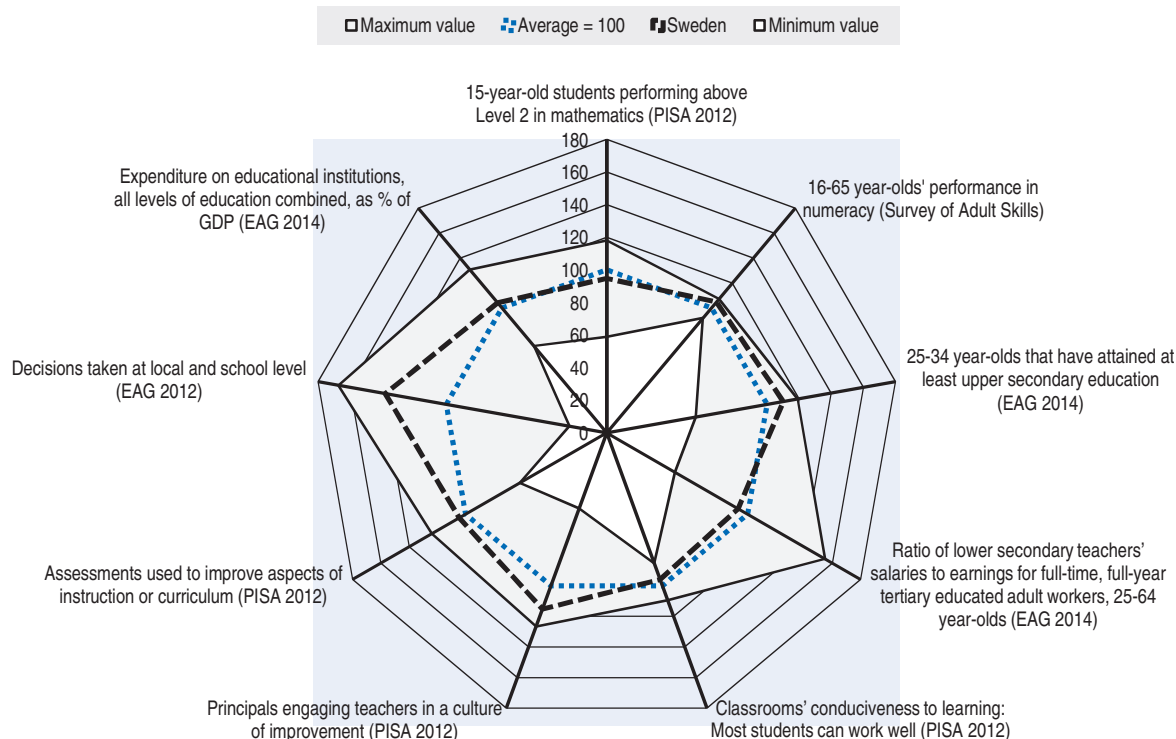
Context

Students: Sweden performed below the OECD average in PISA 2012, with performance in mathematics, science and reading decreasing throughout PISA cycles. The impact of students' socio-economic background on mathematics is below the OECD average. Early childhood education usually starts between the ages of 2 and 3, and most 3-4 year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary education. Schooling is compulsory from age 7 to 16, organised in a single structure corresponding to primary and lower secondary education, and there is no provision for grade repetition unless parents specifically ask for it. School choice and student selection mechanisms, such as ability grouping, can hamper achieving greater levels of equity. Sweden has above-average upper secondary and tertiary attainment rates. The country also has a slightly above-average enrolment rate in vocational education and training VET programmes in upper secondary education, with transitions possible from upper secondary VET programmes to tertiary education. Greater differentiations between VET and general upper secondary paths have taken place as part of broader reforms in 2011. The literacy and numeracy skills of Swedish adults (16-65 year-olds) are higher than in other countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) scoring even higher in literacy and problem solving than other adults. Unemployment is lower than the OECD average. The economic crisis has had a large impact on those who did not reach upper secondary level.

Institutions: Schools have less positive than average learning environments. Autonomy over resource allocation in Swedish schools such as hiring and dismissal of teachers is above the OECD average, and autonomy over curriculum and assessment is below average. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of 4.5 years, including a mandatory teaching practicum. Teaching conditions include below-average salaries and below-average ratios of students to teaching staff in primary and secondary institutions. A much lower proportion of teachers in Sweden than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Moreover, evaluation mechanisms exist at each level of governance. A national framework for evaluation and assessment clarifying the roles among governance levels could improve the education system and reduce variation between municipalities.

System: The education system is steered by the central government and local authorities. The central government defines goals and learning outcomes and has overall responsibility for education. The municipalities are responsible for providing and operating primary and secondary schools, and most of the decisions in lower secondary education are taken by schools or local governments. Post-secondary and vocational education (ISCED 4) is organised and run by a specialised agency. Expenditure on educational institutions as a share of GDP (for all education levels combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher share of funding from public sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.30. Selected indicators compared with the average: Sweden



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Sweden Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171872>

Key issues and goals

Students: Among the key targets reported by Sweden are increasing students' performance and reducing dropout rates to achieve greater equity and quality.

