

### 3. LEARNING TO LEARN

## Are students who enjoy reading better readers?

- Across OECD countries, the quarter of students who enjoy reading most score one-and-a-half proficiency levels higher in reading than the quarter who enjoy reading the least.
- Variations in reading enjoyment explain 18% of differences in reading performance.
- The link between reading performance and enjoyment of reading tends to be strongest in countries where students do best in reading overall.

### What it means

Students who enjoy reading, and therefore make it a regular part of their lives, are able to build their reading skills through practice. PISA shows strong associations between reading enjoyment and performance. This does not mean that results show that enjoyment of reading has a direct impact on reading scores; rather, the finding is consistent with research showing that such enjoyment is an important precondition for becoming an effective reader. Therefore, to bolster reading performance, schools can both instruct students in reading techniques and foster an interest in reading.

### Findings

In almost all countries, students who enjoy reading are significantly more likely to be good readers. Across OECD countries, this difference accounts for an average of 18% of the variation in reading performance. This means that one could predict nearly one-fifth of the differences in student reading scores based on how much students enjoy reading.

PISA results show that the group of countries where enjoyment of reading makes the least difference in reading performance tends to have lower reading scores, overall, than those countries where enjoyment of reading makes more of a difference.

In Australia and Finland, two of the best-performing countries overall, over 25% of differences in reading performance are associated with how much students enjoy reading. In these countries and in New Zealand, the quarter of students who enjoy reading the most

reach exceptionally high reading levels, around the middle of Level 4.

Of the 17 countries where at least 20% of the variation in reading performance is explained by enjoyment of reading, 16 are OECD countries. On average in OECD countries, there is a difference of 103 points between the average scores of the top and bottom quarter of students ranked by reading enjoyment. The quarter of students who score the lowest are generally only able to perform relatively simple reading tasks at the baseline proficiency Level 2. The quarter of students who show the highest levels of reading enjoyment attain at least proficiency Level 4, meaning that they have a 50% chance of completing a relatively complex reading task.

### Definitions

Reading enjoyment is measured on an index based on student responses to a questionnaire. PISA asked them how strongly they agreed with statements about their attitudes towards reading, such as “I only read if I have to”, “I enjoy going to a bookstore or a library” and “I cannot sit still and read for more than a few minutes”.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

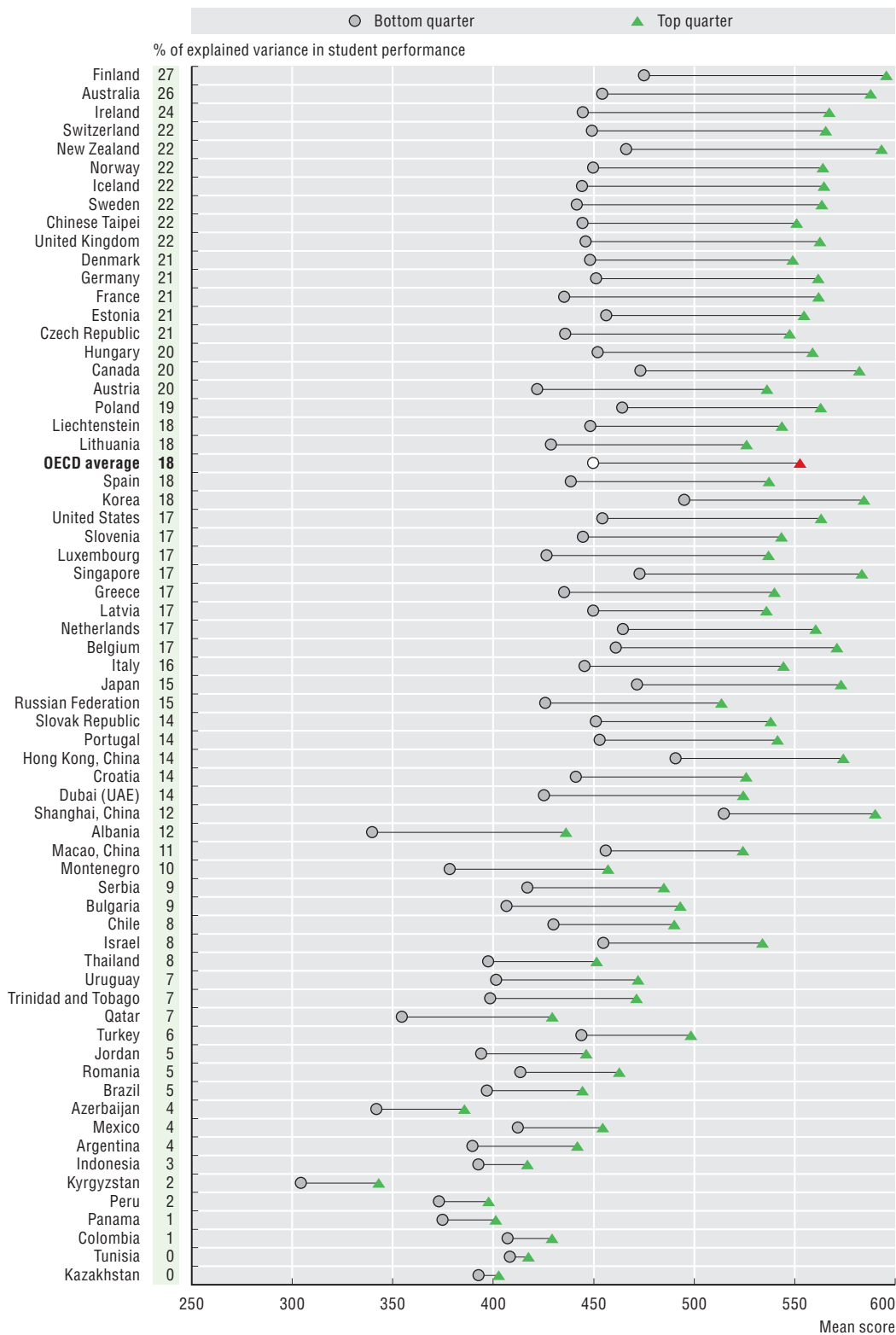
### Going further

Further analysis is presented in Chapters 1 and 2 of *PISA 2009 Results Volume III, Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices*. Full data are shown in Table III.1.1 at the back of that volume.

### Further reading from the OECD

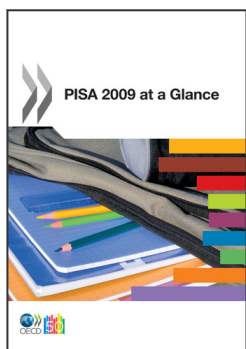
*Learners for Life: Student Approaches to Learning* (2003).

Figure 3.1. The relationship between enjoying reading and performance in reading



Note: Countries are ranked in descending order of percentage of explained variance in student performance.

Source: OECD (2010), PISA 2009 Results, Volume III, Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices, Figure III.1.3, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932360176>.



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