OECD Reviews of Migrant Education

Sweden

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ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Immigrants now make up approximately 20% of the population in Sweden. The share from less developed countries increased; this poses particular challenges for education policy to integrate their children into school.

Until 1970s, migration to Sweden was predominantly for economic reasons, coming from cultural and ethnic backgrounds similar to their native peers. Migration for humanitarian reasons increased in the wake of political events such as in Chile in the 1970s, Poland, Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, and former Yugoslavia, Somalia and other parts of Africa in 1990. Today, most non-western origin countries of immigrants are from ex-Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Iran, Poland and Turkey. Accommodating the needs of their children in school poses challenges on education policy and school practice.

Immigrant students – especially those who arrived at a later stage of their education – face tougher challenges than other students in achieving good education outcomes.

Compared to their native Swedish peers, immigrant students, on average, have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. Nearing the end of compulsory education, at age 15, there are very significant performance disadvantages for immigrant students. These gaps are especially pronounced for first-generation immigrants (*i.e.* students who were not born in Sweden, nor were their parents born in the country). The toughest challenges appear to be access to national programmes and completion in upper secondary education.

The performance differences between immigrant and native students are partly explained by socio-economic differences and speaking a different language at home.

Immigrant students are significantly over-represented among less socio-economically advantaged groups. In Sweden, differences in socio-economic background and speaking a different language at home account for a large part of the performance gap between native and immigrant students at age 15. This indicates that immigrant students would benefit from broader equity policies targeting less socio-economically advantaged students. This also highlights the importance of targeted measures focusing on language support. These measures alone, however, cannot bring effective outcomes; they need to be complemented with other equity measures.

Sweden has already designed a number of measures on migrant education, but is facing a number of challenges related to implementation, especially with a highly decentralised system.

Sweden has a well developed policy infrastructure and policy traditions for equity, which lay good foundations for policy action for migrant education. Sweden has long acknowledged the importance of acquiring the language of the host country and has a long history of providing language support. It also supports – with a legal framework – immigrant children to maintain their mother tongue and culture. But such entitlements are often not well-known and, naturally, not fully exercised – notwithstanding they are intended beneficiaries. Decentralised education poses another dimension to the implementation challenges in Sweden. While it privileges some strategies, allowing education policy and practice to meet local needs,

there is a risk that municipalities or schools with less experience may not have capacity to respond to linguistic and cultural diversity.

Training all teachers – not only language teachers – and school leaders for diversity and for a whole-school approach is the top priority.

Sweden has a highly decentralised education system with school autonomy. Therefore, school policy and practices vary from school to school. It is of critical importance that teachers and school leaders enhance the multicultural perspective in teaching practice and school management. However, the percentage of non-certified teachers in public compulsory schools has increased considerably in recent years. Under such circumstances, it is a priority in Sweden to raise the quality of teachers by providing extra funding to teachers' education and training, seizing the momentum of the "Boost for Teachers" initiative. Teacher education and training could include priority components such as formative assessment, action-research, second language acquisition, and intercultural education. Through such universal measures, not only immigrant students but also native students will benefit.

School leaders are not yet trained to organise effective induction programmes for newly arrived immigrant students. The priority should be to build capacity for a whole-school approach with which schools leaders can engage Swedish language teachers, mother language support teachers, subject or main classroom teachers, other school staff, parents and communities. Ensuring learning opportunities during after-school time and summer holidays is of particular importance for low-performing immigrant as well as native students. This will require school leadership and collective efforts among teachers, parents and communities.

Efforts should be made to build capacity of municipality leaders, who can meet the local needs and successfully exercise autonomy and innovation.

Immigrant students are culturally, linguistically, academically, and socio-economically heterogeneous. With strong municipality leadership, municipalities have the clearest understanding of the changing context (the size and composition) of student population in their municipalities. With the understanding, they can provide political and financial support to implement migrant education policy. For municipality and school leaders to meet the specific needs of immigrant students and their parents and to foster innovation, municipalities can allocate funding to schools on the basis of multiple indicators – instead of a single indicator – such as proportion of students with low performance, with parents with low levels of education, and different home language.

Inter-ministerial efforts are necessary to tackle the complex issue of concentration. Education policy can support monitoring, informed parental choice, and schools in disadvantaged areas.

The majority of immigrants live in the three major cities of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. The issue of concentration of immigrant students in certain schools concerns not only education policy but also other policies such as housing, and immigration policy for humanitarian and family unification. To tackle the issue, all relevant policies need to be orchestrated to make a real change. In the meantime, what education policy could do to alleviate negative effects of concentration on schooling outcomes is: 1) to monitor school capacity to accommodate newly arrived immigrant students and informs other policies, 2) to ensure that immigrant parents, especially with disadvantaged backgrounds, can make informed decision about school choice for their children, 3) focus on raising quality of learning environments in poorly-performing schools with a high concentration of immigrant students, and 4) creating more "magnet schools" in the concentrated areas.

Sweden has a long tradition of supporting data collection and research. But more can be done by exploiting available data and using them for evidence based policy and practice.

Statistics Sweden was established in 1858. The Ministry for Education and Research has invested in linking policy and research, and in national and international assessments on student performance. The existing data, such as from Statistics Sweden, Göteborg Longitudinal database, and other international data such as PISA, PIRL and TIMSS, could be better exploited and used as lessons for policy and practice. An open archival system of all research, well categorised according to use needs with an easy retrieval system will help ensure use of research findings among municipality leaders, school leaders, teachers and researchers.

CHAPTER 1

KEY CHALLENGES

Sweden has built strong social consensus on equity in education along with a tradition of egalitarian policies throughout the society. All children including immigrant students shall have equal access to education in the public school system by the Education Act. In Sweden, the education system has dramatically changed into the most decentralised among OECD countries since the early 1990s. It can also be characterised as strong parental choice of education for their children.

Compared to their native Swedish peers, immigrant students, on average, have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. Nearing the end of compulsory education, at age 15, there are very significant performance disadvantages for immigrant students. This chapter identifies challenges and opportunities in the education of immigrant students in Sweden based on various available performance tests.

OECD Review of Migrant Education

This review is one of a series of policy reviews of migrant education in OECD countries (see Box 1.1) and follows the policy evaluation framework established for the OECD Review of Migrant Education. However, policy challenges and priority issues for immigrant students vary from country to country. To this end, each country was invited to tailor the focus of the policy review in consultation with the OECD Secretariat in order to ensure that the immediate output of the review will meet the specific needs of the country. This policy review of Sweden presents selected policy options designed to respond to the main challenges and supported by evidence and research drawn from other country practice (See Annex A for the Terms of Reference and Annex B for the visit programs). This Review should be read in conjunction with the Country Background Report prepared by the Swedish authorities (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

Box 1.1. OECD Review of Migrant Education

The OECD launched the Review of Migrant Education in January 2008. The scope of the project includes pre-school, primary school, and post-primary school. The overarching question of the review is ***what policies will promote successful education outcomes for first- and second-generation immigrant students***[1] *?*

To examine the question from a relevant policy perspective, "education outcomes" are defined as follows:

- **Access** – Whether immigrant students have the same access to quality education as their native peers; and if not, what policies may facilitate or hinder their access.

- **Participation** – Whether immigrant students may drop out more easily or leave school earlier than their native peers; and if so, what policies may influence immigrant students' completion of schooling.

- **Performance** – Whether immigrant students perform as well as their native peers; and if not, what policies may effectively raise immigrant students' performance at school, especially for those from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The project consists of two strands of activities: analytical work and country policy reviews.

- **Analytical work** draws on evidence from all OECD countries. It includes an international questionnaire on migrant policies, reviews previous OECD work and academic literature regarding migrant education, and explores statistical data from PISA and other sources.

- **Country policy reviews** aim to provide country-specific policy recommendations. Reviews are being conducted in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Each participating country has prepared a Country Background Report based on common OECD guidelines. The results of both the analytical work and country policy reviews will feed into the final report of the Review of Migrant Education.

1. First-generation immigrant students: Students who were born outside the country of assessment and whose parents were also born in a different country. Second-generation immigrant students: Students who themselves were born in the country of review but whose parents were born in a different country, *i.e.* students who are following/have followed all their pre-school/schooling in the review country.

Summary of the position of immigrants in Sweden

Sweden has a population of nine million people. Around one third live in the three major cities of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö; the majority live in municipalities ranging in size from a few thousand people to well over 100 000 people. Sweden is among the top OECD countries with regard to wealth, development and education. Its GDP per capita was USD 36 603 in 2007, compared to USD 32 664 GDP per capita total OECD. Overall educational attainment is quite high, with at least 80% of the population having attained upper secondary education. Average life expectancy at birth of 82.8 for women and 77.7 for men, comparable to that of its Nordic neighbours and above the OECD average. It has one of the highest overall employment rates in the OECD, and one of the highest OECD employment rates for women. Around 80% of all mothers and 90% of all fathers of children below seven were working in 2009 (Statistics Sweden, *www.scb.se*).

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy based on parliamentary democracy. Government activities are directed by a cabinet of ministers, which is led by the prime minister. The cabinet and the prime minister are responsible for their actions to the Riksdag, the parliament. The current government was elected in 2006 and is a coalition of liberal and conservative parties.

Sweden has a tradition of egalitarian policies. The extensive social safety-net of the Swedish welfare state covers all Swedes as well as immigrants who have access at an early stage to a basic level of protection and afterwards enjoy the same rights to the social insurance system as Swedish citizens.