Institutions: Sweden aims to provide secure and positive learning environments in schools, as well as to make the teaching profession more attractive and recruit more skilled teachers into the profession. Another priority reported is improving equity in assessment and grading.

System: Sweden could benefit from a more overarching vision of education, of its priorities, and of developing a stronger and clearer steering system that is aligned to the complex structure of the school system.

Selected policy responses

- A new curriculum for pres-school, compulsory and upper secondary education, introduced in 2011, aims to provide general goals, guidelines and syllabi for each core subject, and to define clearer knowledge requirements. Students' progress is now assessed on national tests in Grades 3, 5 and 9 and two additional tests in Grades 6 and 9 (2011). In addition, a new grading scale has been implemented, beginning in 2011, to improve quality assessment in primary and secondary schools.

- The Education Act was implemented in 2011, aiming to provide all students with the opportunity to reach achievement targets and complete upper secondary school with improved skills, both for the labour market and further studies. Students who run the risk of not achieving the targets have the right to receive individual support. Other objectives include: 1) to give school leaders and teachers greater authority to provide students with better and more conducive learning environments; 2) to set stronger requirement for municipalities to provide greater access to student health facilities; and 3) to provide equal opportunities for all organisers of education.
- A new upper secondary education system (2011) aims to improve VET programmes by providing the option of apprenticeship.
- The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2008) has authority to exert sanctions and can impose fines (through a strengthened role granted by the Education Act, 2011) to schools not complying with regulation and standards.
- The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (NAHVE, 2009) administers a common framework of publicly funded vocational education at the post upper secondary level, decides which programmes will receive public funding and be included in the framework, audits the quality and outcomes of the courses, and analyses and assesses demand for qualified labour and trends in the labour market.
- The *OECD-Sweden Education Policy Review* analyses and proposes recommendations to increase student performance in Sweden.

Spotlight: Improving the attractiveness of the teaching profession

Sweden recently introduced some reforms to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession:

1. In 2011, Sweden started *new teacher education programmes*, structured as four main degrees: a degree in pre-school education, a degree in primary school education, a degree in subject education and a degree in vocational education (*Bäst i klassen – en ny lärarutbildning* OBS Prop. 2009/10:89).
2. Teaching practice in initial teacher training will be carried out at specialised training schools (*övningskolor*, 2014). More stringent requirements for admission in teacher education including aptitude tests have been set up, and a teacher registration system (2013) was also introduced.
3. Through a career development reform (2013), the government created advancement stages and provided salary increases for professionally skilled teachers in compulsory and upper secondary school. Two new career categories for teachers (senior master and lead teacher) were also created. Through this reform, teachers can receive a salary increase of about EUR 566 to EUR 1 132. Approximately one of six teachers qualifies for one of the positions.
4. The Boost for Teachers programme (*Läraryftet*) (2007-11) offered 30 000 teachers the possibility of following advanced continuing professional education at higher education institutions, and about 24 000 took part in this initiative. Boost for Teachers II offers the possibility for registered teachers without formal teaching qualification in a subject or age group they teach, to take specialised courses.
5. Training in effective teaching methods through peer learning has been introduced: all teachers in mathematics can participate in *Mattelyftet* (an in-service training about mathematics), while starting in 2015, teachers of Swedish can participate in *Läslyftet* (an in-service training about literacy). A Science Boost for science teachers has also been developed.

