





# Education Today

THE OECD PERSPECTIVE



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## Foreword

*I*n the OECD Directorate for Education, we are very aware of the key role played by knowledge management in a world of information overload and knowledge-based economies. Traditionally, as OECD analyses have shown, education has not been exemplar in its own knowledge management, despite “knowledge” being education’s core business.

We have applied this observation to our own work. We have become aware that despite – or because of – our continued energetic output of publications there was need to create greater transparency about the key messages from our output as a whole. We have identified the need to present these in an accessible way so that they can be used by different audiences – our own national contacts, other sections of governments, experts, media, and the wider public – who do not have the time to tackle the full corpus of international analysis coming out of our Directorate. Few users read OECD reports cover to cover: this report represents a resource in modular format to help readers to dip in and out and take from it those findings of most interest to them.

We have limited the scope of this resource so that it includes only published results and policy orientations, and those applicable to most OECD countries (rather, for example, than single country reviews). The coverage includes some analyses that have depended on other Directorates in OECD with a direct interest in education in cases where these have been published, at least jointly, by the Directorate for Education.

This is a “first” of its kind for the OECD Directorate for Education. We intend to update it at regular intervals but not to publish every year – how frequently it will be published and in what format will depend in part on the reception this initial edition receives. Within the Directorate for Education, this synthesis has been undertaken by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) and future updating is included in the CERI programme. It was prepared by David Istance, with Delphine Grandrieux who was responsible for copy-editing and Eric Charbonnier and Corinne Heckmann who provided the statistical graphics.

Barbara Ischinger, Director  
Directorate for Education



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### This book has...



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## Introduction

This summary report is based on results from OECD work produced primarily since 2002 when the Directorate for Education was created, and especially in the past 3-4 years. The background to its preparation is explained in the Foreword by Director Barbara Ischinger. The approach chosen focuses on results and policy orientations which are published and hence in the public domain. Only generalised findings about developments, policy, or practice relevant across most OECD countries have been included. So, not covered are: studies or reviews of single countries; publications which provide exchange of information on promising practice without broader analytic conclusions; work plans and programme intentions; clarifying statements of problems/challenges/issues.

It is divided into nine sections, devised as a structure to reflect well the different areas of educational work and to bring out policy conclusions and messages. The choice of a larger number of short sections is deliberate in order to allow the key messages to emerge more clearly than they would in a smaller number of extensive “chapters”. We have also included some illustrative charts as visuals to complement the text.

It is produced entirely in modular format rather than as a continuous narrative. Each of the sections is divided into, respectively: *Key findings and conclusions* and *Orientations for policy*. Each modular text is introduced by the key message it contains or, where the module is in the form of a list of messages, these are highlighted instead. Each one also includes the title and chapter reference to the OECD report from which it comes, and these titles are brought together in an extensive but not exhaustive bibliography at the end.

**In order to stay within manageable limits, this resource is highly selective of all the possible findings and policy orientations regarding education at OECD. As the included texts are removed from the fuller analyses from which they are taken, there is a natural risk of oversimplification with short conclusions taken out of their wider analytical context. For both of these reasons, therefore, it is strongly advised that users looking for more than the headline messages should refer back to the original OECD source for the fuller picture.**

# Education Today

## THE OECD PERSPECTIVE

What does the OECD have to say about the state of education today? What are the main OECD messages on early childhood education, teacher policies and tertiary education? What about student performance, educational spending and equity in education? For the first time, OECD work on these and other important aspects of education have been brought together in a single accessible source.

Organised into nine sections, this report examines early childhood, schooling, transitions beyond initial education, higher education, adult education, lifelong learning, outcomes and returns, equity, and innovation. Each section offers both key findings and orientations for policy. All sections highlight the main messages in a concise and accessible way, with reference to the original OECD sources.

This report will prove to be an invaluable resource for all those interested in the broad international picture of education, as well as for those wanting to know more about OECD work in this important domain.

The full text of this book is available on line via this link:

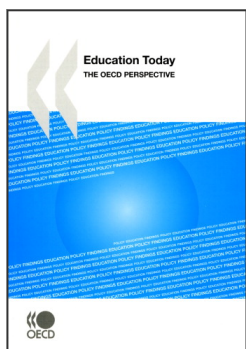
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**From:**  
**Education Today 2009**  
The OECD Perspective

**Access the complete publication at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264059955-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2009), "Table of Contents", in *Education Today 2009: The OECD Perspective*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264059955-1-en>

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