Following the end of World War II, immigration to Sweden increased steadily. Today, approximately 20% of all individuals living in Sweden have an immigrant background (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2001). Until the 1970s, migration to Sweden was predominantly for economic reasons, and immigrants were predominantly from cultural and ethnic backgrounds somewhat similar to those of native Swedes, either fellow Nordics or Europeans (Tasiran and Tezic, 2006). Migration for humanitarian reasons increased and the composition of the immigrant population changed in the wake of political events in Chile in the 1970s – Poland, Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, and former Yugoslavia, Somalia and other parts of Africa in the 1990s.

Today, most non-western origin countries of immigrants in Sweden are from ex-Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Iran, Poland and Turkey. The share of immigrants from less developed countries increased between 1980 and 2000 from about 13% to about 36% (Blume *et al.*, 2005). In 2006, 15% of the foreign born population were born in Finland, 7% in Iraq, 6% in Former Yugoslavia and about 5% in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iran respectively (OECD, 2008a).

Egalitarian policies notwithstanding, immigrants fare poorly, compared to Swedish natives. Their experience is not much better than that of immigrants in other countries. Following the 1990 economic crisis, labour market outcomes of immigrants in Sweden were among the least favourable in OECD countries, both for recent arrivals and for those who had been in Sweden for a long time. In 1995, the foreign-born with less than five years presence in Sweden had employment rates 50 points lower than the native-born. By 2003, this figure had fallen to about 26 points difference (OECD, 2007a).

There is also a substantial earnings gap between immigrants and natives. In Sweden, foreign-born persons earn 17% less than native born persons. This, compared to other OECD countries, is a moderate gap comparable to Germany (17%) and Portugal (16%), in the United States, immigrants earn 21% less, whereas in Australia foreign-borns earn 7% more than native-borns (OECD, 2008a).

Brief description of the education and training system in Sweden

Sweden belongs to the world leaders regarding equality of educational opportunities with strong social consensus on the conception of equity in education. Sweden has one of the most generously funded education systems, with free primary and secondary education and parental choice of education for their children.[1] In 2006, Sweden spent 6.3% of its GDP on education, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 5.7% (OECD, 2009). Under the Education Act all children, irrespective of gender, place of residence, social or financial situation, have equal access to education in the public school system.

The Swedish school system comprises compulsory and non-compulsory schooling. Sweden has nine years of compulsory schooling, between the ages of 7 and 16. Almost all students that complete ninth grade continue to upper secondary schooling, which consists of three-year programmes. Pupils with interests other than those covered by the national programmes can opt to follow a specially designed programme. It corresponds to a national programme in terms of the level of education and length of study, but combines courses from different national programmes and/or locally devised courses. Additionally, there are individual programmes (primarily intended to prepare the students for national programmes later on), or specially designed programs. Compulsory schooling includes regular compulsory school, Sami school, compulsory education for pupils with intellectual impairment and special schools for pupils with certain disabilities. Non-compulsory schooling includes pre-school activities and after school child care, the pre-school class, upper secondary school, and upper secondary school for pupils with intellectual impairment, municipal adult education, and education for adults with intellectual impairment.

Historically, private schools are rare in Sweden. After a school reform in the beginning of the 1990s, private schools approved by the National Agency for Education (from 2008 by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate) are entitled to municipal funding and the number of private schools has been increasing since then. Since they are financed by grants from the students' home municipality they are commonly called independent or charter schools (Söderström and Uusitalo, 2005).

The Swedish education system evolved from one of the most centralized educational systems into one on the most decentralized ones in the OECD. The change took place during the 1990s. In 1991, the responsibility for compulsory and upper secondary school provision was transferred to the municipalities along with a less centralized system of targeted grants to schooling. In 1993, a major grant reform transformed the system of targeted grants into a general grant system. The latter reform implied a fundamental change of the organization of school funding. In 1996, teacher wages, which until then had been set through central negotiations implemented nationwide, started to be set at the local level (Ahlin and Mörk, 2007).

Recent reforms

The new government elected in September 2006 has initiated several major reforms of the Swedish school system (Annex C). The reforms do not explicitly target immigrant students but aim to raise the quality of education in general and in particular for all students who risk not achieving the education goals. Since many reforms were introduced only recently, there are no evaluations on the impact of the reforms available.

Statistical evidence and identification of priorities

Identifying possible priority target groups and areas

Policy intervention can be more effectively and efficiently designed to improve education outcomes for immigrant students if weaker areas of education outcomes of immigrant students are identified. Outcomes for immigrant and native students were compared using a set of ten indicators for measuring

access, performance and participation where the mean performance outcomes of native students were used as the benchmark for comparison against immigrant students. For each indicator, the absolute performance of native and immigrant students were standardised (normalised) using a normative score ranging from zero to ten, where ten was set at the mean performance outcome for native students in each case. This process enabled the simple comparison of immigrant students relative to their native peers across the ten indicators. Figure 1.1 below provides a graphic overview of the relative performance of the two groups of students and more importantly, highlights the areas where gaps between the two groups are most significant.

Figure 1.1. Comparison of education outcomes of immigrant students and their native peers
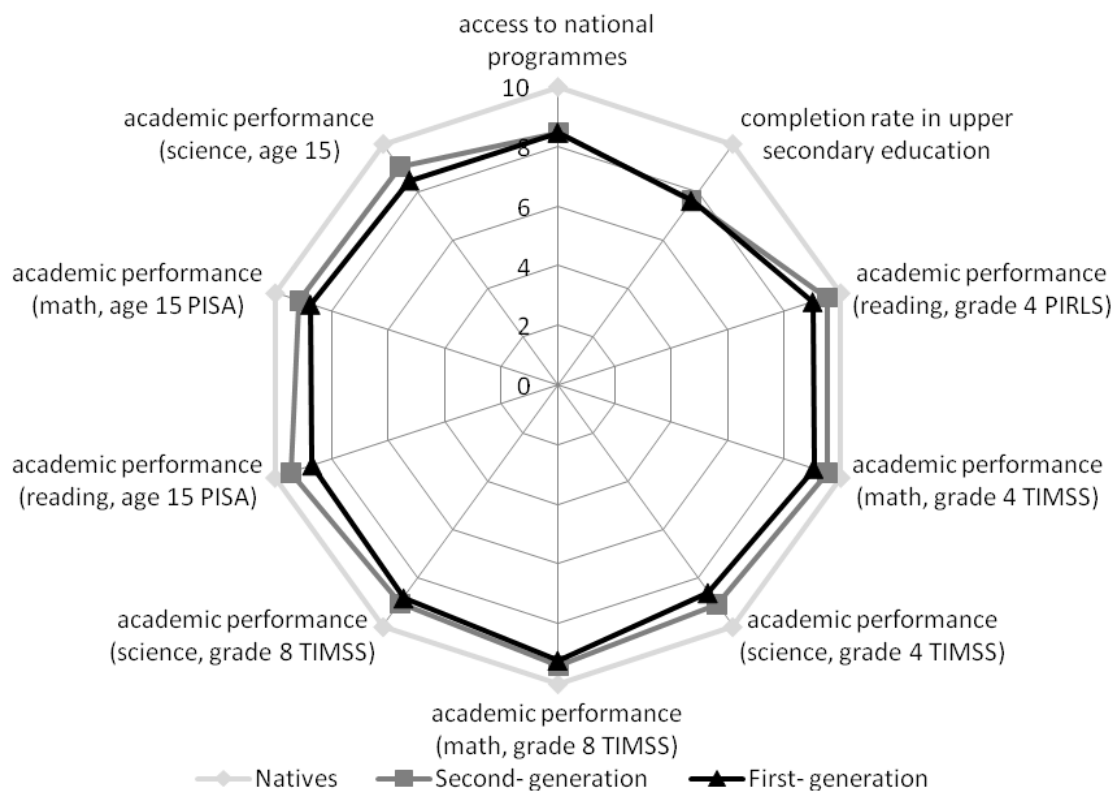
Note: The mean values for native students in each indicator are converted to 10. The mean values for immigrant students are converted as the relative values of 10. The figure cannot indicate when both native and immigrant students perform poorly without a gap between them. In the case of access to national programmes and completion rate in upper secondary education, there is no distinction between first-generation immigrants and second-generation immigrants due to data limitations.

Source: OECD PISA 2006 database; IEA PIRLS 2006 database; Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009; Skolverket, 2006.

Upper secondary as a challenging level

If we compare different levels of education to identify where immigrant students face difficulty the most, Figure 1.1 indicates that completion of upper secondary education is the most challenging level. The challenge, however, does not start with the level of education; it is understood that the problem may have started earlier but may have been accumulated and become evident as an explicit challenge. In fact, access to the national programmes also indicates the growing gap and student performance at age 15 shows bigger gaps than that of earlier ages.

Low-performing first-generation immigrant students as a target group and science as a challenging subject

Overall comparison of educational outcome between immigrant students and their native peers indicates that first-generation immigrants need relatively more improvement in overall education outcome indicators than second-generation immigrant students, in particular for educational performance (Figure 1.1).[2] In terms of academic performance measured in grades four and eight, the gap between immigrants and their native peers grows larger at the end of compulsory schooling (Figure 1.4). The biggest performance gap between native and immigrant students is in science performance at the end of compulsory schooling; the gap is especially large for first-generation immigrant students (Figure 1.5).