SWITZERLAND

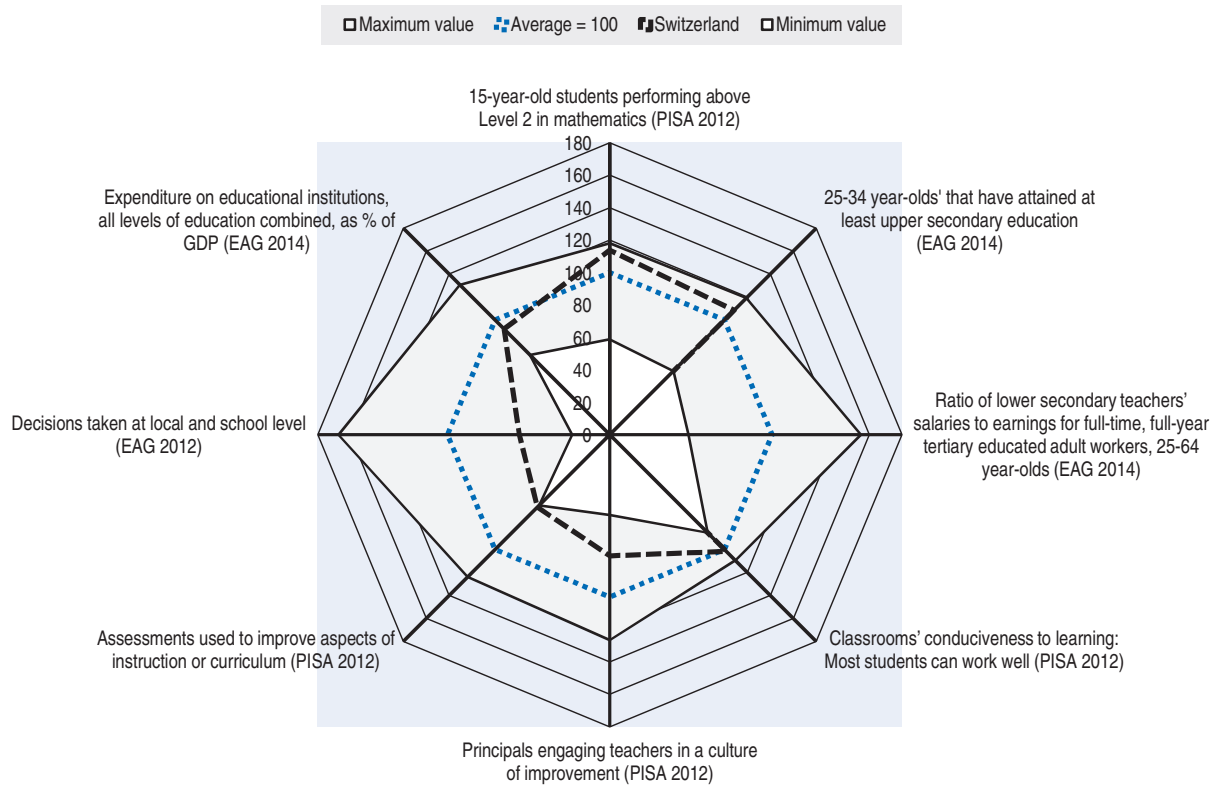
Context

Students: Switzerland performs above the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2012, with improvement in reading and unchanged performance in mathematics and science across PISA cycles. Students' socio-economic background had an average impact on mathematics performance compared to other OECD countries. Pre-primary education usually starts at age 5, and the proportion of 3-4 year-olds enrolled is lower than the OECD average. Compulsory education lasts at least nine years, from age 5 or 7 (depending on the canton) to age 15, and is subdivided into primary school and lower secondary education. Switzerland has limited school choice with one or two years of compulsory pre-primary school in some of the cantons. Student selection mechanisms, such as early tracking (from age 12) and grade repetition, may hamper equity if not managed appropriately. Switzerland has above-average upper secondary attainment and high enrolment rates in vocational education and training (VET) programmes. The VET system is well developed, and professional education and training (PET) is well articulated with upper secondary VET, offering a wide range of progression opportunities for graduate apprentices. Attainment rates in tertiary education are also higher than average. The economic crisis has had a small impact in Switzerland compared to other countries, as Switzerland's unemployment rate is below the OECD average.

Institutions: Schools have positive learning environments, with autonomy over resource allocation, curriculum decision and student assessment policies below the OECD average and more autonomy on selecting teachers. Lower secondary teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme of five years including a mandatory teaching practicum. School leaders have lower-than-average involvement in improving teaching practices and the working environment within the school.

System: Governance of the education system is regional in Switzerland, and there is no national education ministry. Each of the 26 cantons is responsible for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education, whereas the competence for post-compulsory and tertiary education is shared between cantons and the confederation. Most of the decisions in lower secondary education are taken at the canton level; upper secondary education and VET are regulated by the confederation, and cantons are responsible for enforcement. The share of GDP devoted to education institutions (for all levels of education combined) is below the OECD average.

Figure 12.31. Selected indicators compared with the average: Switzerland



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Switzerland Snapshot was produced using OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

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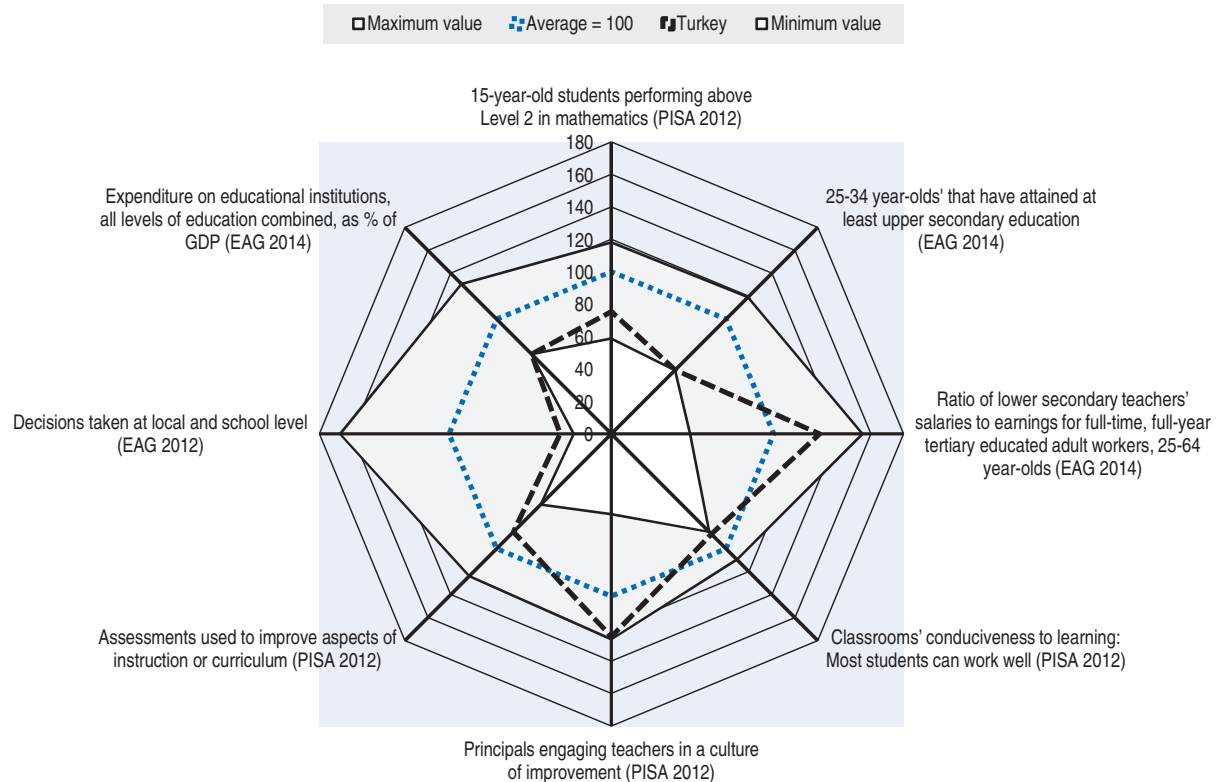
TURKEY

