



TEACHING PROFESSION
2015 INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE

IMPLEMENTING HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHER POLICY AND PRACTICE

THE 2015 INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION





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Asia Society is the leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Asia Society's education department partners with education leaders, primary and secondary education schools, non-formal learning programs, and education systems in the United States and Asia to ensure that students and young leaders develop global competence as the foundation for understanding between people in the Asia Pacific region and the United States, and throughout the world.

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IMPLEMENTING HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHER POLICY AND PRACTICE

THE 2015 INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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INTERNATIONAL SUMMITS: FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

On March 29–30, the 2015 International Summit on the Teaching Profession took place in the majestic setting of Banff, Alberta. Begun in New York City in 2011, the Summits bring together ministers of education, teachers’ union leaders, and other leaders of the education profession from around the world to focus on how to strengthen the teaching profession. The fact that the Summits still continue five years after they started is testimony to the unique value of this dialogue in mobilizing knowledge and experience on a global scale. The Summits have helped to promote public understanding of the centrality of the teaching profession, stimulated an authentic dialogue between governments and teachers’ unions, brought international evidence—not available in the past—to bear on pressing issues, and shared and encouraged action on practical policy solutions to major challenges. The Summits have become one of the most important forums in the world for deliberations among countries—toward the common purpose of making their respective public education systems the very best that they can be.

The 2015 International Summit on the Teaching Profession was hosted by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, and the Learning Partnership, a Canadian national education non-profit, and organized in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Education International. The Summit brought together official delegations of ministers of education, union leaders, outstanding teachers, and other education experts from Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong—China, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, People’s Republic of China, Poland, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (Scotland), and the United States of America. These countries are all high achieving or improving as measured by student performance on OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In addition to these official delegations, observer delegations attended from Belgium, France, Italy, and Luxembourg.

The Summits have evolved over time into a complex, multilayered set of meetings. A Pan-Canadian summit preceded the International Summit and brought together about 250 educators to discuss education policy and innovation in Canada. Expert panels addressed the research base of the Summit topics. Individual meetings of ministers and of union leaders and meetings of country delegations enabled attendees to reflect on the implications of the dialogue for their own country

context and policies. Some countries brought practicing classroom teachers as part of their delegations. Impromptu and lively international exchanges of teachers took place in the informal surroundings of the Summit, with comments being tweeted around the world. The host country, Canada, was represented by eight provincial and territorial ministries of education, along with their union leaders, reflecting the decentralized nature of Canada's education system. A number of business partners also joined the event. All told, more than 400 people from twenty countries participated in the Summit.

Previous Summits, held in the United States, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, had focused on raising the quality and status of the teaching profession as key drivers of the quality of modern education systems, on the often controversial subject of teacher evaluation, and on the challenges of providing equitable access to excellent teaching. The reports on the Summits have been written by Vivien Stewart, Senior Advisor for Education at Asia Society, and can be found on the Asia Society website.

The 2015 theme, "Implementing Highly Effective Teacher Policy and Practice," was chosen in recognition of the challenge of moving from dialogue to action in the context of complex systems and multiple political, economic, and social imperatives. The goal of this Summit was to share emerging best practices and issues around the following three interrelated topics that are critical to the success of education systems in the modern era:

- **Promoting and developing effective leadership**
- **Valuing teachers and strengthening their effectiveness**
- **Encouraging innovation to create twenty-first-century learning environments**

This report is not a proceedings of the Summit but tries to capture the main themes of the discussions. It attempts to show where there was agreement, disagreement or different approaches, as well as where there is simply not enough evidence to evaluate different paths. It tries to capture some of the actions and policies that have been inspired by the Summits and the commitments that countries made about their work over the upcoming year. Its intention is to spread the discussion that took place in Canada to a wider global audience of people interested in how education systems can provide high-quality teaching and learning for all.

SUMMIT OPENING

The Honorable Gordon Dirks, then Minister of Education for Alberta and Chair of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, welcomed participants to Banff, one of Canada's most iconic destinations and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A World Heritage Site with its breathtaking scenery seemed a fitting setting for a global summit on education. Dirks said that as a former teacher himself, whose father and grandfather were also teachers,

he understood how demanding the teaching role is. There is nothing more important than the teaching profession: it shapes the hearts and minds of the next generation and is the profession on which all other professions rest. He welcomed the Summit opportunity to share the challenges that countries are facing and, equally important, practical policies to address them.

Speaking for the Learning Partnership, a Canadian charitable organization



and a co-organizer of the Summit, Kenneth Fredeen, chair of the Learning Partnership and General Counsel of Deloitte, noted the unique role of the Learning Partnership in bringing business together with government and the education system to work on the skills that students will need in the globalized world of the twenty-first century. He noted that education's role is not only to prepare students for the rapidly changing workforce but also to be engaged citizens; the very social fabric of Canada and its stable democracy rest on its free public education system. The issues that the Summit is grappling with—how to promote collaboration, empowerment, decentralization, and evaluation—are also issues that business is confronting.

Speaking for OECD, Deputy Secretary General Stephan Kapferer stressed the importance of basing education policy on sound research. With increasing amounts of comparative international data available from OECD, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which most recently included sixty countries, as well as the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) and the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), it is critical that education policymaking now go beyond rhetoric and opinion to rest instead on evidence about performance. Research can help people to identify critical problems, can dispel myths, and can suggest promising or proven policies and practices.

In his opening remarks, Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of Education International, the global federation of teachers' unions, stressed the importance of this continuing dialogue between governments and the teaching profession. The Summit allows the opportunity to try to counter some of the harmful trends, such as toward high-stakes teacher evaluation based on standardized test scores, and for the collective wisdom of the profession to be brought to bear on education reform. Education policies have, in fact, evolved

“As yet, only one third of students are exposed to the kinds of deeper learning strategies that produce 21st century skills”

as a result of the Summits. He noted that research shows that collaborative school environments that empower teachers are the most successful learning environments for students, and he hoped the discussions at this Summit on leadership, teacher efficacy, and innovation would therefore be foundational.

Andreas Schleicher, Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills at OECD, prepared an OECD background paper on the Summit's themes, entitled

¹ The OECD report, “Schools for 21st-Century Learners: Strong Leaders, Confident Teachers, Innovative Approaches,” can be found at www.oecd.org/publications/schools-for-21st-century-learners-9789264231191

² The OECD report, “PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do,” can be found at www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results

³ The OECD report, “New Insights from TALIS: Teaching and Learning in Primary and Upper Secondary Education,” can be found at www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis.htm

⁴ The OECD report, “The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice” can be found at www.oecd.org/edu/ceeri/thenatureoflearningusingresearchtoinspirepractice.htm





“Schools for 21st-Century Learners: Strong Leaders, Confident Teachers, Innovative Approaches.” The report drew from a number of major OECD studies, including the 2012 PISA Results; the Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 (TALIS), and the Innovative Learning Environments Project (see footnotes). In his remarks, he discussed the urgency of preparing all students for a rapidly changing world that requires very different skill sets, but the reality that, as yet, only one-third of students are exposed to the kind of deeper learning

strategies that produce these skills. He cited the great variation among countries in the extent to which the teaching profession is valued and recognized and the fact that the kinds of deep professional collaboration and developmental feedback that are associated with teachers’ self-efficacy and effectiveness are fairly rare globally. He discussed the need for different kinds of leadership in schools and challenged participants to develop public policies to

address these alarming realities.

In his framing remarks, John Bangs, Senior Consultant to Education International, discussed the importance of the TALIS survey, the only international study of teachers’ views of their professional lives in the world. OECD’s TALIS research, as well as accumulating research from individual scholars, all point in the same direction: There is a strong relationship between teachers’ self-efficacy (meaning teachers’ confidence in

Using the Summits to Promote Change: The Case of New Zealand

Last year New Zealand hosted the International Summit in Wellington. The Honorable Hekia Parata, Minister of Education, reported that the New Zealand planning committee used the Summit to help the New Zealand public understand the need to strengthen the teaching profession and to promote student achievement, especially by Maori students. The subject of the 2014 International Summit was how high-quality teaching can translate into excellence, equity, and inclusiveness for all students. Several hundred New Zealand and Pacific Island educators were invited to observe the Summit and New Zealand organized an accompanying domestic Festival of Education in Wellington as well as events throughout the country. The Festival brought international speakers from the Summit to New Zealand educators, and served as a platform for domestic conversations about valuing and strengthening the teaching and leadership professions, raising student achievement, and celebrating excellence. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from the profession and the media that laid the groundwork for further developments.