First-generation immigrant students from low socio-economic backgrounds

To effectively design target groups for public intervention, not only students' immigrant status but also students' socio-economic background should be considered.[3] In Figure 1.2, each dot represents a student with respect to his/her performance (on the vertical axis) and their socio-economic background, measured by PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (on the horizontal axis). The gradient lines present the relationships between students reading performance in PISA 2006 and their socio-economic background by immigrant status. The steeper the line, the more effect the socio-economic background has on student performance.

Figure 1.2. Relationship between reading performance and students' SES background

PISA 2006

Panel A. Performance for native students   Panel B. Performance for immigrant students

Panel C. Performance for second-generation immigrants   Panel D. Performance for first-generation immigrants
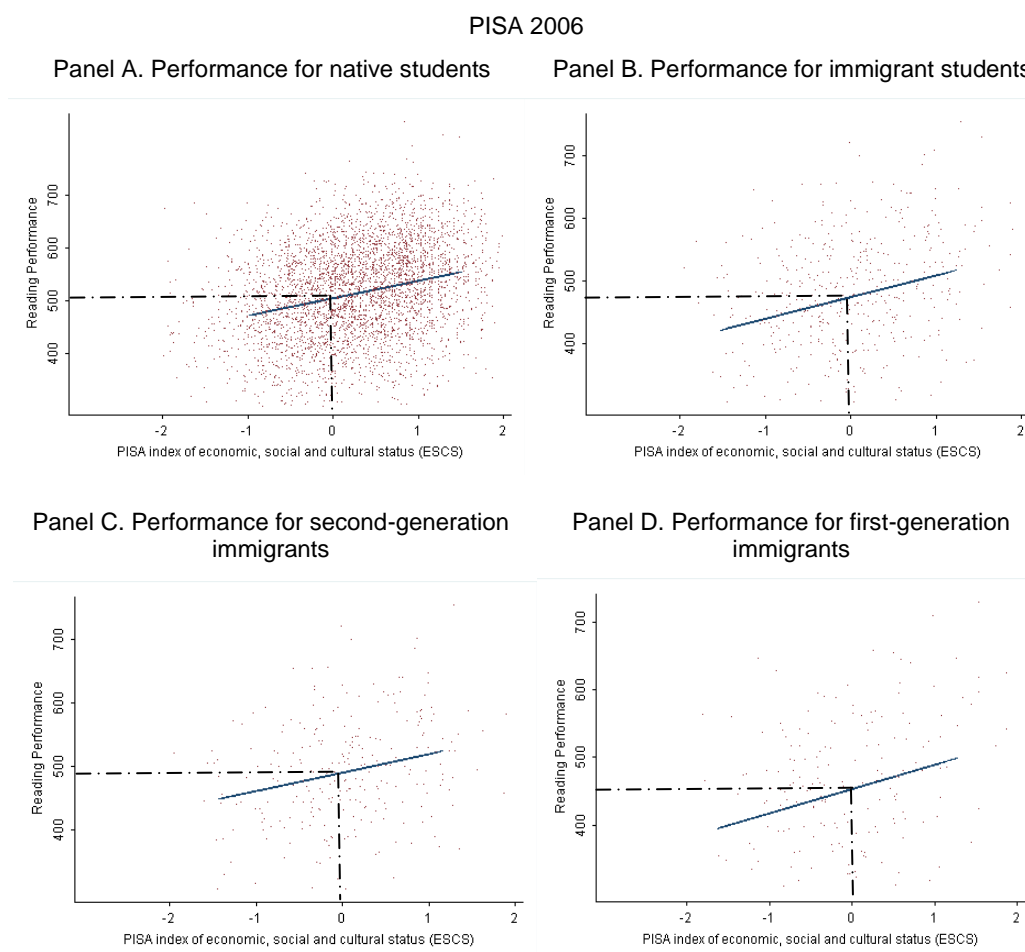
Note: Percent of variation explained by SES: 6.9 (A), 11 (B), 8.1 (C), 12.6 (D).

Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

The results show that the effect of home background on student performance is bigger for immigrant students, in particular first-generation immigrant students than for their native peers (*i.e.* Panel A for native students and Panel D for first-generation immigrant students). For first-generation students, the gradient of the line is steeper, plus, the average height of the learning bar is much lower than that of native students. This implies that targeted policy measures for first-generation immigrant students from low socio-economic background in general could be effective to help raise performance of immigrant students.

Do immigrant students have the same opportunity to access quality education as their native peers?

Notwithstanding the egalitarian ambitions of Swedish education, the outcomes for immigrant students are markedly different from those of native Swedes.[4] Immigrant students are less likely to be eligible for a national programme of upper secondary education compared to their native peers. Table 1.1 shows that in 2007/08, 23% of all students with immigrant background who finished compulsory education were not qualified to continue to a national upper secondary programme, compared to only 9% of native peers (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

Table 1.1. Students not qualified for national upper secondary programmes, by immigrant status

	Total number of students who finished compulsory education	Number of students not qualified for national upper secondary programme		
		Total (%)	Girls	Boys
Swedish background	105 745	9 510 (9%)	4 103	5 407
Immigrant background	17 577	4 083 (23%)	1 910	2 173

Source: Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009.

Individual programmes are available for pupils who are not eligible for a national programme in upper secondary education. Individual programmes are primarily supposed to prepare students for studies in a national programme. As immigrant students are less likely to be eligible for a national programme, they are over-represented in individual programmes. Students in the individual programmes have higher probability of not completing upper secondary education and consequently not receiving a leaving certificate than their counterparts in national programmes. Students in the individual programmes had a considerably higher proportion of interruptions or postponements (*i.e.* 27.9%) than pupils in national programmes (*i.e.* 3.3%) (Skolverket, 2006).

There is also a possibility that immigrant students are overrepresented in vocational programmes, and underrepresented in theoretical studies in upper secondary education. However, the evidence is not entirely consistent. The country note of Sweden for the thematic review on equity in education stated that the theoretical academic programmes are crowded by higher social strata children while working class and immigrant children are concentrated in the vocational (and individual) programmes (Nicaise *et al.*, 2005). However, in 2004 the national Agency for Education concluded that students with immigrant background who were qualified for a national programme chose their programmes irrespective of their migrant background (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

There is some indication that immigrant students are overrepresented in special education. A study based on a longitudinal project "Evaluation through Follow-up" shows that students with non-Swedish backgrounds are overrepresented among those who receive special education support (Giota and Emanuelsson, in press).[5] In another research study commissioned by the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, it was noted that students with immigrant background were often categorised as students with intellectual disabilities. However, it could not be ruled out that these students actually were eligible for this form of education. The research did conclude that testing of students for this

form of education by municipalities was not completely reliable as the testing did not take into account the linguistic context of immigrant students (Rosenqvist, 2007).

Do immigrant students participate as much as their native peers?

In Sweden, there is a gap between native and immigrant students in the net enrolment rate in upper secondary education, as immigrant students are less likely to enrol in upper secondary education than their native peers. For instance, in 2006/07, among 16-to-18-year-old youth, 94% of youth with Swedish background were enrolled in upper secondary schools, while 82% of first-generation immigrants participated in upper secondary education (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). The difference of net enrolment rate between the two groups in upper secondary education may reflect the fact that immigrant students are more likely to participate in individual programmes than native students. In these programmes the probability of non completion is greater than in the national programmes.

Another challenging issue for immigrant students is low completion rates of upper secondary education. Of those who started the first year of upper secondary education in the fall of 2004, 75.5% on average received a leaving certificate within four years, while only 59.7% of students with foreign background completed their school with a leaving certificate, as seen in Table 1.2. The corresponding completion rate of students with Swedish background was 78.2%.

Table 1.2. Education completed in four years for beginners in first year of upper secondary school

	Beginners in first year of upper secondary school for each year		Pupils who received leaving certificates within 4 years	
	Total number	Pupils with foreign background	Total number (%)	Pupils with foreign background (%)
Beginners in 1997	99 216	14 665	75 052 (75.6)	8 978 (61.2)
Beginners in 1998	97 839	14 264	70 979 (72.5)	8 379 (58.7)
Beginners in 1999	96 840	13 900	71 268 (73.6)	8 705 (62.6)
Beginners in 2000	99 330	14 769	74 575 (75.1)	9 280 (62.8)
Beginners in 2001	103 952	15 248	79 029 (76.0)	9 851 (64.6)
Beginners in 2002	108 740	17 144	81 415 (74.9)	10 093 (58.9)
Beginners in 2003	111 330	17 782	83 606 (75.1)	10 527 (59.2)
Beginners in 2004	117 803	17 738	88 896 (75.5)	10 598 (59.7)

Note: Descriptive data on pre-school activities, school-age childcare, schools and adult education in Sweden 2006.

Source: Skolverket, 2006.

Do immigrant students perform as well as their native peers?

The results from international and national tests confirm that the challenge of education for immigrant students at the upper secondary education starts in the earlier stages of learning. This needs to be addressed by interventions at the corresponding stages or even earlier stages.

International tests

The results from the international student assessments (PIRLS, PISA, and TIMSS)[6] for students in compulsory schools reveal the performance gaps in reading, science, and mathematics between students with Swedish background and students with foreign background. Figure 1.3 shows the gap in reading performance in PIRLS 2006 between native and immigrant students at grade four in primary school. In Sweden, the achievement gap between native and first-generation immigrant students is 54 points. Second-generation immigrant students performed better than their first-generation peers and higher than second-generation immigrants in most other countries, but still lagged 28 points behind their native peers.