Context

Students: Turkey performs below the OECD average in PISA 2012, while the country has achieved improvements in mathematics, reading and science across PISA cycles, and the impact of socio-economic background on mathematics performance is around the OECD average. The country is working to improve children's access to education. Turkey also has a higher-than-average proportion of students with particularly low achievement amongst students from disadvantaged low socio-economic backgrounds. Enrolment in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is still low compared to the OECD average (the lowest rate for 3-4 year-olds in OECD countries), and early childhood education usually starts at age 5. System-level policies, such as early tracking (at age 11, one of the earliest among OECD countries) can hamper equity if not managed appropriately. The transition into upper secondary education and tertiary education is also highly selective. At upper secondary level, attainment rates are below average and enrolment in vocational education and training (VET) is at the OECD average. Attainment rates in tertiary education are below the OECD average, and have increased significantly since 2000. Unemployment in Turkey is at the OECD average.


Institutions: Schools in Turkey have the lowest levels of autonomy over curriculum and assessment and resource allocation among OECD countries. Turkish students have a positive view of their teachers and learning environments. Schools and their learning environments face many challenges, including a population influx from rural to urban areas. The capacity of school leaders and teachers to respond to school needs can be limited by weak initial education and training, teachers' lack of experience and the low autonomy accorded to schools. Lower secondary teachers undergo a four-year pre-service training, including a mandatory teaching practicum. Teaching conditions in primary and secondary education include teaching time below the OECD average and above-average class size. At both system and school levels, evaluation and assessment tools are used to ensure quality in terms of compliance with central regulations rather than for student improvement.

System: Governance of the education system in Turkey is the responsibility of the central government. Education policy in Turkey is steered by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and, at the tertiary level, by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Schools have little autonomy and limited capacity to respond to their needs. The central and provincial governments are responsible for personnel and financial management of schools. The central government makes a majority of schooling decisions, with some decisions taken at provincial and school levels in lower secondary education. Education is publicly funded, but schools can receive contributions from parents through their school-parent associations. Tertiary institutions have more autonomy than schools to address their needs, but central authorities oversee funding and student entrance exams for tertiary institutions. The share of GDP devoted to education institutions (for all levels of education combined) is one of the lowest among OECD countries.

Figure 12.32. **Selected indicators compared with the average: Turkey**

Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The Turkey Snapshot was produced using information from the *Education Policy Outlook: Turkey* (OECD, 2013) and OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171897>

Key issues and goals

Students: Turkey has one of the largest shares of population below age 15 among OECD countries, and ensuring education completion and preparation for the labour force and further learning is important. Equity and quality remain a challenge. Some of Turkey's priorities include: improving access and completion of upper secondary education, VET and tertiary education; addressing the needs of disadvantaged students; and improving equity between regions and urban and rural areas.

Institutions: Preparing quality teachers and school leaders is of high importance in Turkey. It is also a priority to enhance evaluation and assessment tools within a comprehensive framework aligned with educational goals to improve student outcomes.

System: Adequately funding the education system is of high interest. In addition, Turkey aims to give provincial authorities and education institutions the capacity to address local challenges while aligning with national priorities.

Selected policy responses

- The recent law numbered 29072 (26.07.2014), aims to provide more pre-school opportunities, for example, by allowing clubs to support social and personal development of children (in their spare time) if requested by parents and where conditions permit; allowing children to use pre-school institutions during the summer, especially those who cannot attend during the regular educational term; and opening free mobile classes, especially for economically disadvantaged students in rural areas.
- The *Secondary Education Project* with the World Bank (2006-11) aimed to improve quality, economic relevance and equity in secondary education and develop life-long learning. According to the *Implementation, Completion and Results Report*, the project partially achieved its objectives: revision and implementation of general and vocational curricula, public availability of student achievement results, distribution of materials for teachers, improvement of vocational teachers' skills, introduction of an online Career Information System, training of school management teams on school development plans, and distribution of grants to schools in low enrolment areas.
- The 4 + 4 + 4 policy (2012) increases the number of compulsory years from 8 to 12 and redefines the education system into three levels (primary, lower and upper secondary education) of four years each.
- Three key development plans steer education in Turkey: the Strategic Plan for the Ministry of National Education (2010-14), the recent Tenth Development Plan (2014-18) and the *Lifelong Learning Strategy Document and Action Plan* (2014-18).