New \$NZ360 million “Investing in Educational Success” legislation aims to raise teaching quality to improve student achievement. The initiative includes new teaching and leadership career paths and roles to share best practice within and across clusters of schools; a teacher-led innovation fund aimed especially at improving Maori and low-income schools; a thank-a-teacher website; Prime Minister’s Educational Excellence Awards; and a new statutorily independent professional body. Minister Parata testified to the immense value of the International Summits in informing and helping to bring about change in New Zealand.

their ability to plan and carry out activities to attain their educational goals) and high student outcomes. Teachers already believe this. However, international research now confirms the importance of professional collaboration, teacher leadership, and teachers' beliefs about whether society values them to student outcomes. He suggested a number of policy implications of these findings on distributed leadership, conditions for trust and collaboration, and teacher evaluation and professional development, which were taken up in the discussion in subsequent sessions.

SUMMIT RESULTS

Each year, participating countries are asked to submit summaries of their actions over the preceding year to follow up on their commitments made at the previous Summit. Anthony Mackay, CEO of the Centre for Strategic Education in Australia, and moderator of the Summits, analyzed the results. Although every country is different in the details, overall, he saw eleven key themes that countries are working on:

- **All countries have committed themselves to broader (“twenty-first-century”) learning outcomes for students and are working to develop learning systems that can deliver them**
- **Progress is being made on a stronger system perspective—going from pockets of excellence to designing a whole system**
- **There is a clearer focus on better collaboration between government and professional teaching bodies**
- **There is an increasingly career-long perspective on the teaching profession, aiming to enhance capacity throughout a teacher’s professional life through investments in ongoing professional learning**

- **There is an emphasis on the profession itself leading reform based on high standards of practice**
- **Work is ongoing on appraisal systems, including peer review and feedback**
- **There are renewed efforts to work with higher education on the pipeline of teachers coming into the profession, the quality of their preparation, and their classroom readiness**
- **There is a focus on the profession itself having twenty-first-century skills, hence in some countries having multiple pathways into teaching**
- **Both governments and the profession want to create a learning culture through networks, alliances, and collaborations**
- **There is greatly increased attention to meeting the needs of every child, especially poor, cultural minority, and special needs children, and ensuring teachers who can meet those needs, including expansion of early learning opportunities**
- **Every country is attempting to create broader partnerships between the education sector and other important sectors such as business and social/early childhood agencies**



PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Around the world, education systems are establishing more complex goals for excellence and equity in education in the twenty-first century. No longer are providing basic literacy skills for the majority of students and higher order skills for a few adequate goals. Instead, the goals of schooling today are to develop a broader range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for every student, including critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Students must also learn how to learn for their lifetime and need to develop a global outlook. Yet, across OECD countries, one-quarter of students do not currently meet even the basic skills needed to work in a modern economy. Achieving these changes, and doing so at a time when there is little prospect of greatly increased resources, will require developing and harnessing leadership at every level of the education system—and beyond. What should modern forms of leadership in education look like?

POLICY LEADERSHIP

Participants agreed that, at the policy level, old forms of top-down leadership and education systems based on compliance are no longer viable. Some education systems in fact have a long history of collaborative leadership. For example, Hong Kong schools are highly decentralized. Of its 1,000 schools only sixty-five are run by the government, so the government has to work collaboratively. Similarly, in Switzerland, education is led by twenty-six cantons, and there is a long history of collaboration between different levels of government and between government and teachers' unions, whose representatives are permanent guests in all reform discussions and conferences.

However, this is not true of most education systems, and many systems today are experimenting with more collaborative forms of leadership that bring more people into consultation and decision making. In Canada, the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario have all undertaken visioning exercises about the future of education. For example, in British Columbia, a major forum in Vancouver brought together many sectors, one-third from the teaching profession and two-thirds from the community, including parents and business. The result was that all the sectors developed a shared vision of the challenges and future of education. Every sector has been invited to be partners in implementing this vision and all have offered



Finland and this is an important signal of how teachers are viewed as leaders. A recent poll showed that education is the most trusted occupation in Finland.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education and two teachers' unions have been collaborating extensively. It is hard work and both sides have been criticized for doing so. The government is working with unions and academic advisors on ways to restructure teachers' time and on a review and report

to help. Ministers admitted that there is tension in facilitating collaboration around policy decisions, but if political leaders don't model collaborative leadership, others will not either. Education can no longer talk just to itself.

Delegates from Sweden frankly admitted that there is much dissatisfaction throughout the society with education. Sweden has invested lots of money and energy, but the education system is not attaining the results Sweden needs to achieve in order to stay competitive and to finance its welfare state. The government needs to take the lead in addressing this challenge but has to do so by uniting different sectors—unions, business, civic community—to find a way to move forward together. The Swedish government has established a Commission, made up of different sectors, to examine research and global experience and make recommendations for change.

In Finland also, despite being a high-performing country on PISA, there is a sense that the education system needs to improve to meet the rapidly evolving needs of the society and economy. It is critical to take the time to create a shared vision with broad engagement of the whole community since only through a shared vision can real leadership be exercised. The government, working with teachers, is using international data as evidence that Finland needs to improve and to go beyond rhetoric and opinions to be able to show the effectiveness of education reforms and their value to social betterment and national economic security. Teachers have always had a role at the national policy level in

on professional learning. So far these efforts have been primarily about relationship building, but the government and unions are working on what success measures should be applied to their joint efforts.

A number of countries discussed how they bring

“Collaborative leadership at the policy level only works if children rather than institutions or adult interest groups are at the center of policy”

teachers' voices into the policymaking process. In Singapore, where there is a single education system that employs all educators, the Ministry regularly rotates teachers and school leaders between schools and the Ministry—both to inform the policymaking process and to help develop leaders for the future. In Sweden, teachers are involved in rewriting the national curriculum. In the United States, the US Department of Education brings in teacher and principal leaders for periods of time to help inform policy. Where teachers are not invited to the policy

table, teachers are also inserting themselves into policy discussions, for example on testing and accountability—making their own table, as it were.

Delegates from Scotland, which is part of the United Kingdom but has a separate education system, argued the need for outward facing leadership as well. Echoing the discussion from last year’s Summit on equity and inclusion, they argued that collaboration with other sectors such as health, business, and youth work is essential. Collaborative leadership at the policy level only works if children rather than institutions or adult interest groups are at the center of policy.

To be sure, every jurisdiction recognizes that collaboration in policymaking is difficult and can produce major tensions; but without the trust, shared vision, and help from other sectors, the education system cannot significantly meet the challenges of educating all children to the levels needed for the twenty-first-century global knowledge economy.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

To meet these challenges, education systems everywhere are devolving more authority to schools and holding schools accountable for results. So the role of school leaders is becoming ever more demanding. Added to this is the accumulating evidence from research that weak school leadership is associated with poor school performance and

high teacher turnover while strong leadership can lead to significant improvement, particularly in the most challenging schools. Too limited a supply of effective school leaders is a major reason why many countries have difficulty moving from pockets of high achievement to excellence on a system-wide scale.

These trends and evidence have led policymakers to recognize increasingly that “school leadership with a purpose” is central to raising student achievement. Yet data from the TALIS survey of teachers and principals in thirty-four jurisdictions showed that:

- **Although in some countries all principals receive formal training prior to their appointment, overall only 47.7 percent of principals had done so**
- **Principals spend more time on administrative tasks (41 percent of their time) than on instructional tasks (averaging 21.5 percent of their time)**
- **Training in instructional leadership varies from near universal to under 60 percent in some jurisdictions**

School leaders are a relatively small but pivotal group. So investing in producing effective leaders should yield a high rate of return in moving school systems forward. A generation ago, good principals were efficient middle managers. In recent years a number of countries have revamped their conception of school leadership to focus on instructional leadership

and developed new approaches to training and developing them. There is considerable innovation around the world in this area (see Box for examples). There is also an emerging international consensus about the characteristics of effective school leaders although there is less evidence yet about what experiences actually serve to develop such leaders, especially on a scale large enough to staff a whole system.

Other jurisdictions also



School Leadership Standards and Programs

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
 China National Standards for Principals
 Ontario Leadership Framework
 New Zealand Best Evidence Synthesis on School Leadership
 Singapore Leaders in Education Programme
 Scottish College for Educational Leadership

These countries are developing modern approaches to school leadership with fairly similar features that include:

- Redefining the role of school leaders to focus on four key areas: (1) having a vision for the school, setting goals for student performance, measuring progress, and making improvements; (2) supporting, evaluating, and developing teacher quality as key to student success; (3) shaping an organizational culture and strategically using all resources to focus all activities on teaching and learning; (4) partnering with all stakeholders, including parents, students, community agencies, and universities, to support the development of the whole child
- Taking a career-long approach to developing school leaders, beginning with recruitment
- Designing leadership development experiences according to career stage and school need; emerging, middle-level, aspiring, new, and experienced leaders all have different needs
- Focusing on continuing development of skills rather than isolated courses
- Sharing school leadership collaboratively with teacher leaders
- Developing succession planning so that schools continue to make progress even if the leadership changes

reported on new initiatives in the school leadership area. In Poland, a new national principal training program is being developed. And in Hong Kong, an executive MBA in education is being piloted. In Germany, where leadership training programs are state-based, Saxony is opening its leadership training programs to teachers, not just prospective principals. As with an orchestra, schools may need leaders of different parts under the overall baton of the conductor.