Figure 1.3. Gaps in reading performance between native and immigrant students

Reading in PIRLS at grade four
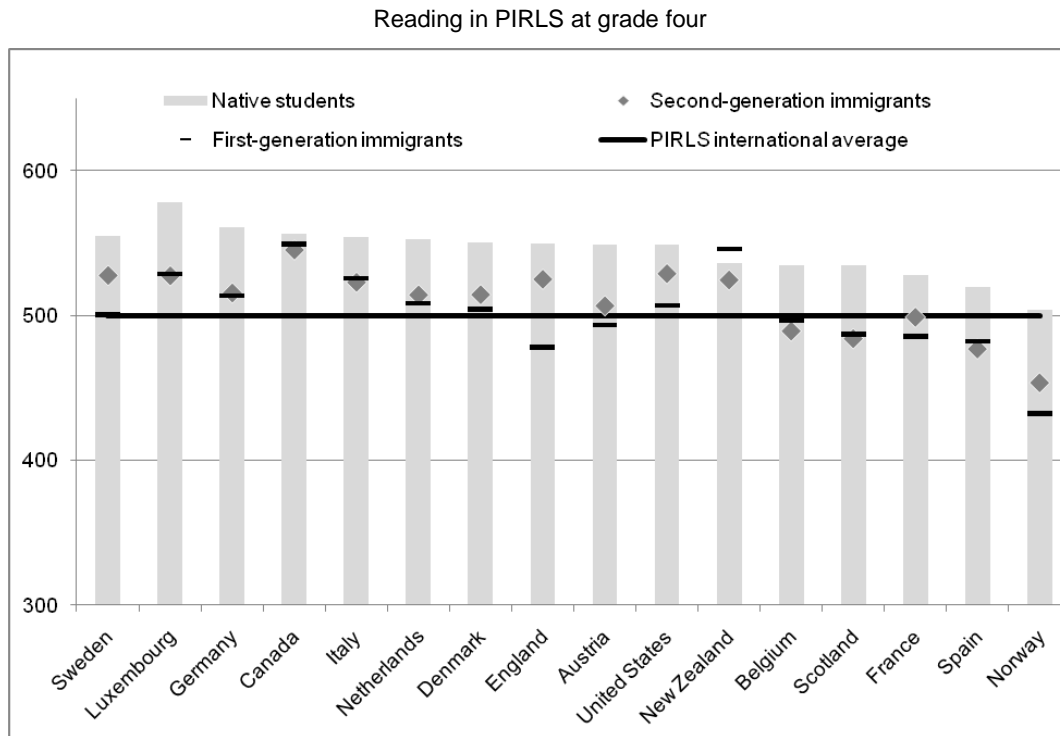
Figure 1.4 shows the results of TIMSS 2007 in mathematics and science for the fourth grades and the eighth grades, comparing Sweden with the international average. In Sweden, native and immigrant students performed better in both mathematics and science than their international counterparts. However, in Sweden the performance gaps between native and immigrant students are much bigger than average international performance gaps between two groups. For instance, the achievement gap between students with both parents born in Sweden and students with both parents born in foreign countries was 60 points in science for grade four, double the gap in the international average.

The performance gap between native and immigrant students in primary schools is also present for 15-year-old students at the end of compulsory schooling (PISA 2006 database). Immigrant pupils score significantly lower than their native peers in reading, mathematics and science of PISA 2006 (Figure 1.5). For instance, the performance gap in science between first-generation immigrants and their native peers (*i.e.*78 points) represents more than one proficiency level difference on the PISA science scale and corresponds to more than two school years in the OECD countries.[7] This implies that there is a comparatively large difference in student performance in substantive terms between native and first-generation immigrant students (OECD, 2007b). The achievement gap in reading performance (*i.e.* 68 points) also represents about one proficiency level difference on the PISA reading scale.

Native Swedish students perform above the OECD average in PISA 2006, this holds for reading, science and mathematics. First-generation immigrants in Sweden, however, perform considerably less well on average, particularly in science. However, second-generation immigrants catch up and perform at levels that are on par with the OECD average for science and mathematics, and perform better in reading.

Figure 1.4. Performance gaps between native and foreign-background students

Mathematics and science in TIMSS 2007 at grade four and grade eight
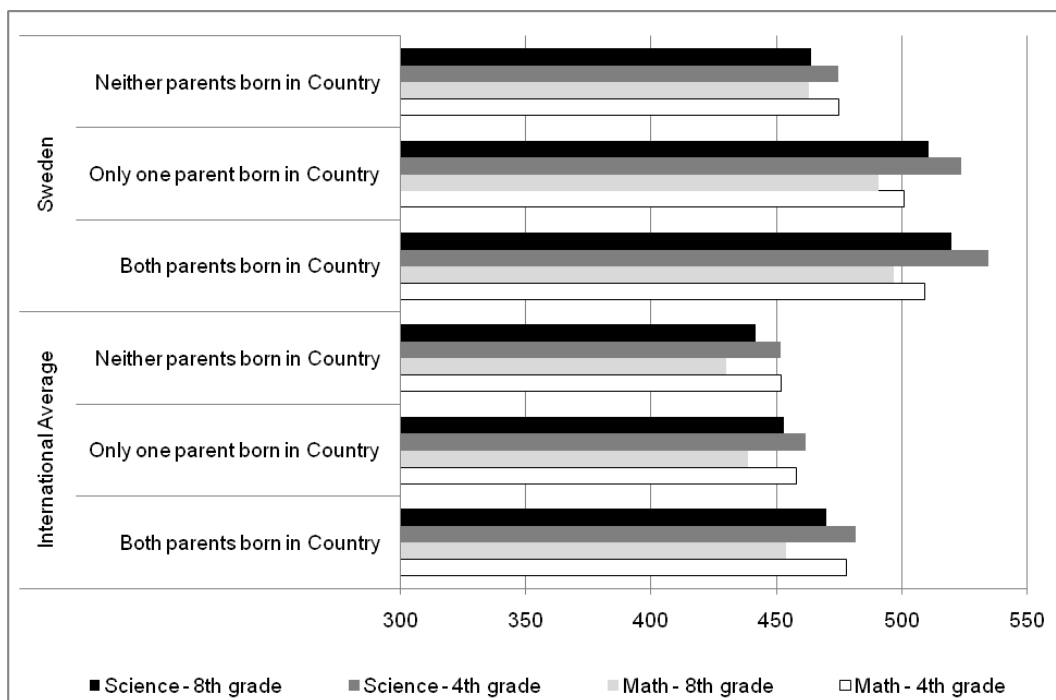
Source: Martin *et al.* (2008); Mullis *et al.* (2008).

Figure 1.5. Performance gaps between native and immigrant students

Reading, science and mathematics in PISA 2006 at age 15
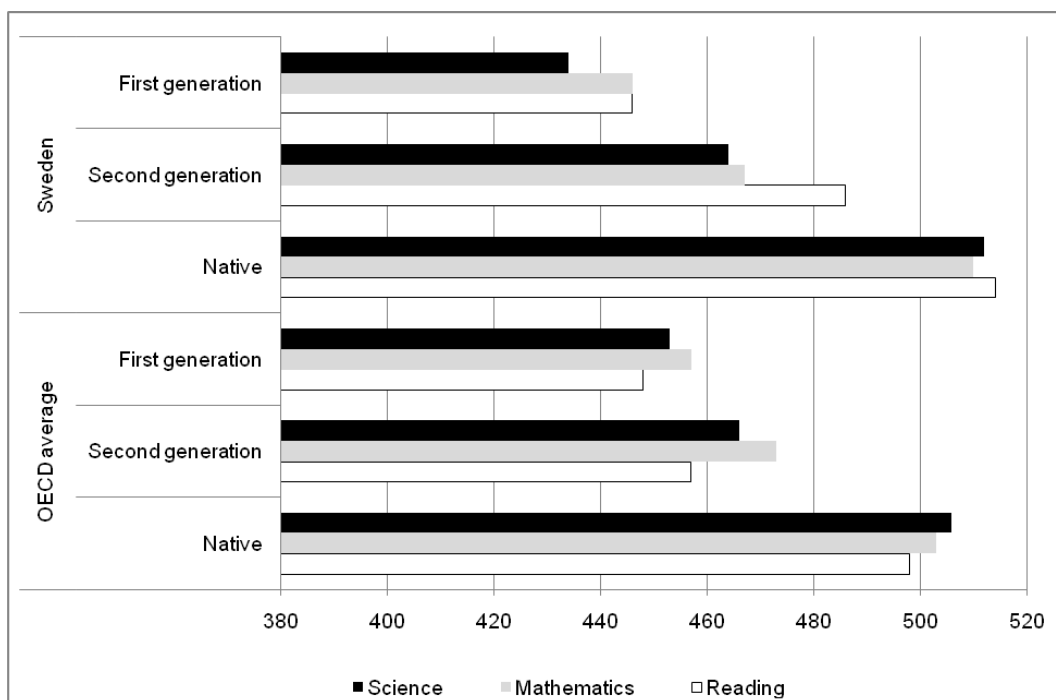
Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

Immigrant students in Sweden also face a relatively higher risk of not reaching the first proficiency level in PISA than their native peers (Figure 1.6). Performance below Level 1 on the PISA reading scale (*i.e.* 335 points) signals serious deficiencies in students' ability to use reading literacy as a tool for the acquisition of knowledge and skills in other areas (OECD, 2007b). In Sweden, about 17% of first-generation immigrant students perform below proficiency Level 1, while only about 3% of native students do so. Second generation migrants perform much better than their first-generation immigrant peers, with only 4% of them performing below proficiency Level 1. Compared to other OECD countries, Sweden ranks in the middle in terms of the share of first-generation immigrant students who perform below proficiency Level 1, and in terms of the size of the gap between the performance of first-generation migrants and their native peers.