Spotlight: Improving vocational education and training

To strengthen completion rates and develop skills for the labour market, Turkey aims to improve VET by targeting key areas, including links with the labour market, quality of teaching and of the curriculum.

More recently, the Specialised Vocational Training Centres Project (UMEM, 2010-15) aims to build capacity of youth and to increase employment rates and the Vocational Education Project for Employment (IMEP, 2009) intends to reduce unemployment rates by collaborating with the public sector. The Strengthening Special Education Project, financed by the European Union (2008 Financial Instrument for Pre-accession), aims to improve the quality of work and vocational training for individuals with special education needs by strengthening transition to work and vocational training.

MoNE and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) are also collaborating to support the vocational skills and entrepreneurship and leadership qualities of 15 000 VET school managers and teachers under the Teaching, Entrepreneurship and Leadership Training Co-operation Protocol for Managers and Teachers in Vocational and Technical Schools and Institutions.

To better match VET supply with the labour market, some projects focused on specific sectors, including tourism (the Culture, Art and Education Co-operation Protocol, 2004) and the Employment of Tourism Training Centres (TUREM Graduates Project), electricity (New Trends in Illumination Project, 2009) and railway (Railway Operation in European Credit System for VET project, 2011-13).

Data is collected through the Information System for Determining Educational Needs on Vocational and Technical Education Project (2005-13). A Follow-up Study of Graduates of Vocational and Technical Secondary Education Institutions (2007) tracked VET secondary graduates. Information on learning opportunities with medium- and long-term projections is also available in the Draft Turkey Vocational and Technical Education Strategy Paper and Action Plan.

The detailed policy profile is available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-32-en>

UNITED KINGDOM

Context

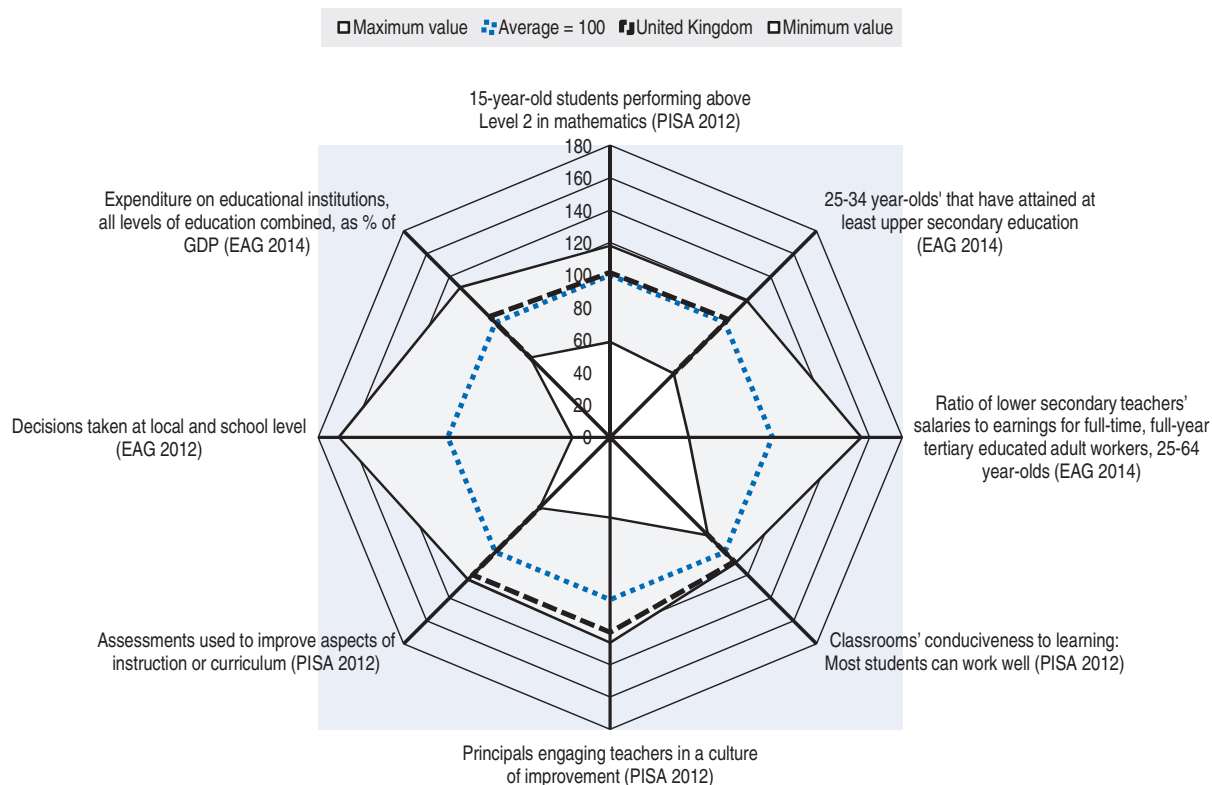
Students: The United Kingdom performs at around the OECD average in PISA 2012 in mathematics and reading, and shows above average performance in science. Student performance has remained unchanged across PISA cycles for the three assessment areas. The impact of students' socio-economic background on students' performance in mathematics for the United Kingdom is at the OECD average according to PISA 2012 (although higher than the OECD average in Northern Ireland). On average, across the United Kingdom, an above-average proportion of 3-year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary education, while 4-year-olds are enrolled in either pre-primary or primary education. Some system-level policies favour equity, such as low incidence of grade repetition and comprehensive schools, but others, such as within-school ability grouping or school choice could hinder equity if not well managed to mitigate possible negative impacts. At upper secondary level, attainment rates are around the OECD average, and the enrolment rate in vocational education and training (VET) is below average. Attainment and graduation from tertiary education in the United Kingdom are high compared to the average of OECD countries, with a comparatively higher share of international students. The graduation rate is one of the highest among OECD countries for tertiary type-A programmes. From the United Kingdom, England and Northern Ireland participated in the Survey of Adult Skills, and achieved below-average scores in literacy and numeracy amongst 16-65 year-olds, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) performing lower than other adults in England. Work is in progress to reform the qualifications systems in England, Wales and Scotland. Youth unemployment in the United Kingdom is above the OECD average.