Countries are trying both to improve the supply of effective school leaders and to build the capacity of existing leaders. A continuing challenge for most systems, as was discussed extensively at the 2014 Summit, is developing a supply of leaders that reflect the diversity of the students they serve and ensuring that effective leaders are deployed to the schools that need them most. A major theme of the discussion of school leadership was the need for leadership to be instructionally focused and shared collaboratively

with teacher leaders.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Teacher leadership was a major theme of discussion throughout the Summit, part of a wide interest among participants in different models of school and system organization and leadership that would enable teachers to play a more central role in the transformation of teaching and learning and in the development of policies that affect their work.

At the school level, even if the role of principal is defined as being about leadership for learning, there are still many operational tasks to be handled, as suggested by the TALIS data, which show that principals spend more time on administrative than instructional leadership. So ways need to be found to distribute leadership among a number of people with complementary pedagogical and managerial

competencies.

There is a wide agreement that school leadership needs to move away from the traditional top-down managerial model to one of collaborative leadership, involving teacher leaders who can participate in making decisions about the school and strengthen its pedagogy. Summit participants identified a number of roles for teacher leaders, including mentoring new teachers, coaching teachers in specific subjects, observing other teachers and providing feedback on classroom practice, leading professional learning in schools, and working with poor schools to raise the quality of instruction and student achievement. Not only would these kinds of leadership roles provide better support for other teachers but from a change management perspective, if there are too few people involved in leadership in a school, there may be little change because there are so few people promoting change and so many potentially against it. Teacher leadership is seen as something that can strengthen the instructional core of the school, create career opportunities for talented teachers, and promote innovation and improved student outcomes.

The term “teacher leadership” has no settled meaning among jurisdictions. Some systems have highly structured career paths with specified leadership roles for teachers while in others, teacher leadership is more informal. For some, teacher voice in decision making is the prime consideration, while in others teacher leadership is principally about working with teachers to strengthen the pedagogy of the school. While collaborative leadership is highly valued by

teachers and appears to increase principals’ job satisfaction as well, collaborative leadership should not be an end in itself but a means to enhancing instructional practices in order to improve student learning. We don’t yet have enough research on under what conditions distributed and collaborative leadership is effective in improving student outcomes. It was suggested that it would be immensely useful to commission a global study of different forms of teacher leadership. The issue of how to promote more teacher leadership was taken up again and in greater depth in session two of the Summit in the context of professional collaboration and teaching as a career (See Valuing Teachers and Strengthening Their Effectiveness).

HORIZONTAL LEADERSHIP ACROSS SCHOOLS

All systems have higher- and lower-performing schools, and as systems seek to “raise the bar and narrow the gap,” the concept of horizontal leadership across schools or cross system leadership is receiving increasing attention. Systems are experimenting with ways to use the best leadership talent in the system to have an impact beyond their individual school in order to increase the capacity of the whole system.

In Shanghai, the most senior teachers in a school work in a province-wide network to test and spread best practices across schools. And through a process known as empowered management, high-performing schools work with low-performing schools to improve their teaching and school culture. In Singapore, successful principals are rotated periodically among schools with the goal of raising the performance of weaker schools, and senior or master teachers work through the Academy of Singapore Teachers to share best practices across the system. Estonia has been working on short-term exchanges of experienced principals and excellent teachers between schools, and Finland also makes extensive use of teacher



and principal networks across schools for these same purposes. New Zealand is developing clusters of schools in which outstanding teachers and principals work across the cluster to raise performance.

One place where this approach has been well-researched is in London, where the London Challenge was established in 2003 to improve secondary schools in the five lowest-performing boroughs of the city. Successful school heads were released to work with other schools as coaches and consultant heads for periods of time. Teachers with advanced skills worked with teachers in the low-performing schools to raise the quality of teaching from “adequate” to “uniformly good.” There were also resources to create additional supports for poor children, including tutoring before exams and access to London cultural institutions. But the critical factor seems to have been the generation of commitment by effective school leaders with a “no excuses” mentality and the creation of capacity in the target schools through the work of excellent teacher leaders. Evaluations of the London Challenge showed that it turned around rock bottom morale and raised performance significantly in a very cost-effective way. The approach is now being tried in a number of other places, including Scotland, where a Scottish Attainment Challenge will use a similar approach in a number of inner city areas but with a focus on primary rather than secondary schools.

CONCLUSIONS

There was substantial agreement about the need for modern forms of collaborative leadership at every level—to promote better policy and better teaching and learning. The challenge is how to make it happen and how to know if it is being effective. Several themes for policy emerged from the discussion.

- **In some jurisdictions there is frequent consultation between government, teachers’ unions, and other sectors but this is not the case in all. In some places, therefore, there is a need to strengthen consultation and trust-building processes, without which there can be no effective policy development or school improvement.**
- **Where these do not already exist, policymakers need to stimulate the creation of new leadership approaches for principals, beginning with recruitment and ensuring that initial training programs and ongoing professional development embody the concepts of instructional and distributed leadership.**
- **There is a great deal of interest in having teachers playing expanded roles in schools, but teacher leadership is not yet widespread in policy or practice. Countries should stimulate more models and experiments together with research on which designs appear to work.**
- **Different models of horizontal leadership across systems, including partnerships, networks, and clusters, have emerged in a number of countries. They appear to be a way of getting some of the best talent in the system to focus on raising the quality of teaching in the schools that need it most. Since this is where the most urgent problems in education exist, policymakers should further encourage, develop, and monitor these strategies as a way of promoting equity.**

Education in the Host Nation: Reform and Innovation in Canada

Canada is a parliamentary democracy of 35 million people spread out across the world’s second largest country by area. It is a multicultural society with two official languages, a large foreign-born population (19.6 percent) and with 4 percent having an Aboriginal identity. Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver in particular are home to large immigrant populations. Education is exclusively the responsibility of the ten provinces and three territories of Canada. Education

on First Nation reserves is provided by the First Nations themselves with funding assistance from the federal government. In this context, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, founded in 1967, plays a critical role in sharing best practices, and organizing collaboration between provinces and territories on pan-Canadian priorities, such as the recent early learning framework, as well as in handling Canada’s international relations in education.

Canada is regularly among the top performers on international assessments, with fair and inclusive policies that contribute to high levels of equity. The performance of students from immigrant backgrounds, for example, is close to that of their peers—although First Nation students remain significantly behind. Ninety-three percent of Canadian students attend public schools. Despite the independence of the provinces and territories on educational matters, the structure of the educational system is fairly similar across jurisdictions although there are some differences in curriculum, assessment, and accountability to respond to diverse circumstances. Elementary schools run from grades 1–6 and secondary schools from 7–12, except in Quebec, where they are grades 7–11. Provincial and territorial ministries of education play a leading role in education. They are responsible for policy, assessment, and accountability while local school boards are responsible for implementing the curriculum, operations, and administration.

The reform efforts of two provinces were highlighted at the Summit:

Raising Achievement through Capacity Building in Ontario

The province of Ontario contains 40 percent of Canada's population and 40 percent of its new immigrant population. Of its 2 million students, 20 percent speak a home language other than the official Canadian languages of English and French. In the 1990s, the Toronto schools were losing both students and teachers, many students were not achieving provincial standards, and there were significant achievement gaps between different ethnic groups.

Starting in 2003, the government, working with all sectors, established goals for improving literacy and math achievement in elementary schools and for improving the high school graduation rate. A decade later, the number of students reaching provincial standards in literacy and numeracy had increased from 54 percent to 72 percent, and the high school graduation rate had grown from 68 percent to 84 percent. Performance gaps between groups of students had also narrowed and in some cases closed, the number of low-performing schools had been reduced, and public confidence in the schools had increased.

Studies of these dramatic improvements show that Ontario's success lay in choosing a small number of ambitious goals, and then working with teachers to build on content and pedagogical knowledge in literacy and math, working with school leaders to

focus on instructional leadership, and using school, school board and provincial data to constantly refine goals and strategies. At the high school level, student success leaders worked on finding successful educational paths for those most at risk of dropping out. And new kinds of Specialist High-Skills Majors and experiential learning opportunities, developed in conjunction with local industry partners, played an important role in raising the graduation rate and giving students the foundational skills needed to succeed.