Figure 1.6. Percentage of students scoring below proficiency Level 1, by immigrant status

Reading performance at age 15 (PISA 2006)
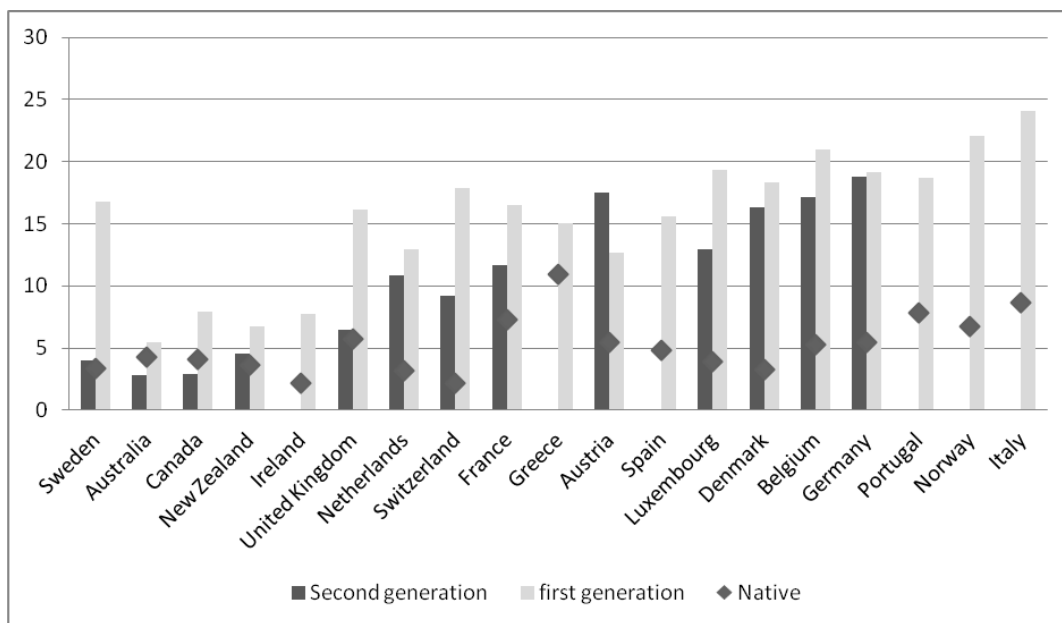
Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

National tests

National data based on final grades and national tests also show a substantial performance gap between natives and immigrants. Final grades at the end of compulsory schooling determine eligibility for the national programmes at upper secondary education. Students must have at least a passing grade in Swedish (or Swedish as a second language), English and Mathematics to be eligible for upper secondary school. The results from final grades show that students with foreign background are overrepresented in the group of students not eligible for upper secondary education. In particular, students with foreign background were substantially overrepresented among the students who did not qualify for grades in two or more subjects (Skolverket, 2006) (also see the previous section of "access to quality education"). National tests, also in Swedish (or Swedish as a second language), English and Mathematics are administered in ninth grade. They too show a performance gap between immigrant students and their native peers. In 2007/08, 3.3% of the students did not receive a passing grade in Swedish, while 16.2% did not receive a passing grade in Swedish as a second language (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

NOTES

1. All education in the public school system is funded fully by the public authorities. There is usually no charge to students or their parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport. In upper secondary education, fees can sometimes be applied to school meals and transport. In 2006, Sweden spent 4.1% of GDP on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, above the average of OECD (3.7%) (OECD, 2009).

2. In the case of access to national programmes and completion rate in upper secondary education, the figures for students with foreign background are used for both first-generation and second-generation immigrant students.

3. One tool used for this purpose is a policy assessment tool to design interventions based on a socio-economic gradient (also known as learning bars) – *i.e.* the relationship between student performance and student socio-economic background (Willms, 2006). The positioning of the bar with respect to the vertical axes or the average height in figure 2 indicates the overall level of student performance. The higher the bar is, the better the students perform on reading. The slope of the bar is an indication of how much student reading performance changes with a change of one unit on students' socio-economic background. The steeper the slope is, the more inequity students experience (OECD, 2008b).

4. As "Equity in Education" by the OECD argues that the ultimate goals of equity in education may include that the distribution of outcomes should be uncorrelated with individuals' social origin (Nicaise *et al.*, 2005).

5. For instance, among children born in 1972 and participating in the project, about 35% of students with Swedish background received some kinds of special education supports, while about 60% of students with foreign background received the same kind of supports.

6. PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study; TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study; PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment.

7. Thirty-eight score points on the PISA 2006 science scale is equivalent to the OECD average of one school year difference (OECD, 2007b).

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CHAPTER 2

POLICY ORIENTATIONS

This chapter examines strengths and weaknesses with current policy initiatives and suggests policy options for migrant education in Sweden. Sweden is undertaking a wide range of universal and targeted measures to improve the situation of immigrant students. Nevertheless, more efforts can be made to ensure successful implementation of migrant education policy, especially in the highly decentralised system.

The priorities would include: 1) diversity training of all teachers – not only language teachers but subject and classroom teachers; 2) leadership training for school leaders to implement a "whole-school approach" to migrant education; 3) effective induction programmes for the newly arrived students, especially those who arrived at an older age; 4) capacity building of municipality leaders; 5) alleviating negative effects of concentration on schooling outcomes with the whole-of government approach; and 6) better use of the available data to advance evidence-based policy and practice.

Introduction

There are significant differences in reading performance at age 15 between immigrant and native students in all but four OECD countries with available data (Figure 2.1). However, the experience of immigrants is influenced strongly by the socio-economic status of parents and by whether the language spoken at home is different from the language of the host country. In Sweden, immigrant students' socio-economic background accounts for nearly half the performance difference in reading between immigrant and native students. It is likely, as in most OECD countries, that the length of residence has an impact on results, especially with improving income and literacy in Swedish and getting a job of their qualification level or prior work experience.

In Sweden, as in the majority of OECD countries, once the students' socio-economic background and language spoken at home have been accounted for, there is no longer a significant difference in reading performance between immigrant and native students at age 15. The challenge for policymakers is to find ways of facilitating integration to quicken the improvements in immigrant student performance with a special consideration on improving language teaching, and compensating the lack of financial resources and social networks that immigrant parents do not have while building on linguistic and cultural richness that they have brought from home countries.

Figure 2.1. Difference in reading performance between immigrant and native students
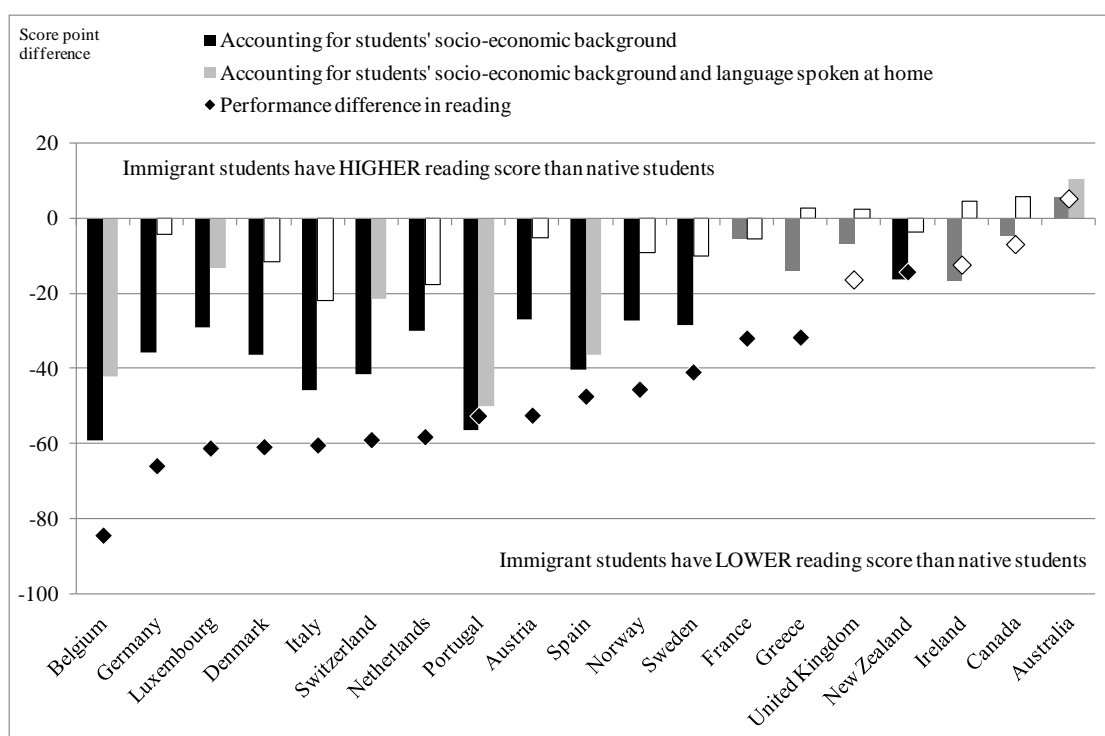
Note: Statistically significant differences are marked in a darker tone.

Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

Broadly speaking, governments have limited policy levers. These include:

1. Research and information: This could be used by the national government, other levels of government or non-government actors to align their efforts to national goals and for citizens to make informed decisions.

2. Tax measures: This could be direct or indirect, to encourage or to discourage actions.

3. Legislative requirements: This prescribes or proscribes actions.

4. Regulations: This determines the way in which actions are carried out.

5. Direct or indirect provision: This includes transfers to or expenditures for people or organizations or which involve the operation of programmes by government.

Sweden, as other OECD member countries, has a well developed policy infrastructure and policy traditions which work as both advantages and challenges. Some of the infrastructure was established in times where the needs were different, prior to large scale immigration. However, a good education system and policy traditions for equity are good foundations for policy action on behalf of immigrant children. That system, in concert with the other levers of government, could form equal opportunity strategies, equal treatment strategies or equal outcome strategies, described in Sweden by Nicaise *et al.* (2005) in the OECD review of equity in education in Sweden. Decentralized education in Sweden, privileges some strategies above others for the national government. Ultimately, the choices made by the national government depend on factors such as the critical nature of the goals, jurisdictional independence and the risk of policy failure.

This chapter reviews policy orientations in three areas that are critical to overcoming the barriers of low socio-economic status and language: early childhood education and care; schools and communities; and system management. For each of these areas, strengths and challenges of current practices are reviewed and policy options are suggested to address the challenges, building on the existing strengths of Swedish arrangements.

Early childhood education and care

Strengths

Strong political support for free, universal and quality pre-school

Sweden has a long tradition of early childhood education and care. It is widely viewed as a cornerstone of the welfare society. The development of pre-school activities and after-school services for children between the ages of 0 to 12 years with parents who are working or studying has taken place since the 1960s. Today, pre-school and after-schools services are available for children from one year of age and are the responsibility of the municipalities.

Traditionally, pre-school activities in Sweden have dual objectives: 1) to enable parents to combine work and family life, and 2) to provide children with favourable conditions in which to grow up and develop. ECEC activities are a central part of Swedish social and family policy and seen as part of life-long learning. Early childhood education and care was integrated into the Ministry of Education and Research in 1996.

The Education Act and the curriculum for the pre-school of 1998 regulate ECEC services. There is a strong political commitment to supporting effective pre-school pedagogy. Longitudinal studies show the importance of effective pedagogy in developing the children's cognitive, social and emotional development giving them a strong start in all aspects of life, (Taguchi *et al*., 2003; Mitchell *et al*., 2008). The Education Act requires employees at pre-schools to be trained or experienced to be able to satisfy the child's needs for both care and pedagogical activities. In 2009, 53% of the staff in pre-school were trained pre-school teachers.

Following a reform in 2002, access to pre-school became a universal right for all children, irrespective of whether their parents were unemployed or on parental leave. All children are eligible for free universal pre-school, when they turn four years old. It covers at least 525 hours a year. For children age six, free pre-school class is also offered for a minimum of 525 hours a year.

Funding of pre-school services is the responsibility of the municipalities. It is financed by central government grants, local tax revenue and parental fees. To ensure affordability, the government recommends the maximum fees and municipalities then endorse the recommendation. Fees are set at between one and three percent of parents' income (depending on the number of children) up to a ceiling of about USD 180 per month. This is beneficial for all children and parents, especially immigrant families with low socio-economic status.

Overall, enrolment in ECEC in Sweden is high. The proportion of enrolled children in the age groups one to five years and six to nine years is still increasing. In 2008, altogether, 803 454 children were enrolled in pre-school activities or school-age childcare, an increase of about 68 000 children since 2004. For the age group of one-to-five-year-olds, 85.6% of the group attended pre-school in 2008, while for six-year-olds the enrolment rate in the pre-school class was 95.1%.

For children who do not attend pre-school, many municipal authorities run what is called "open pre-schools", which children and their parents can attend for a few hours a day. For many families with a foreign background, these "open playgroups" function as a meeting place and provide a good first step into Swedish social life. Municipal authorities can also run what is called "special language pre-school groups", which children with a mother tongue other than Swedish can attend for two to three hours a day in order to learn Swedish and receive learning support in their mother tongue. The aim is to develop active bilingualism and a dual cultural identity.

Curriculum emphasising on language stimulation in early years, and valuing mother language and culture

The first national curriculum for pre-school (Lpfö 98) was introduced in 1998. It states that pre-schooling is to be considered and developed as a part of education and life-long learning. The curriculum is linked to the curricula for compulsory and upper secondary schools. The state determines the overall goals and guidelines for ECEC, while municipalities are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum framework.

A traditional Nordic approach to early childhood education and care has been reluctant to "assess outcomes" in the early years of a child's development. Therefore, the goals are stated in terms of aims rather than in terms of the expected outcomes. Nevertheless, the existence of the curriculum makes ECEC in Sweden more accessible to evaluation and quality development.

The goals of the curriculum include developing "a rich and varied spoken language and the ability to communicate with others and to express their thoughts". It articulates Sweden's high emphasis on developing children's vocabulary, to increase their ability to play with words, raise interest in the written language and train their communicative functions. The goals also include striving for tolerance, sensitivity and mutual respect for all forms of different backgrounds and cultures. It explicitly supports children whose first language is not Swedish, in developing their cultural identity as well as their ability to communicate in both Swedish and their first language. Language support for immigrant children in Sweden is regarded as important not only for their language learning in Swedish but also for the child's language and cultural learning of their own.

The curriculum also describes a pedagogical approach to stimulate the child's learning and well-being development. For example, team-work activities are encouraged as a way to ensure that children receive support and stimulation in their language, communicative and all-round developments.

Challenges

Cooperation between education and care

Equal access to, participation in and outcomes from education depend on the social backgrounds of children. Education policies alone can therefore not reach out successfully to all children and their families. Instead, the issues surrounding disadvantaged children and their families need be tackled in cooperation with family and social policies.

In one municipality, a dilemma emerged with the change of the responsibility from the local administration for social services to that of education. With the change, the cooperation between pre-school and primary school has improved; however, the cooperation between pre-school and care-related agencies such as health and child poverty was made more difficult. At the national level, responsibility for pre-school was transferred from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Research in 1996.

Decreased provision of mother language support

The pre-school curriculum prescribes that pre-school must contribute to providing children whose first language is not Swedish with the opportunity of developing both Swedish and their own first language. During the 1980s, language support in pre-school was supported with grants. This resulted in about 60% of children with a mother tongue other than Swedish receiving language support. The number of children gaining support fell substantially after funding for school and pre-school was no longer made through ear-marked grants (see Chapter 1). With the curriculum for pre-school, introduced in 1998, the provision of mother language support was strengthened and as a consequence the number of supported children has increased slightly but steadily.

According to data by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2006a), in the case of one-to-five-year-olds, 15% of children in pre-schools and 5% of children in family day-care homes spoke a first language different from Swedish in 2005. Of these only 14% received first language support. For six-year-olds who attended the pre-school class in 2005, the proportion of pupils whose first language is not Swedish was 14.5%, and, of these, 46.6% received a first language support.

Overall, in almost all municipalities there are children in pre-school whose first language is not Swedish. However, only about seventy municipalities provide first language support. This is an increase compared with 2004 when only about fifty municipalities offered first language support (Skolverket, 2006a).

Policy options

Ensure comprehensive support of the child's development for learning and well-being

The curriculum states that pre-schools should establish good co-operation with leisure centres and primary schools to exchange knowledge and experiences with the aim of supporting the child's comprehensive development for learning and well-being. As responsibilities for pre-schooling is integrated under the Ministry of Education at the state level, it is of particular importance that local authorities ensure the effective inter-play between education policies and social and welfare policies at the local level.

Ensure learning trajectories as well as well-being will require interdisciplinary cooperation and communication. There should be a clear reason for cooperation. Otherwise, such efforts will not be made voluntarily, time will not be spent without a reason and expertise will not be built.

An example of such cooperation could be "language screening in early years". Professionals from the education, welfare and health sectors could work together towards identifying potential risks and designing preventive interventions at an early stage. The existing pedagogical traditions and culture in Sweden are rather opposed to "screening" or "assessment" of young children. The government should however encourage assessment practices for pre-school children. Specific policy objectives behind the assessment practices, working methods and assessment tools, the degree of formality and types of assessors vary from country to country, depending on the country's cultural, political, and societal values. Considering the Swedish context, the government should encourage participatory assessment practices, *i.e.* pre-school teachers, working closely with health specialists, keep track of the language development of the child and use the information from screenings in order to keep track of the language development of the child. For example, if an immigrant child was placed in a special needs class with the first screening, most likely due to the language barrier rather than the disability-related issue, it is important that regular assessment by a teacher will give opportunities for the child to be transferred to a mainstream class. The cooperation between pre-school and health clinics can be strengthened.

In Denmark, all children undergo language screening at age three. All immigrant children, from age three, also undergo language evaluation when they first enter the school system, to determine if they need language support. Ministry has made language evaluation materials available to municipalities at no cost. Immigrant children are obliged to complete a language stimulation course if professionals decide that they need it. The similar attempt has been made in Norway. Children are assessed their language development at age four both in their mother language and Norwegian at health clinics. On the basis of the assessment, closer assessment and diagnosis will be offered to tailor language teaching and education in general. The diagnostic tests are being developed in different languages in order to distinguish problems associated with cognitive development and those with lack of knowledge in Norwegian language.