Institutions: Students in the United Kingdom report positive learning environments, and school leaders provide pedagogical direction, in a context of increasing autonomy. From the data available, schools in England and Scotland have among the highest levels of autonomy over resource allocation and curriculum and assessment in OECD countries. To teach at lower secondary education, teachers in England and Scotland are usually required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme (four years in England, five years in Scotland). More teachers in England than the TALIS average consider that the teaching profession is valued in society and would choose to work as teachers if they could decide again. Depending on the country, the evaluations that schools follow can have a greater focus on accountability through external evaluations (England), or be combined with internal self-evaluations (Northern Ireland and Scotland).

System: The United Kingdom is composed of four countries (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) which each have responsibility for education policy. Each country in the United Kingdom has a different education governance system, but can have some similar governance structures. Most policies are defined within each of the four countries, and are designed to provide an increasing role to schools and teachers.


Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all levels of education combined) is above the OECD average and is funded more from private sources than the OECD average. Funding policies vary across the United Kingdom, with similarities in the range of funding allocations or grants for special groups.

Figure 12.33. **Selected indicators compared with the average: United Kingdom**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The United Kingdom Snapshot was produced using information from the *Education Policy Outlook: United Kingdom* (OECD, 2015) and OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171906>

Key issues and goals

Students: One of the main challenges across the United Kingdom countries is to raise student performance and decrease performance gaps between students of different socio-economic backgrounds.

Institutions: Another challenge is related to attracting high-quality teachers and school leaders and providing them with the tools to manage their improvement. Balancing accountability and improvement in schools is also important.

System: Ensuring efficient co-ordination among actors by reducing bureaucratic procedures and ensuring that sufficient funding reaches the most disadvantaged schools are also considered important by some of these countries. Providing qualifications for successful transition into the labour market is also an issue.

Selected policy responses

England:

- The *Pupil Premium* (2011) programme aims to reduce inequities between students through additional school funding to support disadvantaged students and close attainment gaps. It targets students who have received free school meals at any point in the last six years, with schools deciding how to use this funding. In 2014/15, the premium for primary school children will be GBP 1 300 per eligible child and GBP 1 900 for looked after children. Secondary school children will receive GBP 935. The programme has been recently extended to cover early childhood education.
- England is planning to *increase the number of academies and free schools* (2010) to give schools more control over their curriculum, budget and staffing. Academies are publicly funded independent schools, and free schools are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to local needs for children in their community. They are academies by law and so are not under the control of their local authority. England considers it important to follow up on the impact of these developments on equity and quality of student outcomes.

Northern Ireland:

- In Northern Ireland, *Every School a Good School* (ESaGS) (2009) is a policy for school improvement which aims to support schools to raise standards and overcome barriers to higher student learning.
- The *Entitlement Framework* (introduced in 2007 and statutory since 2013) aims to guarantee that students age 14 and above can access a broad and balanced curriculum, by requiring the offer of a minimum number of courses in their geographic area. The intention is to help students reach their full potential by providing access to relevant and engaging courses that best suit their needs and aspirations. All post-primary schools and Further Education colleges are grouped into *Area Learning Communities* (ALC) established to help them work collaboratively in order to ensure that the courses offered in a given area meet students' needs and the minimum required by statute.

Scotland:

- *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) (2010) aims to transform learning for 3-18 year-olds by providing all learners with a range of personalised learning to develop skills and knowledge and by skilling teachers to assess a learner's progress based on a wide range of information. An OECD review of the Scottish education system will take place in 2015 and will examine the progress of implementation of CfE from Primary 1 to the third year in secondary school (Broad General Education phase).
- Created in 2011, *Education Scotland* is an independent agency whose goal is to support quality assurance and improvement in the Scottish education system. Education Scotland operates in the following areas: 1) providing support and resources for learning and teaching; 2) undertaking inspection and review at schools; 3) organising continuing professional development activities for teachers; 4) promoting positive relationships and behaviours in schools; 5) creating online support materials for teachers to support student improvement; 6) implementing *Teaching Scotland's Future* in collaboration with key partners; and 7) conducting education research.

