Executive Summary

This report constitutes the third in a series of thematic comparative reports which brings together the findings of the OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (School Resources Review). It provides ideas for governments to design effective human resource policies and achieve their education policy objectives.

Following an introductory chapter highlighting the importance of human resource policies, the report's remaining chapters focus on the following thematic areas:

- How careers, salaries and working conditions can be designed to attract and motivate talented individuals to pursue a career in school education;

- How teaching, leadership and other staff can best be matched to schools and students, and the most effective staff be matched to those that need them the most;

- How professional learning systems can support the continuous growth of school staff and improve teaching and leadership capacity in schools.

Chapter 1 sets the context for this report by conceptualising school staff as a vital resource of today's school education systems. It highlights the positive impact that teachers, school leaders and other staff can have on student learning, and the role of human resource policies in strengthening, recognising and preserving this impact.

From a financial perspective, the importance of school staff is evident in the investments that school systems make in their workforce. Given the labour-intensive nature of school education, spending on staff constitutes the largest expenditure item in any OECD country. Human resource policies that influence who school staff are and what they do can have a substantial impact on education spending and involve investment trade-offs that should be informed by the best possible evidence of effectiveness as well as an analysis of the particular context in which they take place.

Raising the attractiveness of a career in schools

Chapter 2 describes policies that can help countries attract talented individuals to a career in school education and sustain their motivation over time. Attracting motivated individuals to work in schools is a pressing concern in many OECD countries, particularly those with rising student enrolments or a large share of staff approaching retirement age.

Individuals choose a career in school education for a wide range of reasons and the factors that matter for their entry into the profession may not be the same that convince them to remain on the job in the long run. Evidence suggests that extrinsic factors are of secondary importance for those who have chosen to enter and remain in their profession. Nevertheless, the attractiveness of school careers, salaries and working conditions compared to those of alternative occupations does affect the propensity of young people to undergo initial teacher preparation and stay in the profession during their first years.

In addition, failing to provide supportive employment conditions for staff in schools is likely to have detrimental effects on their well-being, and ultimately, their willingness to

remain in the profession and their capacity to provide high quality learning environments for their students.

This chapter analyses policy alternatives to help school systems i) design career structures with opportunities for professional growth and specialisation, ii) establish salary scales to attract new entrants and retain experienced staff and iii) provide supportive working conditions, working time arrangements and task profiles to sustain staff motivation over time.

Distributing teachers, school leaders and other school staff effectively

Chapter 3 discusses policies to support the effective and equitable staffing of schools. All schools need competent teachers, leaders and other staff to ensure high-quality instruction, leadership, administration and ancillary services. But schools vary in their geographical location, internal organisation and student population and therefore require a different staffing mix (e.g. in terms of type and numbers), to support student learning and development in their particular context.

Many countries have difficulties in matching supply and demand for teachers and school leaders. Even where school systems manage to attract a sufficient number of high-quality candidates for recruitment in the school sector, they typically still face shortages and/or oversupply of candidates to fill positions in particular schools, depending on their geographical location, socio-economic context and specific subject areas on offer.

Inequities in the distribution of staff across schools in different socio-economic circumstances are particularly problematic in many countries. Even within schools, the least experienced teachers may be assigned to the students who face the greatest difficulties.

This chapter provides a set of policy alternatives to support an effective and equitable distribution of staff between and within schools. Beyond systematic forecasting of supply and demand, this requires i) transparent, stable and equitable staff funding mechanisms, ii) effective and fair recruitment processes and iii) efforts to attract professionals to where they can have the biggest impact.

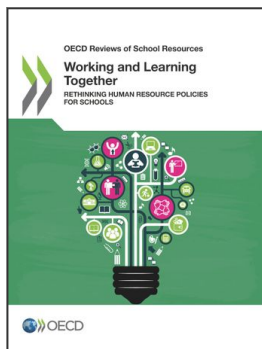## Promoting powerful professional learning for school staff

Chapter 4 documents the importance of moving beyond simplified models for staff development towards an evolutionary process comprising initial preparation and continuing professional learning. Creating a professional learning environment in which teachers and leaders feel individually and collectively supported is essential to unleash their potential to realise the transformative impacts of highly effective teaching and leadership.

This begins by preparing cohorts of teachers and school leaders who are ready for the particular context in which they will work and providing them with rigorous, applied preparation programmes that require demonstration of in-classroom teaching or in-school leadership skills. It continues through the early years of new teaching and leadership roles through a successful induction and mentorship programme that promotes rapid learning and skill development in the setting where staff will do the work – schools.

But professional learning does not end after the initial years in a new position. Schools must increasingly embrace processes that structure the school as a place where professional learning is an ongoing part of the day-to-day work of the organisation, where school staff work collaboratively to help each other learn, where systems exist to capture and codify

knowledge, and where explicit supports exist to develop leadership capacity among all adults. Where professional learning emerges from evaluation, systems should be designed to ensure that evaluation accomplishes its growth-oriented intent.

This chapter proposes policy alternatives to i) bring strategy and process improvements to initial teacher preparation, from initial education to induction, ii) conceive professional learning as part of larger continuous adult learning and improvement processes in schools and iii) mobilise the potential of evaluation to serve as a formative developmental tool for teachers and school leaders.