Provide appropriate training for kindergarten teachers

The decentralised Swedish education system allows pre-schools, schools and municipalities to develop locally-tailored solutions given the specific composition of their population and the local contexts. The upcoming reforms in pre-school aim to enhance the quality and qualification levels of pre-school teachers. The government's goal is to place qualified teachers in every pre-school. The review team observed good practice of emphasising literacy and numeracy into pedagogy, especially for immigrant children, and conducting research at some pre-school sites.

Studies show that early interventions help young children develop a foundation, including basic literacy, for cognitive development and well-being; the benefits are greater for children with disadvantaged family backgrounds (Heckman, 2006; European Commission, 2006). In Sweden, immigrant children at age 15 have shown a greater gap in mathematics with their native peers than in literacy (OECD, 2007a). The early interventions are also effective for mathematics (Clements and Sarama, 2008). It is important to integrate both literacy and numeracy to start developing children's linguistic and mathematical development at an early age, with special attention to immigrant children.

During site visits, the review team observed good practice of pre-school teachers developing their own educational materials to better work with immigrant children and their families. They consider it essential to raise parents' literacy level in order to most effectively develop children's literacy. Parental involvement was also found to be of critical importance for developing literacy in their mother language and for valuing ethnic identity and culture. If teachers cannot afford to offer mother language support at pre-school sites, teachers could guide their parents to offer language stimulation in their mother language at home.

Teachers have been given opportunities to work with international researchers or special language trainers, organised by the municipalities. In the workshops, tips were shared among practitioners with common challenges, and effective approaches were explored based on theory and practice, and practical tools were developed to help the teachers. The teachers who participated in the workshops acknowledged that they gained benefits from sharing tips among peer teachers, being informed of research findings and, especially developing the tools and materials. They confirmed that the tools and approaches are something they are using in their everyday work after the workshops. It was found that such workshops were useful because they were "problem-solving"-oriented. They not only helped these pre-school teachers to be equipped with practical tools but also strengthened self-confidence in dealing with challenges. The government could support the dissemination of these good examples; such subjects as "pedagogy focusing on literacy and numeracy" and "linking research and practice" can be part of the requirements in the upskilling scheme of the current reform, *i.e.* to raise the qualifications level of pre-school teachers.

Box 2.1. Policy recommendations: early childhood education and care

- Ensure comprehensive support the child's development for learning and well-being.

    − Give a clear reason for cooperation between education policies and social policies.
    − Launch projects to stimulate cooperation at the local level such as "language screening in early years".

- Provide appropriate training to kindergarten teachers.

    − Integrate both literacy and numeracy to start developing children's linguistic and mathematical development with special attention to immigrant children.
    − Support teachers to work more closely with parents to stimulate children's language development in their mother language at home.
    − Embedding professional development in the current teacher reform with a strong focus on linking research and practices, peer-learning, and problem-solving with concrete case studies.

Schools and communities

Perhaps the most important objective of a strategy to improve migrant education in Sweden is accelerate the process by which new migrants become integrated – not just into the education system, but into the language and large community. This makes it indispensable to nest education measures in a larger context that municipalities, school leaders, teachers, parents and communities. Within the education system it requires a "whole-of-school" approach that embraces teaching in general, language learning, special needs education, and other educational support services, especially after-school education opportunities.

Strengths

Inter-ministerial cooperation: from immigration to integration

From the mid-1960s till the mid-1980s, the primary focus of immigration policy in Sweden was on labour market integration, notably through the Swedish Labour Market Board. The Swedish Immigration Board was established in 1969 to handle asylum applications specifically. The number of refugees and asylum seekers increased in the years that followed; the responsibility for newly arrived immigrants was transferred from the Swedish Labour Market Board to the Immigration Board in 1985.

In that year a dispersal policy was introduced. It aimed to spread the newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers evenly across the country and to avoid a large concentration of immigrants in the largest cities of Stockholm, Göteborg, and Malmö). However, after being hosted in an assigned municipality for the introduction period, immigrants tended to move to a municipality where they were able to find housing rather than a suitable employment opportunity. The policy did not achieve its intended outcomes and was therefore, abandoned (OECD, 2007b).

Recognising the importance of inter-ministerial cooperation (*e.g.* between housing and employment) in tackling integration issues, the Swedish Integration Board was established in 1998. In 2007, the Integration Board was closed, and its tasks were distributed to several government authorities. In the same year, The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality was established and assigned the responsibility for the inter-ministerial coordination. In 2008, the government adapted an inter-ministerial integration strategy for the years 2008-10.

During the review visit, key policy makers and researchers acknowledged that school cannot solve everything alone; it needs to be orchestrated with other policies such as labour market, health and housing in connection to school policy and practices. Indeed, the Ministry of Education and Research reports that other ministries are often involved in designing education policies for the integration of immigrant students into school (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). They listed: Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Health and Social Affairs; and Ministry of Justice (migration and asylum issues).

Inter-ministerial cooperation alone is not enough. During the review visit, several interviewees stressed that, in Sweden, municipalities and schools decide what cooperation is needed and schools frequently cooperate with the municipal social service agencies. They emphasised that policy coherence is essential at the local level in Sweden, not solely at the national level.

Accumulated experience of providing language support for immigrants and their children

Sweden started its immigration history by providing humanitarian assistance to immigrants and refugees from the Nordic, Baltic and other European countries during the Second World War. During the mid-1960s, the focus of policy attention shifted to immigrants arriving for work-related reasons. The

importance of acquiring the language of the host country was already acknowledged by then. In 1970, the government decided to offer free language training to immigrants who arrived for purposes of refugees and family unification. Two years later, a government bill was passed to guarantee newly arrived immigrants the right to 240 hours of salaried language training (OECD, 2007b).

Today, such language training comprises an essential part of the introduction programme for newly arrived adult immigrants, so called Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). The primary purpose of the training is to provide adult immigrants with basic knowledge of Swedish and Swedish society. Another purpose is to help immigrants find employment and, therefore, the training is in principle focused on raising Swedish proficiency for occupational purposes and is combined with work experience. The length varies between 18 and 36 months. For those who are illiterate, SFI should be combined with reading and writing in basic adult education.

From the 2002/03 school year a new syllabus was introduced containing three different study paths each with two courses. The new syllabus system is designed to better meet the need of individuals with different educational backgrounds, potential and study objectives. Language proficiency is assessed through a national standardised test. Even so, the evaluation by the National Agency for Education showed that about 50 to 60% of participants do not reach the required level after two years (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009; OECD, 2007b). As a result, a recent initiative, "Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) initiative – better quality and tougher requirements", focuses on strengthening the incentives and means for achieving better quality and outcomes of the programme. The initiative aims at introducing seven measures: 1) Final tests in all programmes of study at national level; 2) Clearer goals in the SFI curriculum; 3) Time limits for SFI education; 4) Evaluation of SFI: 5) Skills enhancement for SFI teachers; 6) Stronger national inspection system; and 7) Performance-based SFI-bonus.

Immigrant students may study Swedish as a Second Language (SSL) as a subject in compulsory and upper secondary school. The goal of SSL is to help students develop daily communication skills and proficiency in Swedish in order for them to study school subjects in Swedish. Achievement levels and proficiency requirements for SSL are similar to those for studying Swedish (as a first language). And they are considered equivalent with respect to eligibility for admission to university or other post-secondary study.

Personalised support for all students and individualised learning pathways in upper secondary education

All students have the right to receive academic and career guidance prior to selecting an educational program or occupation in compulsory school. In upper secondary school, guidance counsellors usually offer personal counselling sessions about educational programs and occupations. They may also assist with study planning, changes and transfers (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

The standard national subject syllabi are to be followed even in preparation classes. In practice, however, it is only once newly arrived students are transferred to a regular class, they are taught with the standard syllabi with students of the same age in most cases. These students often need special support in mainstream classes to make the transition smooth. Notwithstanding the special support that all students are entitled to, they are also entitled to what is called "Study Guidance in the Mother Tongue". The support teacher may provide extra support in their mother language. He/she may often bring together a small group of students or may offer individualised guidance in their mainstream classes.

Some immigrant students are old enough to start in upper secondary education but lack the necessary qualifications for the national programmes. Such students can study in an "individual" program. The aim of the programme is for the student to acquire the necessary qualifications to be entitled to a national upper secondary education program: *i.e.* to receive passing grades in Swedish, English and Mathematics.[8]

Immigrant students are over-represented in the individual programme while higher social strata children are over-represented in academic programmes (OECD, 2005a). In the forthcoming reform of upper secondary education the government has announced its aim to abolish the individual programmes due to poor performance in these programmes. The government is currently preparing new study alternatives which are intended to replace the individual programmes. The final plan will be decided by the Parliament in the second quarter of 2010.

The importance of the targeted interventions for the newly arrived, especially older students has been stressed by key stakeholders during the policy review. To ensure the effectiveness of the induction programme, it needs to ensure the relevance of the contents of the programme and the quality of the teachers who teach the programme.

Political support and legal framework for valuing mother tongue and culture

Countries may be categorised into three different models: 1) the ethnic identity model (valuing mother language and culture), 2) the language assimilation model (focussing on the acquisition of the language of the host country), and 3) language integration model (valuing both languages). Sweden falls under the third model (Vedder and Virta, 2005). A 1979 amendment to the Swedish constitution encourages immigrants to maintain and develop their ethnic identity, language and religion.