Wales:

- The Improving Schools Plan (2012) introduced a National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF, 2013) to provide a continuum of support to improve literacy and numeracy and reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes for 5-14 year-olds. National Reading and Numeracy Tests for students from Year 2 to Year 9 have been introduced for formative and summative purposes. To support their reform, Wales undertook an OECD education policy review (2013-14), resulting in *Improving Schools in Wales: An OECD Perspective* (2014).
- Wales is implementing the recommendations of the *Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year-olds*, to ensure that qualifications are understood and valued and meet the needs of young people and the Welsh economy. Engagement and consultation with stakeholders is taking place and will include a revised, more rigorous Welsh Baccalaureate, new and revised GCSEs and A levels and stronger gatekeeping for vocational qualifications.

The detailed policy profile is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-33-en>

UNITED STATES

Context

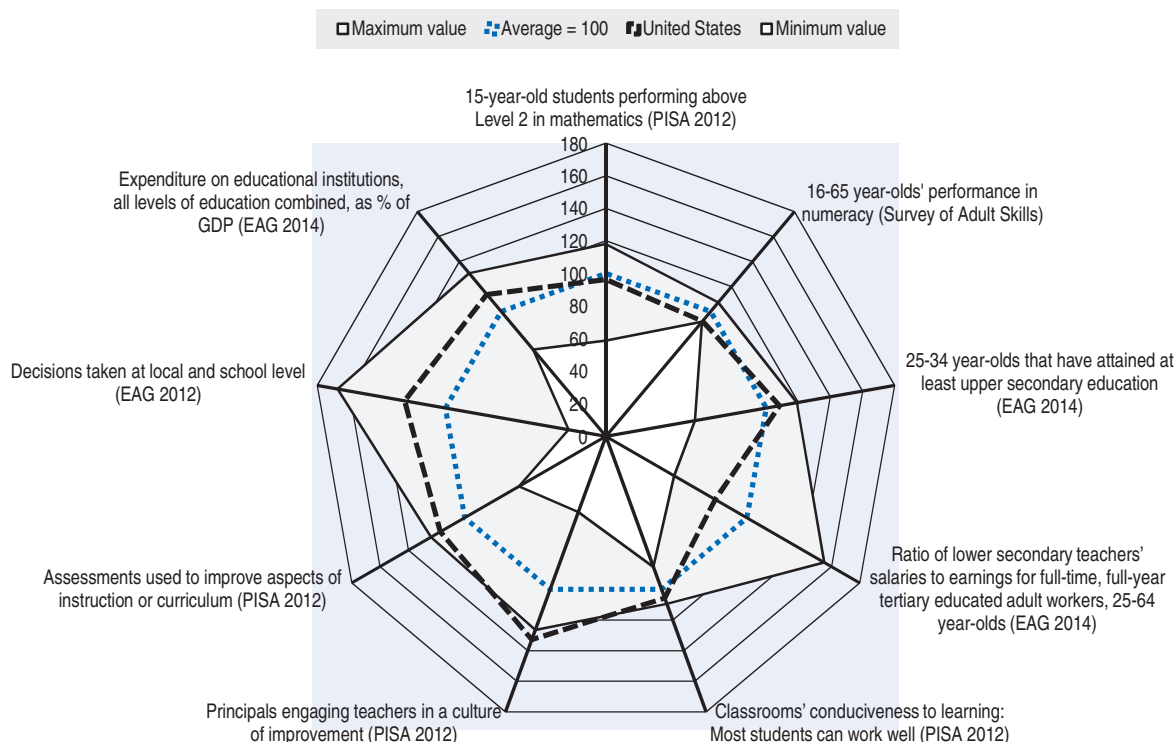
Students: The United States performs below the OECD average in mathematics in PISA 2012 and around the OECD average in reading and science, and had unchanged performance across PISA cycles. The impact of students' socio-economic background on performance in mathematics was similar to the average in other OECD countries. The United States has some policies that promote equity. Pre-primary education usually starts at age 4 with the proportion of 4-5 year-olds enrolled below the OECD average. Compulsory education starts between ages 4 and 6 depending on the state, and students attend secondary comprehensive school until age 17. Tracking starts at age 16, when students can begin vocational training (later than in most OECD countries). Grade repetition is slightly higher than the OECD average, and school choice is limited. The United States has above-average upper secondary and tertiary attainment rates. Vocational education and training (VET) is decentralised, and there is low participation in formal apprenticeships. Adults (16-65 year-olds) performed below average in literacy and numeracy compared to other OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills, with younger adults (16-24 year-olds) performing at a lower level than other adults. Low performance is mainly focused in specific population sub-groups. Unemployment is at the OECD average and remains lower for those with higher educational attainment in the context of the economic crisis.