Envisioning the Future in Alberta

Alberta, a prairie province of 3.5 million people with approximately 600,000 students, is a high-performing province on PISA. The province has been growing rapidly due to its oil and gas resources. Despite the fact that it is high-performing, in 2010 the Alberta Ministry of Education launched a province-wide set of discussions with the general public, focused on what the educated Albertan should look like in 2030. The resulting document, "Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans," set a high-level vision for a future education system that recognized how rapidly the world was changing and that "would prepare Alberta's students for their future not our past." A series of initiatives are being put in place to carry out this vision, including redesigning the provincial curriculum and student learning assessments to encourage students to go more deeply and to add modern competencies of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving; a learning and technology framework to ensure that students can use technology to support the creation and sharing of knowledge; a task force on teaching excellence that is recommending stronger preparation and professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders and new teacher and leader standards that are aligned with the new goals and expanded teaching methods; redesigned high schools to create more flexible student-centered approaches to twenty-first-century learning; and dual credit schemes to smooth the transition to post-secondary education. The initiatives are designed to prepare students for a world that is constantly evolving and to produce graduates who "are ethical citizens, engaged thinkers, and who display an entrepreneurial spirit."

For more information, see

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/renewedVision.pdf
<http://inspiringeducation.alberta.ca>.

VALUING TEACHERS AND STRENGTHENING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

The second session turned to the issue of the status, recognition, and effectiveness of the teaching profession. The International Summits have created much greater awareness globally of the centrality of the teaching profession and have helped to shift the conversation in some countries away from confrontation with teachers' unions and a focus on removing a relatively small number of poor teachers toward how government and the profession can work together to get excellent teaching into every school. Data from the TALIS survey of teaching show that in high-performing countries teachers feel recognized and valued by society, and that, in every country, teachers' self-confidence in their teaching is correlated with student learning gains. But the disturbing news from the TALIS surveys is that conditions for effective teaching are not widely available around the world. For example:

- **Only 30 percent of teachers say that teaching is valued by society**
- **Most teachers (90 percent) love their job but feel unrecognized and unsupported in their schools**
- **Most work in professional isolation—50 percent never team teach; only 30 percent ever observe their colleagues**
- **Feedback is rare—46 percent say they receive no feedback on their teaching**
- **Only 30 percent say that excellent teaching is recognized in career advancement or financially**

Participants debated what governments and teachers' organizations can do to improve these dismal statistics. Previous Summits had reviewed the comprehensive approach to creating a high-quality teaching profession developed in the highest-performing systems. Within this larger context, in 2015 the discussion centered primarily on the professional status and recognition of teachers, how to create collaborative work environments that support effective teaching, and how to modernize the teaching career.

PROFESSIONAL STATUS AND RECOGNITION

Evidence from TALIS suggests that the most successful education systems are those in which the value of the teaching profession is widely recognized by society. Countries where teachers feel their profession is valued show higher levels of student achievement, as measured by PISA math scores in 2012. Since these are correlation measures, the direction of causality cannot be firmly established. Are highly competent teachers recognized by society, or does societal respect for teachers attract highly competent teachers? However, in the thirty-four countries that participated in TALIS, only one-third of teachers believe that teaching is valued by their society. Among the countries participating in TALIS and in the Summit, there was large variation, with more than 80 percent of teachers in Singapore believing this to be true compared to only 5 percent in Sweden.

The reputation of an occupation is a key determinant

in attracting people into the field. In some countries public discussions about teachers have been very negative, with “teacher bashing” commonplace among politicians and the press—in effect blaming teachers for all the problems of the education system. Not surprisingly, this has a negative effect on the reputation of teaching as a profession and on its attractiveness to new recruits, especially those who have other career options. But in most countries, governments do try to provide public recognition for the fundamental role that teachers play in the society. Most countries have awards for excellent teachers. For example, in China, excellent teachers are nominated by the teachers’ union and recognized by the government at the regional and national level as “heroes of the nation.” Singapore recognizes all teachers as “nation builders.” The United States has a long tradition of recognizing state and national “teachers of the year.” And New Zealand recently established Prime Minister’s awards for teaching excellence. But while useful, these public displays of recognition on their own are not enough.

Teachers Contract, Term 1923

This is an agreement between Miss _____ teacher, and the Board of Education of the _____ School, whereby Miss _____ agrees to teach in the _____ School for a period of eight months, beginning September 1, 1923. The Board of Education agrees to pay Miss _____ the sum of \$75 per month. Miss _____ agrees:

1. Not to get married. This contract becomes null and void immediately if the teacher marries.
2. Not to keep company with men.
3. To be at home between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am unless in attendance at school functions.
4. Not to loiter in downtown ice-cream stores.
5. Not to leave town at any time without the permission of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
6. Not to smoke cigarettes. This contract becomes null and void immediately if the teacher is found smoking.
7. Not to drink beer, wine or whiskey. This contract becomes null and void immediately if the teacher is found drinking beer, wine or whiskey.
8. Not to ride in a carriage or automobile with any man except her brother or father.
9. Not to dress in bright colors.
10. Not to dye her hair.
11. To wear at least two petticoats.
12. Not to wear dresses more than two inches above the ankle.
13. To keep the schoolroom clean:
 - A. To sweep the classroom floor at least once daily.
 - B. To scrub the classroom floor with hot water and soap at least once weekly.
 - C. To clean the blackboard at least once daily.
 - D. To start the fire at 7:00 am so the room will be warm at 8:00 am when the children arrive.

Teaching has always struggled with its professional status. While things have improved significantly since the 1923 teachers’ contract from Ohio (see Box), the old “factory” model of a captive pool of female teachers managed by predominantly male principals or head teachers is still widespread. So too is the model of a school building full of “egg crate” classrooms where everyone is working alone.

Summit participants debated the relative importance of different factors that affect the professional status and reputation of teachers in their societies. While salaries are not the key determinant in whether or not

people go into teaching, in some countries and regions, they are a significant factor in determining attraction and retention in teaching. Other factors such as the increasing demands on the profession, the reputation of teacher education programs, the isolation, tough accountability regimes, and lack of career paths were also cited as critical issues. In many countries, teachers' job satisfaction has decreased in recent years. Overall, participants concluded, the profession needs fundamental restructuring. How can the teaching profession be turned into a modern, high-quality, well-regarded profession around the world?

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

The model of teaching in most western countries as a stand-alone activity may be the only solo practice profession left in today's economy. In fact, the idea that a single teacher working on his/her own should be able to meet the diverse needs of thirty students for a year is increasingly being called into question. And the urgent reality is that in many countries large numbers of teachers leave teaching, especially in the first five years, due to their sense of isolation and lack of support.

While TALIS doesn't measure teachers' effectiveness in a classroom, it does ask teachers to describe their ability to manage their classes, provide instruction, and engage their students in learning. Research has shown that when teachers are more confident about their own abilities to teach ("greater self-efficacy"), their students tend to do better in school and are

more motivated to learn, and the teachers themselves tend to use more effective instructional practices, have greater enthusiasm for teaching, and report greater job satisfaction. Importantly, TALIS also finds that the more teachers collaborate with their colleagues, the greater their sense of self-efficacy.

What is teacher professional collaboration?
TALIS distinguishes between two types of teacher

“Only one third of teachers say that teaching is valued by society”

cooperation: (1) exchange and coordination and (2) professional collaboration. The first includes exchange of educational materials, general discussions of learning with other teachers, and attending team conferences. This is the more common form of cooperation, and it is *not* significantly associated with improved practice. The second emphasizes a deeper level of exchange of ideas and practice through joint or team teaching, observing others' classes and providing feedback, engaging in joint activities across classes, and collaborative professional learning. These forms of professional collaboration are associated with higher performance.

By contrast with the tradition of stand-alone teaching, so common in the west, in high-performing Asian countries, professional collaboration is baked into the way schools work:

In Japan, for example, schools have intentionally designed teachers' rooms (*shokuin shitsu*) in which teachers have desks grouped by subject matter. Every new teacher has a senior teacher in their subject as a mentor and they



team teach with more senior colleagues. The regular interaction among colleagues in the teachers' room gives new teachers access to their more experienced colleagues and enables substantial communication of information about students and teaching during the school day. After school, subject matter meetings take place in the teachers' room, where teachers work together on lesson study.

