Promise of International Solutions for America

How PISA can be used to improve public education in the United States

Learning First Alliance – November 13, 2013

www.aft.org/promise/pisa
Welcome and Introductions
What is a “PISA” & OECD
International Comparative Research
Responding to International Comparisons
Fairer times for U.S. education
Q&A
What is OECD?

- International organization of 34 member countries
- Dedicated to a global economic development
- Develops recommendations for common problems

“and then governments implement recommendations.”
PISA 2013

• Program for International Student Assessment
• “Measures” capability in reading, math and science – 2012 focuses on math
• Given to 15-year-olds randomly selected from over 70 participating countries
• Surveys principals, parents and other stakeholders—but not teachers
• The U.S. sample includes roughly 165 schools and 4200 students

The 2012 PISA results will be released on December 3rd in Washington, DC
A TV reporter presented this graph and said: “The graph shows that there is a huge increase in the number of robberies from 1998 to 1999.”

Do you consider the reporter’s statement to be a reasonable interpretation of the graph? Give an explanation to support your answer.

-The Smartest Kids in the World…, 2013
International Research

Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession
LESSONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education
Lessons from PISA for the United States

Teachers for the 21st Century
USING EVALUATION TO IMPROVE TEACHING
McKinsey and Company

“These countries recruit 100 percent of their teacher corps from the top third of the academic cohort.”

OECD

“The frequently cited claim that the best performing education systems all recruit their teachers from the top-third of graduates - however defined - is not supported by evidence.”

These two reports were written within 8 months of each other—who is right?
McKinsey and Company

“...we reviewed the experiences of the world’s top-performing systems, in **Finland, Singapore, and South Korea.**”

OECD

“Improvements must come partly through the **transformation of the present teaching force**, with teachers expected to be able to adapt to new knowledge and demands during their careers...”

McKinsey based its conclusion on only three countries—a fact that is lost on most who cite this research.
The countries who participate are selected based on PISA scores.
The Summit had three main sessions:

1. How is teacher quality defined, what standards are set and by whom?
2. How is teacher quality evaluated?
3. How do evaluations contribute to school improvement and teacher self-efficacy?
The Answers

1. It must be done with teachers and not to them.
2. You must use multiple measures that represent the breadth and depth of what we want students to know.
3. Most countries struggle to make the connection between evaluation and professional growth—they tend to focus on the latter.
There are three essential components of successful teacher quality systems:

1. COLLABORATION
2. TRUST
3. TIME
The Shanghai Secret
By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
SHANGHAI — Whenever I visit China, I am struck by the sharply divergent predictions of its future one hears. Lately, a number of global investors have been “shorting” China, betting that someday soon its powerful economic engine will sputter, as the real estate boom here remarks. Education experts will tell you that of all the things that go into improving a school, nothing — not class size, not technology, not length of the school day — pays off more than giving teachers the time for peer review and constructive feedback, exposure to the best teaching and time to deepen their knowledge of what they’re teaching.
“PLCs are an indication of a broader trend towards professional development that is increasingly collaborative, data-driven, and peer-facilitated, all with a focus on classroom practice.”


“In other words, collaborative practice becomes the main mechanism both for improving teaching practice and making teachers accountable to each other.”

“Schools in Denmark, Finland, Japan, Norway, Shanghai and Sweden have a good history of teamwork and cooperation. They often form networks and share resources and work together to create innovative practice...”

“...but this collaborative culture does not fall from the sky and needs to be carefully crafted into policy and practice.”

“Collaborative Culture is the Key to Success”
Andreas Schleicher – March 2013
In April 2013, OECD released a study on evaluation and assessment. The report examined policies and practices in 28 countries (U.S. declined to participate) and makes recommendations for school and teacher evaluation.
OECD’s Recommendations

- Take a “holistic” approach
- Align evaluation with educational goals
- Focus the system on improving instruction
- Avoid distortions (too much emphasis on standardized tests, etc.)
- Put students at the center (broad measure of both quantitative and qualitative data)
- Build system capacity
- Allow local adjustments, flexibility
- Build consensus
“The degree of competition among schools is one way to measure school choice. Competition among schools is intended to provide incentives for schools to innovate and create more effective learning environments. **However, cross-country correlations of PISA do not show a relationship between the degree of competition and student performance.**”

“All this said, even though there may be no performance advantage for private schools after accounting for socio-economic background, private schools may **still be an attractive alternative for parents who want to capitalize on the socio-economic advantages that these schools offer**, including student peers from advantaged backgrounds, additional resources or better policies and practices that are often found in more socio-economically advantaged schools.”
**Chart B4.3.** Index of change between 2008 and 2010 in total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure for all levels of education combined

(2008 = 100, 2010 constant prices)

Countries are ranked in descending order of the change in total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure.