Institutions: Schools have autonomy over hiring and dismissal of teaching staff, and responsibility for curriculum decision and assessment is below the OECD average. Regularly certified teachers are usually required to follow a pre-service teacher training programme including a teaching practicum, pass a competitive examination to enter the teaching profession and receive compulsory continuing education. Teachers are relatively younger than the OECD average, and teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include above-average class size and teaching time. Their salaries are lower compared to other OECD countries and to populations with similar education qualifications. One-third of US teachers in TALIS consider that the teaching profession is valued in society. The United States has invested in building state and local capacity to use relevant data so that students, teachers, parents and policy makers can make better education decisions, including better informed investments in post-secondary education.

System: The United States has regional governance of the education system, where state, local and federal governments guide and fund the education system. Public school curricula, funding, teaching, employment and other policies are set through locally elected school boards with jurisdiction over school districts. State governments manage educational standards and standardised tests for public school systems. Most decisions

in lower secondary education are taken at the local level of government. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (for all levels of education combined) is above the OECD average, with a higher share of funding from private sources than the OECD average.

Figure 12.34. **Selected indicators compared with the average: United States**



Note: For each indicator, the absolute performance is standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from 0 to 180, where 100 was set at the average, taking into account all OECD countries with available data in each case. See www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm for maximum and minimum value countries.

Source: The United States Snapshot was produced combining information from the country's response to the Education Policy Outlook Snapshot Survey received in December 2013 with OECD data. More information on the spider chart and sources is available at www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933171913>

Key issues and goals

Students: The United States reported that the aim of providing access to a quality education to all students, regardless of where they live and their learning needs, is of prime importance. It aims to improve student achievement; reduce achievement gaps by ensuring all students, particularly high needs students, have access to a quality education; and increase upper secondary school graduation rates, college enrolment and completion rates. To that end, the United States has set as its goal to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020.

Institutions: The United States reports that it is working to ensure that all students are taught by effective, well-supported teachers and attend schools with strong leaders. States are currently creating systems to assess differences in educators' skills and performance so that they receive the professional supports required to provide excellent instruction. The United States provides additional resources to schools serving high-needs students

and aims to turn around the lowest-achieving 5% of primary and secondary schools. In addition, the United States reports that it is supporting innovative practices in post-secondary education to increase college enrolment and competition rates, particularly for high-needs students.

System: The United States aims to support state and local capacity to provide high-quality early-learning education programs, to maintain high standards for kindergarten to Grade 12 learning that ensure that students graduate from high school college and career ready (CCR), and to assess students' progress according to rigorous standards along the way.

Selected policy responses

- The *pre-school Development Grants* (2013) and *Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge* (2011) programmes support state and local efforts to create or expand high-quality early childhood opportunities for all children.
- To raise student outcomes, the *Common Core State Standards* (2009) have been adopted by 43 states, the District of Columbia, four territories and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA).
- The Department of Education (ED) created a *College Scorecard* (2013) to inform on college costs, graduation rates, loan default rates, amounts borrowed and employability. A *model financial aid disclosure form* (2011) aims to clarify to students the type of aid they qualify for and compares aid packages offered by colleges and universities.
- ED's *Teacher Incentive Fund Program* (2012) provides states and districts with grants to develop policies to recruit and retain effective teachers. The *Teacher Quality Partnership Program* (2012) aims to improve the quality of new teachers through partnerships among Higher Education Institutions, high-need districts and early childhood education programmes.
- ED aims to provide rigorous accountability and flexibility to states from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The *ESEA Flexibility Program* (2011) aims to move away from top-down accountability towards data-driven decisions and expertise at state and local levels. As of April 2014, 42 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have approved ESEA Flexibility plans and are adopting assessments for students and rigorous college-and-career-ready (CCR) standards.
- With assistance from ED, states are developing *longitudinal data systems* (2002) that provide educators and policy makers with access to real-time information to make better decisions and personalise instruction, so students can successfully make the transition at each education stage from pre-primary education to college and career.
- To improve access to tertiary education, the maximum *Federal Pell Grant* award increased by 19% since 2008, and the number of recipients has expanded by 50%. Also, the *Pay as You Earn* (2013) plan enables eligible students to cap student loan repayments at 10% of monthly income. Finally, the *American Opportunity Tax Credit* (2009) assists families with college costs.

Spotlight: Supporting reforms through competitive grants

Race to The Top (RTT, 2009) is a competitive grant programme designed to create incentives for comprehensive reforms and innovations, to improve student achievement for all and to promote attainment and graduation in upper secondary and tertiary education. The original RTT provided awards to states to advance reforms in four areas: 1) adopting and implementing standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college, the workplace and the global economy; 2) building data systems to measure student growth and success, and informing teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; 3) recruiting, developing, supporting, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and 4) turning around lowest-achieving schools. Awards went to states that had demonstrated a track record of success and that had developed ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling and comprehensive education reforms. Winners received substantial grants to be used over four years and are helping to lead the way in terms of a variety of reforms for states and local school districts throughout the country.

ANNEX A

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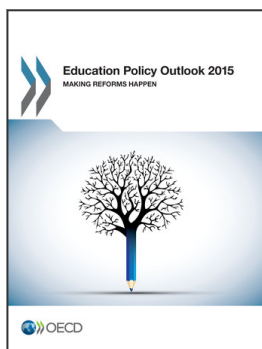
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