“The development of collaborative cultures among teachers and school leaders is one of the most powerful ways to improve the quality of teaching, and we need to surround teachers with the same kind of collaborative culture that supports every other high-performing profession”

In Japan, all teachers participate regularly in lesson study, a practice in which groups of teachers meet regularly to review and improve their lesson plans based, in part, on an analysis of student errors. Lesson study is thought by researchers to account for the thoroughness of Japanese mathematics lessons, for example. Teachers learn through lesson study groups how to introduce a math concept, use skillful questioning to elicit a discussion of mathematical ideas, including incorrect ones, and review the concept again at the end. School-by-school lesson study often culminates in large public research lessons in which lessons that have been tested in school and progressively improved over time are watched by hundreds of teachers, researchers, and policymakers via video. This is a mechanism through which effective ways of teaching a particular concept spread widely among schools.

All is not rosy by any means in Japan. Japanese teachers work very long hours because they also supervise extracurricular activities, something the government is now trying to address. And the extra work involved in carrying out the recent reforms and pressure for students to do well on tests has led to significant levels of teacher burnout. However, because of the commitment to teacher growth and the existence of universal structures to develop teaching excellence, there is a low attrition rate of new teachers, the quality of Japanese teaching is high, and Japan has successfully carried out a major change in its teaching practice to address an area in which its students had not previously excelled. (See “Encouraging Innovation to Create Twenty-First-Century Learning Environments.”)

In Shanghai, China, every teacher in a school is a member of a teaching and research group that includes all teachers who teach the same subject. The groups meet together every week to share the work of lesson preparation, collectively examine student progress and diagnose student learning needs, and design ways to meet these learning challenges. As in Japan, in this way junior teachers learn from senior teachers about best practices. Teachers are also members of grade level groups, which also meet weekly to address issues affecting students in that grade. Teachers' classes are observed frequently by other teachers who provide structured feedback on their teaching. And technology has now been added to these extensive collaboration mechanisms as teachers share lessons on digital platforms. Over the course of their career, Chinese teachers are thus constantly sharing their knowledge with other teachers and learning from them at the same time. They are thus doing what is characteristic of high-status professions—constantly improving their mastery in a very disciplined way.

Since teaching is viewed as a long-term career and since improving teaching effectiveness outweighs the impact of any other school policy, Shanghai invests significantly in these professional learning mechanisms. The trade-off for this is that class sizes are much larger than in a typical American school, for example.

In Singapore, teaching has a similar apprenticeship framework in which there is a systematic effort to pass on the accumulated wisdom of teaching practice in particular fields. Singapore teachers are guaranteed 100 hours of professional development every year. Much of this professional development

is school-based, led by senior-level teachers whose job it is to work on overcoming learning problems in the school or to introduce new practices. In recent years, as Singapore has sought to broaden the range of approaches in its classrooms in order to promote twenty-first-century skills and competencies, this system of mentoring by lead or senior-level teachers and regular professional collaboration has been used to help teachers develop these broader pedagogical repertoires.

While western countries are less systematic than these Asian systems in supporting professional collaboration among teachers, many forms of teacher professional collaboration have grown up over time that reduce isolation. For example, teacher turnover and attrition are high in many systems and very costly. Mentoring and induction programs for new teachers have therefore become relatively widespread internationally, and these have been shown to reduce attrition and increase teacher confidence and effectiveness. However, they are not universal by any means, and there is a big difference between principals' reports of the presence of such induction programs and teachers' perceptions of such supports.

Being well-prepared for teaching by participating in professional development activities, particularly those that focus on classroom management, instruction, and engaging heterogeneous learners, also has a positive impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Research has shown that job-embedded professional development is more effective for teacher learning than isolated courses.

Many forms of this have sprung up over the past twenty years, including teacher professional learning communities, schools led by teams of teachers, and instructional coaching, which played an important role, for example, in Ontario's successful reforms. Research has shown these to be effective when they are well implemented.

Participants argued that the development of collaborative cultures

among teachers and school leaders is one of the most powerful ways to improve the quality of teaching and that we need to surround teachers with the same kind of collaborative culture that supports every other high-performing profession. But although TALIS shows that professional collaboration is important, it does not provide answers as to how to do it. And there are, in fact, some significant barriers to its widespread development.

German participants reported that the culture of German schools is competitive rather than collaborative and that to change this, collaborative work styles would have to be started in teacher education programs, which currently enshrine the model of the lone teacher working alone.

A big barrier to professional collaboration is how schools structure time, and here there are large variations between countries. For example, a study comparing Shanghai teachers with teachers in California showed that teachers in both places spend about the same amount of time on the job, roughly forty-two hours per week. But California teachers spent more than 70 percent of their time teaching classes, whereas teachers in Shanghai spent closer to 40 percent, using the rest of the time for lesson preparation, meeting with students individually, marking homework, observing classes, and providing feedback to other teachers and participating in their teaching groups. The trade-off for this is larger class sizes, a subject on which TALIS research and the views of many teachers are at odds.



Some countries are addressing the time issue. For example, Finland makes provisions for three hours of professional collaboration per week as part of the teachers' contract. New Zealand is negotiating with its teachers' unions about restructuring time to encourage more professional learning and collaboration. In Hong Kong, where there is a decline in the school-age population, instead of letting teachers go, the government will work with the union to use freed-up time for teachers to retrain. To create effective professional collaboration mechanisms, many countries need to rethink how time and other resources are used. For example, they could certainly increase time for effective professional learning by reducing the amount of time teachers spend on extraneous duties and on less useful forms of professional development and focusing it instead on forms of professional learning that clearly improve outcomes for students.

TALIS also found that teachers are positive about developmental feedback that supports teachers and leads to opportunities for professional development, but many teachers believe that appraisal systems are mainly for administrative purposes and, depending on their design, they may also be a barrier to professional collaboration.

Some participants felt that the language and ideas of self-efficacy and collaboration are somewhat abstract and don't have common meaning across all jurisdictions. Collaboration is not an end in itself but a means toward better student achievement. Many countries have, in fact, shifted their professional development resources and policy guidance significantly toward job-embedded and collaborative professional learning. But collaboration needs to be well-structured to work. There are real dangers in superficial collaboration. While studies have shown that teacher professional collaboration can be powerful, we need to better understand under what conditions collaboration works reliably to



measurably improve instruction. The challenge for education leaders and policymakers is to take steps to ensure that what can work does work.

TEACHING AS A CAREER

Unlike other careers where upward movement in rank and responsibility is the norm, in most countries teaching has a flat career path in which upward movement on the salary scale is usually determined by years of experience, not performance. The main opportunity for career advancement for teachers today is to leave the classroom and become an administrator. According to TALIS data, only one-third of teachers believe that excellent teaching is recognized in any way, whether through career advancement or financially. Participants agreed that the teaching profession needs to evolve significantly in order both to retain talented teachers who are looking for new challenges and to attract and meet the expectations of a new generation of teachers. These new teachers, sometimes referred to as generations X and Y, have different expectations than older teachers. They expect new challenges, recognition, and opportunities to change their roles periodically.

Summit participants discussed different ways to create new roles and opportunities for teachers. Some systems, such as those in Singapore and Shanghai, have well-developed systems of career pathways. Teachers rise through structured career ladders with increasing compensation and responsibility to work with their colleagues to improve teaching quality



workforce from good to great,” said a New Zealand participant.

In the Netherlands, only 25 percent of teachers feel that excellent teaching is recognized. The Dutch Ministry of Education argued that the perceived lack of meritocracy in teaching is one of the biggest obstacles to its being regarded as a true profession. The Ministry has proposed various kinds of recognition for teachers, including financial bonuses and career development

within and across schools.

In Singapore, talent is proactively identified and nurtured rather than being left to chance. Teachers are assessed annually and after three years of teaching, teachers are given the opportunity to see which of three career paths would best suit them—master teacher, specialist in curriculum or research, or school leader. Each path has salary increments and opportunities for professional development. As discussed in the previous section, some of this professional development is school-based and is led by senior teachers on the career ladder, and some is university-based at the National Institute of Education.

A number of other countries are developing different types of career ladders. In Sweden, one out of six teachers will be enabled to become a “first” teacher, with a substantial salary bump of 15–20 percent. Schools in disadvantaged areas will be enabled to have a higher proportion of first teachers. These reforms will be paid for by both the national and local governments. As part of its new reforms, New Zealand is also working on new roles and better career paths for teachers. These include “lead” teachers who will work with other teachers in their schools to improve performance, and “expert” teachers who will work across clusters of schools. The design of these roles is being worked out between the government and teachers’ unions in the context of a Professional Learning Framework. “New Zealand has a modern curriculum that requires an upskilled workforce to manage, and we want to take the whole

opportunities, but these remain controversial within the Dutch teaching profession.