**Source:** OECD. Tables B4.2. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/seg.htm).

**StatLink** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847070>
As international investment in education increased on average during the global financial crisis, U.S. investment fell.
### Countries with < 10% Poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>PISA Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Schools with &lt; 10% Poverty</strong></td>
<td>551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>536</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>508</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>506</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Countries with 10%-24% Poverty</td>
<td>PISA Score</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Schools with 10%-24% Poverty</strong></td>
<td><strong>527</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>521</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
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## Let’s Talk Poverty Rates and Performance

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### Let’s Talk Poverty Rates and Performance

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Countries with 25%-49% Poverty</th>
<th>PISA Score</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Schools with 25%-49% Poverty</strong></td>
<td>502</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>425</td>
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</tbody>
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# Let’s Talk Poverty Rates and Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries with 50%-75% Poverty</th>
<th>PISA Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Schools with 50%-75% Poverty</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (58%)</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adapted From:

*PISA: It’s Poverty Not Stupid*
Mel Riddile – NASSP from PISA 2009
Child Poverty Gap in Selected Developed Countries, 2009

Note: The child poverty gap is the gap between the poverty line and the median income of children below the poverty line, taken as a share of the poverty line. The poverty line is defined as half of household-size-adjusted median income.

Source: Adamson (2012, Figure 7)
On February 9th, 2012 OECD released: *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*

The OECD has recommended ten steps which would reduce school failure and dropout rates, make society fairer and avoid the large social costs of marginalized adults with few basic skills.

**Design:**
1. Limit early tracking and streaming and postpone academic selection.
2. Manage school choice so as to contain the risks to equity.
3. In upper secondary education, provide attractive alternatives, remove dead ends and prevent dropout.
4. Offer second chances to gain from education.
Equity in Education?

The OECD has recommended ten steps which would reduce school failure and dropout rates, make society fairer and avoid the large social costs of marginalized adults with few basic skills.

**Practices:**
5. Identify and provide systematic help to those who fall behind at school and reduce year repetition.
6. Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn.
7. Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education.

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*Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*
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**Resourcing:**
8. Provide strong education for all, giving priority to early childhood provision and basic schooling.
9. Direct resources to the students with the greatest needs.
10. Set concrete targets for more equity, particularly related to low school attainment and dropouts.

On February 9th, 2012 OECD released: 
*Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools*
We are not saying American schools are good enough—they are not. What we are saying is that we need to be honest about all the drivers of performance if we are ever going to make the right choices for our students.
What are the results?
Percentage of low-income students

Percentage of low-income students

“No other developed nation has inequities nearly as deep or systemic; no other developed nation has, despite some efforts to the contrary, so thoroughly stacked the odds against so many of its children. Sadly, what feels so very un-American turns out to be distinctly American.”

The report recommends:
1. More Equitable School Finance
2. High Quality Teachers, Principals and Curricula
3. Expand Early Childhood Education
4. Mitigate Poverty’s Effects
5. Accountability and Governance Reforms
• When implemented well:
  – Ensures students are ready to compete in the global economy
  – Begins to address the achievement gap

Provides fewer, higher, deeper standards that help students develop skills of critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and persistence which are essential to college and career
“Critics of American education are sometimes disapproving of the teachers’ unions and of how they perceive these unions as interfering with promising school reform programs by giving higher priority to the unions’ “bread and butter” issues than to what the evidence suggests students need to succeed. But the fact is that many of the countries with the strongest student performance also have the strongest teachers’ unions, beginning with Japan and Finland....Indeed, the higher a country is on the world’s education league tables, the more likely that country is working constructively with its unions and treating its teachers as trusted professional partners.”

I wonder where this is from? A union publication?
Mystery Solved

It’s on page 240 of this publication. The first printed copy was handed to Arne Duncan in December 2010.

“Hidden” in chapter 11 titled, “Lessons from PISA”

No, OECD has said that the lessons are still the same.

United States
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Agenda</th>
<th>OECD Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Commitment to deep student engagement as outlined in Common Core</td>
<td>✓ “Establish ambitious, focused and coherent education standards that are shared across the system”</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ A systematic approach based on what works</td>
<td>✓ “Ensuring coherence of policies and practices across the system”</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Development and support for high quality teaching (tools, time, and trust)</td>
<td>✓ “The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals”</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Community Partnerships</td>
<td>✓ “Policies need to ensure that disadvantaged schools prioritize their links with parents and communities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Labor/Management Collaborative reform and shared responsibility</td>
<td>✓ “Ensure country is working constructively with its unions and treating its teachers as trusted professional partners”</td>
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• Utilize the AFT Toolkit “U.S. Education: A Global Perspective”
• Respond to the PISA release, making the case for how it supports the AFT quality agenda
• Get people asking the right questions - How do other countries do it? How are they different?
• Work to bring our progressive message through Reclaim The Promise to state legislatures, school boards, etc.
Some people say the United States should get back to leading the world in education.

Or what I like to call the “The older we get, the better we were” philosophy.

The United States ranks 11th out of 12 countries on an international study of mathematics achievement.

...students from the United States have fared quite poorly on these assessments.”

Assessment of the National Center for Education Statistics on all the international comparisons from 1966 - 1988
Promise of International Solutions for America

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Nov, 2013