Opportunities for teacher leadership can take forms other than career ladders. In Finland, for example, where schools are much smaller, teacher leadership is more informal. All teachers exercise considerable authority for curriculum development, assessment, introducing new pedagogies, leading teacher teams, and mentoring new teachers, but they do so without permanent or fixed roles or levels. In Estonia also, where all teachers have master’s degrees, leadership is regarded as something that is team-based. Other examples of team-based teacher leadership from a number of places were also mentioned. In New York City, a union-managed charter school in the South Bronx is run by teams of teachers who are paid 15 percent more than other teachers and who have raised achievement to the point where the school is now ranked near the top among high schools in New York City.

Participants engaged in a sharp debate as to whether teacher leadership is a formal role versus an attitude or a practice, an aspect of professionalism. Some participants argued that leadership today is less about formal position than about a person’s ability to move a group around a set of ideas. A trend in some businesses, for example, is to flatten organizational structures and give more decision making authority to middle management. These horizontal structures of leadership are represented by lattices. Whatever the structure, successful companies focus a lot of attention on organizing people in ways to promote

TEACH to LEAD: Promoting Teacher Leadership in the United States

Teach to Lead is an effort co-led by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and supported by the two teachers' unions and more than seventy other education organizations. In announcing the initiative, Secretary Duncan said, "Teach to Lead seeks to catalyze fundamental changes in the culture of schools and the culture of teaching so that teachers play a more central role in the transformation of teaching and learning and in the development of policies that affect their work." According to Ron Thorpe, President of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, "This initiative is about reimagining a teaching career that is designed for today's world, not one anchored in an industrial model that no longer works for students or teachers." One-quarter of US teachers have indicated an interest in hybrid roles, ones that enable them to play leadership roles in their schools without leaving the classroom. Since December 2014, Teach to Lead has held a series of regional teacher leadership summits to highlight innovative teacher-led work in states, districts, and schools. The initiative is not about a single idea but about building a movement; creating space for teachers to lead without leaving the classroom empowering teachers to be innovative, and involving teachers in informing policy.

See www.teachtolead.org

organizational excellence.

What are the roles in which teacher leaders are needed? Many were mentioned—mentoring beginning teachers, coaching teachers in specific subjects, observing teachers and providing feedback on classroom practice, leading professional learning in schools, working with schools in poor neighborhoods to strengthen curriculum or teaching, input into policy, and action research in schools. It was suggested that a global study of teacher leadership might be incorporated into the next worldwide TALIS survey in 2018.

The emerging concept of teacher leadership has become an active area of discussion and innovation in the United States. "Teach to Lead," a year-old initiative jointly convened by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the U.S. Department of Education, is designed to advance

student outcomes by expanding opportunities for teacher leadership.

There is considerable experimentation around the world with respect to creating new roles and career paths for teachers. The lessons learned from efforts of countries that already have such systems suggest key implementation issues that need to be addressed (see Box). There are also unresolved issues.

Everyone agrees that excellent teachers deserve recognition, but what motivates teachers and how do various kinds of incentives work in practice? In some places financial incentives are very much part of the picture, but in others these are anathema and some forms, such as merit pay plans in the United States, have been shown not to work.

Should rewards focus on individual teachers or collective effort? A number of studies show a direct connection between the quality of the individual

Restructuring the Teaching Career: Key Implementation Issues

- Need clear and credible selection criteria for lead teachers
- Need clear role definitions for teacher leaders, e.g., coaching, model teaching, providing structured observation and feedback, curriculum development etc.
- Become part of collaborative school cultures, i.e., all teachers are involved in professional learning
- Focus on clear instructional and academic improvement goals
- Redesign use of time
- Pay particular attention to new teachers
- Work closely with the principal as instructional leader
- Focus attention on getting high-quality teaching into schools of greatest need

teacher and student outcomes. But other studies show the power of collaboration and teamwork in raising the quality of a school. In Singapore, which awards bonuses for individual teacher performance, the Ministry is now looking at team and school

“Unleashing the profession will achieve more than changing policy, but you also need to change policy to unleash the profession”

recognition as well. In truth, there is a need for more research on what levers and structures will promote both recognition and collaboration.

What should be the role of unions in addressing these issues? Teachers are one of the most unionized workforces in the world. However, there are great differences in the traditions of unions between different countries and contexts. In some countries they play a major role in the development of public policy; in others, not. In some countries they work closely with the government; in others, not. Unions play an important role in raising teachers’ salaries and improving working conditions, advocating for public policies that benefit children and families, and, in some countries, such as the United States and Switzerland, for example, in providing professional development for their members.

In recent years, teachers’ unions have focused more on professionalism, such as through the development of teacher standards and professional learning frameworks. Teachers’ unions support the idea of teachers as leaders of their profession, but the implication

that some teachers are more worthy than others threatens the unity of the whole. Teachers’ unions are, however, examining career pathways and other ways to restructure the profession to provide greater opportunities for teacher leadership.

Labor-management contracts are one mechanism for working on these issues. For example, in Finland there is a contractual obligation to provide three hours per week for teacher collaboration. In New Zealand, the government is negotiating with the teachers’ union on time for professional development. In Scotland, a difficult conversation between government and the teachers’ unions about how to remove poor teachers eventually turned into a conversation about how to grow teachers and led to a contractual obligation for local authorities to provide and for teachers to participate in regular professional development. In Hong Kong, the government is working on an agreement with teachers’ unions on professional development.

In most of these areas, we have promising practice but not proven practice. An OECD study of 450 education reforms found that only one in ten had any research associated with it to assess impact. We have evidence from TALIS as to what the problems are. On the one hand, we have strategies with evidence of effectiveness that are not being followed. On the other, we have policies with little evidence. There is a need to attach more research to these initiatives and to decide what are the right indicators and metrics to use in judging success.



CONCLUSIONS

Whatever the points of agreement or disagreement, there was a consensus that in most countries there need to be structural changes to the teaching profession in order to attract and retain talent and promote conditions for effective teaching. As one participant put it, “Unleashing the profession will achieve more than changing policies but you need to change policies to unleash the profession.”



What does an effective and valued twenty-first-century teaching profession look like? As participants learned at previous Summits, the highest-performing countries, where teachers believe they are highly valued by society, take a comprehensive approach to the teaching profession—actively recruiting high-quality entrants, raising the rigor of teacher preparation programs to equip prospective teachers with strong subject matter skills and extensive clinical experience, mentoring every new teacher, developing career paths and leadership roles for outstanding teachers, and providing effective forms of professional learning and collaboration directed at student achievement.

Within this larger framework, what can public policy and teachers’ unions do with respect to the issues under discussion at the 2015 Summit?

Government and unions working together should:

- 1. Communicate the value of the teaching profession to the larger society, recognize teachers’ professionalism, and provide guidance to schools on the value of distributed leadership and involving teachers in decision making**
- 2. Within the context of available resources, encourage experiments with restructuring the use of time to encourage professional collaboration so teachers can observe and receive feedback from professional**

colleagues and work together to improve their instructional practice

- 3. Consider how to promote career ladders and other forms of teacher leadership with accompanying recognition for excellence and use these teachers to lead instructional improvement within and across schools**
- 4. Focus resources on schools most in need in order to raise the quality of teaching and student learning**
- 5. Cooperate on research and data-gathering to examine the impact of these changes on the teaching profession and on student outcomes**

These are not new ideas but they have a renewed urgency given the imperative to prepare students for the new global knowledge economy and to close achievement gaps. The good news is that the teaching profession may finally be ready to embrace change in the conceptions of teachers’ roles. If the teaching profession is able to develop career pathways, with recognition and broader opportunities for excellent teachers, together with professional standards and ongoing professional learning opportunities, then it may indeed achieve public recognition like other professions such as medicine, law, engineering, accounting, and architecture to which it has long aspired.

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION TO CREATE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The world is changing ever more rapidly. Technological, economic, and political trends have transformed the skills needed by young people today. A generation ago what was taught lasted a lifetime. Today we need to prepare young people for rapid social and economic change, for jobs, technologies, and social issues that don't yet exist. No longer are providing basic literacy skills for the majority of students and higher order skills for a few adequate goals. Instead, the goals of schooling today are to develop a broader range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for every student, including critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Students also need to learn how to learn and to develop a global outlook.

The world no longer rewards people for what they know but for what they can do with what they know. Sometimes called twenty-first-century skills or deeper learning, according to OECD, the goal of learning today is what learning scientists call *adaptive expertise*: “*the ability to apply meaningfully-learned knowledge and skills flexibly and creatively in different situations. This goes beyond acquiring mastery or routine expertise in a discipline. Rather, it involves the willingness and ability to change core competencies and continually expand the breadth and depth of one’s expertise. It is therefore central to lifelong learning.*”

What does this mean about what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is assessed? How can these skills be developed through new learning environments? And what is the role of teachers in leading these innovations?

Accumulating research in the learning sciences has helped us to understand the fundamentals of how people learn. To be effective, learning environments should follow seven principles of learning (see Box on next page):

OECD’s research on innovative learning environments has shown that there are examples of these kinds of learning environments all over the world. Imagine a school, for example, where students are members of scientific inquiry teams investigating, for example, the determinants of local energy use. Using energy modeling software and working collaboratively with students at a school in another part of the world through e-twinning, their teacher coordinates a team of people, including a city engineer and a retired physics professor. Students in both schools develop hypotheses about their community’s energy use, compare

Seven Principles of Learning

- Make learners the center, and encourage their active engagement and understanding of themselves as learners
- Recognize the social nature of learning, and ensure opportunities for collaborative learning
- Be attuned to learner motivations and the key role of emotions in achievement
- Recognize individual differences among learners, and move away from one size fits all
- Stretch all students but without excessive overload
- Use assessments consistent with learning aims with strong emphasis on formative feedback
- Promote horizontal connections across areas of knowledge and between formal learning environments and the wider society
- Adapted from: *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*. OECD, 2012.

their findings with each other, and co-publish an online report about how to retrofit local buildings for conservation.

There are inspiring examples of learning innovation in every country, where time, space, and people are being used differently, but these are only pockets of innovation. The key question is how to develop them on a wide scale at the system level. Schools are conservative institutions that value compliance over innovation. Their industrial work organization works against innovation. In fact, the “grammar” of schooling has remained remarkably constant over the past 100 years so that reforms tend to amount to tinkering rather than transformation.

Countries shared some of their strategies for creating innovative learning environments at scale:

NEW CONTENT

A number of countries and jurisdictions are changing their curriculum. In British Columbia, a new provincial curriculum reduces the volume of curriculum material in order to allow time for students to go deeper on a smaller number of topics and to create time for teacher collaboration and innovation in pedagogy. British Columbia is also opening up its education system to bring in the expertise of the business community, recognizing

that education doesn’t rest solely with professional educators. And provincial awards are encouraging students to design “schools of the future”.

In Sweden, the government is frank about its dissatisfaction with Sweden’s results on PISA, but Sweden prides itself on being an innovation hub, with the highest number of start-up companies in Europe after London and Berlin. Swedish young people have created a number of global companies, such as Spotify, Skype, and Minecraft. The education system makes an important contribution to this by promoting a mindset of free and critical thinking where failure is not criticized. Sweden has also developed a new curriculum in high schools on entrepreneurship. Students can start businesses while they are still studying, and some of these companies continue after high school. The Swedish curriculum is also placing more emphasis on the arts to encourage creativity.



As part of its 2000 education reforms, Hong Kong introduced a new compulsory subject into the curriculum—liberal studies. The goal of liberal studies is to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to six core areas that enables teachers and students to have greater freedom to follow their interests. This is intended as a culture-breaking concept: it is not subject-based but about learning how to learn. Liberal studies has taken a number of years to develop in Hong Kong. Innovation of this type is certainly not an overnight project. It takes time to build a new culture, but it is hoped that this will develop a new breed of talent in Hong Kong. (South Korea has a similar “free semester” system, also intended as a system-shifting initiative.) To meet the challenges of economic change and greater longevity, Hong Kong is also introducing career and life-planning education into its secondary schools. To do this, they will need new kinds of teachers, ones who are comfortable working closely with industry partners. The goal is to produce students who are ready for college, careers, and lifelong learning.

NEW PEDAGOGIES

TALIS data show that teachers agree with the importance of more “active” learning pedagogies such

as inquiry-based learning and problem solving. Over 90 percent of teachers agreed that their role was to “facilitate students’ own inquiry,” and more than 80 percent agreed that thinking and reasoning are more important than content and that students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own. Despite this, TALIS shows that these kinds of active teaching practices are not widespread. Only one-third of students are engaged in deeper learning pedagogies, and only one-quarter of teachers think that innovation is rewarded in any way.

But it is possible for governments to bring about change on a wide scale toward these ends, as the example of Japan shows. Japan was overall a high performer on PISA 2000 but in reviewing the data in more detail, the government became concerned that Japanese students were weaker on tasks involving creative thinking. To remedy this, they slimmed the curriculum and raised its cognitive demand, and invested heavily in teacher collaboration over a number of years. Japanese efforts to encourage more active learning included project-based learning, apprenticeships in enterprises, use of resources outside of schools, and student use of information and communication technologies to create and analyze knowledge. The result was that on the PISA



Source: Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario, pp. 10-11, www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/renewedVision.pdf

2012 assessment of mathematics, Japanese students had made the largest improvement in the world. Japan is now rebuilding its teacher training programs to secure a pipeline of teachers who can use these active pedagogies. To accelerate these efforts, the government has created a Center for the Promotion of Next Generation Learning as part of teacher education.

INNOVATION MECHANISMS

Some countries are creating bottom-up innovation funds, mechanisms, or spaces to innovate on behalf of the system, recognizing that not every teacher will innovate. For example, in the Netherlands, schools have a lot of autonomy, but this on its own hasn't given rise to a great deal of innovation. The government and teachers' unions sat down together to consider how to empower teachers and schools. Starting this year, all regulations will be loosened on some of the best schools, to give complete freedom from the national curriculum and assessment to see what develops. The government is also starting a debate about modernizing the curriculum. Finally, the government has given the teachers' organization an Innovation Fund of 5 million euros to support bottom-up innovation. Through this fund, teachers will be supported with resources and coaching, and a board of teachers will decide which ideas to support. Through these mechanisms, the government's role is changing from directing and regulating schools to facilitating and enabling innovation.

Singapore has already invested in reforming its curriculum, assessment, and teacher training to develop twenty-first-century skills and competencies. But they found that one barrier was the mindset of educators. Singapore teachers are very busy and quite successful—why should they innovate? Singapore has created a series of innovation initiatives. An innovation fund provides teachers with time and resources to create innovations. Excel Innovation festivals showcase what schools are doing, to other schools and to the general public, including parents. And a national innovation award recognizes teachers' innovations that can be scalable beyond one school to the system



as a whole. Singapore's goal is to try to inculcate a culture of continuous improvement, drawing from the tradition of quality circles. Sometimes even small ideas can have a big impact and are worth celebrating. For example, an app that takes attendance and automatically sends a message to parents whose children are absent from school reduces the time teachers have to spend on this administrative chore.

In Shanghai too, the education system is pursuing innovation—changing from a primary emphasis on knowledge mastery to the development of twenty-first-century skills and capacities, developing inquiry-based lab work, and using information and communication technology for learning, an area in which China is behind other countries. A prime mechanism for this is the provision of funds to teacher researchers, the most senior teachers in Shanghai, who develop an innovation, then share the innovation through a public demonstration, and receive recognition for their work. Innovations may be seeded in one school, then tried on a broader scale, and finally, if they work well, become public policy.

BARRIERS TO INNOVATION

There was an extensive discussion of the barriers to innovation.

Many systems are overwhelmed with current demands. For example, in Germany, teachers are already dealing with so many changes—new immigrants, integration of special education, demographic decline, and so on. Teachers feel they have too many

obligations to be creative. There is also a tension between teachers' desires for greater freedom while also not wanting to have to discover everything for themselves. In addition, the government is also concerned about quality control. How can the quality of instruction be kept high while also innovating? The big question in Germany is how to motivate principals and teachers to deal effectively with everything that is on their plates and still be innovative.

Top-down reforms that are introduced without enough consultation or support for teachers also inhibit innovation. Seventeen years ago in Quebec, for example, a summit was convened and a new curriculum promulgated. Implementation of the curriculum was not successful because it did not take into account either the expertise of teachers or their need for time and space to work together on developing teaching strategies for the new curriculum. Twenty-two percent of Quebec teachers are in a state of burnout, and 20 percent leave within the first five years, which speaks eloquently to working conditions that are not conducive to innovation.

Teachers spoke eloquently of their need for stability and time in order to innovate. If they are constantly being given new initiatives and issues to work on and if the system's accountability arrangements are at odds with what the new policies are, then it is hard to be innovative in teaching practice. Here then is a dilemma: teachers need some stability to innovate, but society's needs are constantly "moving the goalposts."

In some industries, innovation is propelled by significant research and development funds and structures. The health field, for example, spends fifteen times as much on research and development as education, despite the fact that both have similar levels of public expenditure. Practitioners are also involved in some of the R & D activities, and medicine has well-developed mechanisms for sifting and aggregating research and spreading it rapidly around the world. Education lacks any such global mechanism for evaluating and disseminating

research-based information.

In this regard, a number of countries have developed or are developing mechanisms to involve teachers more actively in school-based inquiry or action research. New Zealand, for example, is developing a teacher researcher role in each school as part of its Professional Learning Framework. Since 2008, classroom teachers in Quebec have been involved with researchers from the university on pedagogical change—not just in their typical roles as suppliers of information on surveys or objects of research, but as real partners. This is an effort to break down the walls between the university and the school and to generate information that is more useful on pedagogical innovation. Singapore has a commitment to having researchers from the National Institute of Education work in schools alongside teachers to understand how to bring about active pedagogies. Finland similarly has good collaboration between teacher education programs and schools. And as described above, in Shanghai, the most senior teachers in the system play research roles in their schools and across the system as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

The world is transforming before our eyes. Whole industries disappear and others take their place. The skills that were needed yesterday are not the skills that will be needed tomorrow. We need to prepare young people for their future, not our past. If we were designing schools today, we would not design them as they are now. What should be the content? The peda-



gogy? How should teachers be trained? How should learning link to outside experience? What is the role of technology?

There are more questions than answers at this stage. This was the first discussion of innovation in the context of the International Summits and whereas there is a common language in discussing teaching or leadership, there is not one when discussing innovative learning environments. Time also did not permit many aspects of innovation to be discussed.

Suffice it to say that with only one-third of students exposed to the deeper forms of learning required to develop “adaptive expertise,” there is a long way to go in creating innovative learning environments. Innovation is not easy. Teachers need some stability in their environments in order to innovate their content and pedagogy; but in a volatile and uncertain world, with multiple pressures to perform, that is often difficult to achieve. And institutional rigidities such as outdated assessments, accountability regimes, or traditional structures of time use may inhibit innovation.

Still, governments and unions need to create a broad climate and culture to:

- 1. Develop the expertise and skills of leaders and teachers to engage in these forms of advanced teaching and learning**
- 2. Redesign organizational structures, including technological infrastructure, to permit new kinds of teaching and learning to flourish**
- 3. Create wider partnerships and connections, including global connections, to enable learning outside of school**
- 4. Foster bottom-up innovation and sharing of exemplars and results**

In short, they should create the conditions to redesign content, modernize pedagogy, and restructure time and space for learning. This is urgent.

NEXT STEPS

As part of the Summit program, country groups met and reflected on what they were learning from the Summit as it applied to their own circumstances. As complex as the challenges are, ministers and teacher leaders took away important lessons for their own countries. At the end of the 2015 Summit, country delegations identified the priorities that they intend to work on over the next year and report back on at the 2016 Summit.

Canada: Forty Canadians from every province met and agreed to create more opportunities for teacher leadership and recognition and to foster climates of collaboration in schools that support deeper learning and practice. They also reiterated Canada's commitment to fostering a climate of high expectations and well-being of all students, with special attention to integration of services, and inclusive education for all, especially Aboriginal children.

Denmark: Denmark intends to ensure shared ownership of reforms between government and the teaching profession, to encourage teamwork between teachers and school leaders, to further develop continuous professional learning and feedback opportunities to accommodate the needs of today's schools, and to give more freedom to teachers to try out innovations.

Estonia: Within the framework of Estonia's lifelong learning strategy 2014–2020, Estonia plans to work on developing collaborative learning communities within schools to enhance best practices, to develop leadership skills training for teachers, and to build more trust between teachers, principals, and the ministry by encouraging job shadowing.

Finland: The top priority for Finland is to launch a comprehensive education reform program from early childhood to adult education that will include stronger induction and mentoring of teachers and changing the culture of teaching from working alone to collaboration.

Germany: Important challenges for Germany are to develop and spread better practices with respect to student diversity in schools, to use information technology to improve teaching in every subject, and to develop a modern understanding of school leadership. To succeed in meeting these goals will require further collaboration between the government and teachers' unions.

Hong Kong—China: As part of its commitment to providing fifteen years of free education, the Hong Kong government will continue to work on providing three years of early childhood education. It will also focus on professional learning communities for teachers and school leaders in elementary schools and on consolidating the ongoing reforms of senior secondary education.

Japan: The Japanese government and teachers' union agreed to work together on realizing the concept of “schools as collaborative teams” in order to improve total school performance, to rebuild teacher training and recruitment to secure teachers who continue to learn autonomously, and to work on establishing educational environments to enhance individualized and active approaches to learning.

Netherlands: The Netherlands will foster bottom-up innovation by teachers, tied to research, and to mechanisms to spread best practices across the education system. The Dutch government also proposes to introduce more rewards for teachers by developing effective career ladder structures and to strengthen the self-efficacy of the profession through the further development of the National Council of Teachers and the establishment of a Teacher Registry.

New Zealand: As part of its ongoing reforms and collaboration between government and teachers' unions, New Zealand proposes to promote deeper forms of collaboration that measurably improve student outcomes—in particular, since time has been identified as a crucial barrier, to explore the use of a digital collaboration platform to create more time for improving the quality of teaching.

People's Republic of China: Delegates from China will share the lessons from the Summit on world trends in teaching—especially with respect to teacher leadership, collaboration, and innovation—with their colleagues. In particular, since the government is committed to reducing the disparities in education, these lessons will be incorporated into the govern-



ment's focus on improving teaching and leadership in the middle and western part of China.

Poland: Poland proposes to continue the directions established last year as part of its long-term plan—to enhance teachers' professional capacity based on individual school needs, to support both teacher and principal leadership at the school level, and to extend schools' collaboration with external partners such as businesses and nonprofit organizations.

Singapore: Singapore will continue to develop its teacher leaders in all areas through networked learning communities beyond the school, working in collaboration with the teachers' union, Academy of Singapore Teachers, and National Institute of Education. It will also continue the development of an online student learning space to share teaching and analysis of student progress, with an emphasis beyond grades to mastery of skills and habits of life-long learning.

Sweden: With continuing teacher shortages, Sweden will continue to focus on attracting high-quality teachers and school leaders through incentives and good working conditions that enable teachers to concentrate on teaching. It will also continue the discussion with stakeholders of a national structure for continuing professional development, involve teachers in educational research and in creating structures for validated information on best practices, and develop a national action plan for information technology in education.

Switzerland: Switzerland’s main insight from the Summit was that greater collaboration among all the stakeholders at all levels was crucial for continuing progress. In response, accordingly, it proposes to create more leadership roles for teachers, such as induction coaches and technology coaches; to promote greater teacher self-efficacy through formative evaluation; and to propel more innovative strategies through connecting schools better with the outside world.

“One big question for every country will be: When TALIS is next administered in 2018, will the discussions about the importance of teaching and leadership have led to actions, conditions, policies, and practices that promote and support a highly effective and respected profession?”

United Kingdom (Scotland): Recognizing that the government needs to collaborate with all key stakeholders to clarify the vision for education in Scotland, Scotland proposes to continue to build and enable leadership capacity with appropriate accountability at all levels, to improve outcomes for all young people; and to develop a more consistent approach to gathering evidence to inform policies and practices, such as through an OECD country review.

United States of America: The United States will continue to work to expand access to high-quality early learning, and to expand access for learners of all ages to high-quality career and technical education. It will also convene a national Summit of all stakeholders to highlight and expand teacher leadership opportunities.

CLOSING

Delegates came to the Summit with multiple expectations. The Summit itself had been an exercise in collaboration between countries and between governments and unions. The International Summits have become a reference point for actions to enhance the teaching profession and improve student learning. Participation extends domestic dialogues, enabling participants to learn from promising approaches elsewhere, consider the cutting edges of education policy, and share unresolved challenges.

The 2015 Summit certainly didn’t answer all of the questions about leadership, about modernizing the structure of the teaching profession, or about how to create innovative learning environments, but it did set in motion processes that might start small but may eventually grow to larger scale and to changes in policy. As countries bring about these changes, they ought also to link them to continuing research so that as dialogues lead to action, they can also lead to evidence and impact.

Many of the changes under discussion at the Summit will require courage and a willingness to challenge traditional institutions and assumptions. At the end of the Summit, the German delegation offered to host the 2016 Summit in March in Berlin, where participants will have a chance to report on their actions since the 2015 dialogue and to explore other challenges.

One big question for every country will be: When TALIS is next administered in 2018, will the discussions about the importance of teaching and leadership have led to actions, conditions, policies, and practices that promote and support a highly effective and respected profession?

This report was written by Vivien Stewart, Senior Advisor for Education at Asia Society and author of A World-Class Education: Learning from International Models of Excellence and Innovation.

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