Research shows that valuing the mother tongue and culture of immigrant children can be an effective tool for facilitating their learning, as literacy and other skills in the mother language can be transferred to the second language (Cummins, 2000; Goldenberg, 2008); bridge the gap between their home and school cultures (Brind *et al*., 2008); and develop language proficiencies as part of their personal, social and cultural identity (Holmen, 2008).

The review team has repeatedly heard that teachers and school leaders feel that valuing language and culture of immigrant students will help raise the self-confidence and aspirations of immigrant students and, what is more, help facilitate intercultural understanding among their native peers. The Swedish migrant education policy is geared towards this policy goal, *i.e.* to develop skills in his/her own language and culture and promote their development as bilingual individuals, to help build self esteem, and allow them to follow developments in the home country (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

In Sweden, immigrant children in pre-school are entitled to mother language support. Immigrant students in compulsory education and in upper secondary education are formally entitled to mother language tuition as a school subject called "Mother Tongue Tuition" if they wish and certain other criteria are met, such as if there are more than five children in the school who want tuition in that language and a teacher can be found. The subject of the syllabus covers the literature, history and culture of the country of origin. The grades in this subject are considered equivalent to those in other subjects. It is in most cases an extracurricular activity outside normal timetabled lessons but students may be able to study the subject as an alternative to the second foreign language as a school option. At the end of year nine as well as in upper secondary education, there are nationally approved tests in the subjects of Swedish, Swedish as a Second Language, English and Mathematics. For years six to nine, there is diagnostic testing to form a basis on which to assess where an individual student stands in relation to the set goals, to help teachers to assess students and to support them in their learning. The materials used for the lower grades focus on language development and learning of basic mathematical concepts (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009).

The Swedish Education Act states that all students no matter what backgrounds they are from have equal access to the national education system and school activities shall be structured in accordance with fundamental democratic values. Persons active in the school system shall, in particular, promote equality

between the genders and actively counteract all types of insulting treatment such as bullying and racist behaviour (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). Therefore, all teacher education programmes include teaching about fundamental democratic values and supporting students' learning is integrated into the democratic arrangement in schools.

Teacher education programmes are required to prepare students teachers for a multicultural society and to promote access to teacher education programmes for students with different cultures (Norberg, 2000). The teacher education reform of 2001 emphasised that future teachers have to be trained to work in multicultural schools (Rabo, 2007). Intercultural education has become a subject in the general part of the teacher training, although an evaluation indicates that the approaches of intercultural/multicultural education vary from one teacher education programme to another. For example, some institutes focus on recruiting students with different cultural backgrounds in teacher education programmes, while some institutes offer obligatory courses for multicultural education for student teachers (OECD, 2005a; Norberg, 2000).

Schools making practical arrangements for mother tongue tuition

Mother tongue instruction in schools may take place in or outside the regular timetable in compulsory school; and as an individual option, a language option, or in the form of a remedial course in upper secondary education. If students study their mother tongue outside the regular timetable, they are entitled to a combined total of seven years in the public school system. Students wishing to take their mother tongue in upper secondary school must have a grade in that language from year nine of compulsory school, or equivalent.

In practice, lessons are usually held outside regular timetable hours. In schools with students with limited knowledge in Swedish, some subjects may be offered in their mother tongue, while they learn Swedish. For instance, in Botkyrka, the review team interviewed students who were learning mathematics in Arabic through a mathematics teacher of the same immigrant background. Although calculations and mathematical formula are the same regardless of the language, the ways to do the calculations and solve the formula are different between the countries and, students preferred to continue to learn mathematics in the same way. Yet, learning the language of instruction was still important in mathematics as it helped in interpreting the questions.

Providing mother tongue tuition and support is expensive. Sharing the resources is of critical importance across all levels of education. An on-line resource site, *Tema Modersmål*, has been developed to primarily for those working in pre-school and school education. The website hosts different mother tongue rooms and provides tools for communicating in different languages. These rooms are run by mother tongue teachers at both pre-school and school level. As of July 2009, about 26 languages were covered.[9]

Strong political commitment to improving the quality of teaching

Under the decentralised and objective-oriented educational system in Sweden, municipalities and schools play a key role. In this respect, the government has initiated continuous reforms of teacher education and in-service training for teachers and to improve teaching quality and to keep equally high quality of education for all.

The reform of teacher education in 2001 emphasised professional development. Through a new project the government will allocate SEK 3 billion (Swedish kronor) to in-service training and to further development in subjects and skills for teachers from 2007-11. In the beginning there was ear-marked funding specifically for SFI. Today, the funds have merged, but there is still great demand and supply for courses in second language learning (SFI and SSL).

In addition, the government brought back the degree in teaching for special needs education in 2008, which was abolished in the early 1990s. By reintroducing a degree for teachers in special needs education, the government tries to equip teachers for special needs education with special knowledge in teaching children to read, write and do mathematics. In addition, the government emphasises on improving the quality of pre-school teachers with another initiative, "the boost for pre-school".

Ongoing reforms include reformed training for school leaders providing better knowledge of the national goals for education, a new teacher training programme offering two different types of teaching degrees (*i.e.* primary school teacher and secondary school teacher) and a proposal of qualifications and career paths for teachers.

Emerging good practices in promoting quality teaching

Research- and action-oriented development programmes may help build the linkage between research in practice and related policies. In addition, the result of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), although Sweden did not participate, confirms that individual and collaborative research has the greatest perceived impact on the professional development for teachers in TALIS countries (OECD, 2009a). Therefore, teacher-driven practices to improve the quality of education are a very innovative and effective way to achieve better outcomes for quality teaching.

Some municipalities (*e.g.* Botkyrka and Malmö) and schools have started to build research- and action-oriented approach at classroom levels to improve the quality of teaching. For instance, several research circles in language development and subject instruction have been practiced for teachers and researchers, in which participating teachers can share their experience and develop their skills and knowledge through peer learning and the connection between field practices and research.

Challenges

Overall quality of teaching workforce

There is a general shortage of qualified teachers in Sweden. The Education Act is open to interpretation by municipalities and schools and, some municipalities and schools hire teachers without a teacher exam. The percentage of teachers without a teacher exam in public compulsory schools has increased considerably since mid-1990s, rising from 7.2% in 1995/96 to 17.2% in 2003/04. In the school year 2005/06, only 84.3% of the teacher workforce for compulsory schools had gained higher education teacher qualifications (Skolverket, 2006a); 30% of the teachers in grades seven to nine had no teacher diploma (OECD, 2005a).

The proportion of teaching workforce with teacher qualifications varies among different types of schools and municipalities. As of July 2002, independent schools are subject to the same requirement to employ qualified teachers as municipal schools. However, the proportion of qualified teachers was lower in grant aided independent schools than municipal schools (*e.g.* 64.7% and 85.7%, respectively, in 2005/06). Among municipalities, the proportion of teachers who are fully qualified varies from 70% to 98% (Skolverket, 2006a). The shortage of qualified teachers is even more acute for teachers of Swedish as a Second Language (SSL) and Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). The poor quality of SSL and SFI has been raised as an issue by the OECD thematic review on equity (OECD, 2005a).

In order to improve the quality of teaching, the government initiated the "Boost for Teachers" programme in 2007. It aims to provide current teachers with opportunities to attain qualifications. There were some problems in the initial phase of the initiative due to lack of demand from municipalities. In the last year, demand has increased and teachers who have taken part are satisfied with the in service training.

Lack of teachers' capacity to meet diverse students' needs

In Sweden, teachers in the big cities of Stockholm, Malmö and Göteborg may have a class with high concentration of immigrant students. This means that teachers and schools are required to be well equipped to deal with students in a classroom with multi-cultural and multi-linguistic backgrounds. During initial teacher education and through continuous development programmes, therefore, teachers and school leaders need to learn and teach diversity and multiculturalism in classrooms and schools. Multicultural perspective in education is well expressed in the national policies such as national steering documents and mother tongue tuition for immigrant students. However, there are no national guidelines on teacher education for diversity,[10] as the main responsibility for teacher education lies with each teachers college and the main responsibility for retaining and developing the skills of teachers and school leaders belongs to municipalities.

During the review visit to Sweden, the stakeholders emphasised that the key issue with immigrant students is not so much how these students are taught in "preparatory classes" or whether they are transferred to regular classes within a certain (short) period of time. They stressed that the main issues is whether regular classes are ready to welcome the newly arrived students. A difficult case was presented as a real challenge: students, especially those who arrived at a later age and/or arrived without basic education, will be at most risk of falling behind and dropping out from school. If they are to be transferred to regular classes in an insufficient time period, they are likely to drop out from the course. Therefore, if the ultimate goal is to provide equality in learning opportunities (through "individualised" learning opportunities), the duration of the preparatory class should not be the focus. At the same time, immigrant students should not risk inequality in learning outcomes by falling behind in other subject matters.

Experiences from the OECD member countries show that not enough opportunities are offered for training to address diversity in schools. The online survey carried out by an OECD/CERI project on Teacher Education for Diversity reveals that teachers, teacher educators and student teachers perceive the topic of diversity in their classrooms as very important but very few of them feel prepared to handle it in practice (OECD, 2009b).

The result of evaluation on teachers' competence and working conditions by the National Agency for Education (NAE) confirms that teachers are not quite ready for teaching in a multicultural classroom (Skolverket, 2006b). The NAE evaluated the issue of teacher competence in compulsory schools and its impact on students' learning environment and results based on the NAE's national evaluation of compulsory schools (focused on students of year nine) in 2003. According to the evaluation, one in three teachers stated that they have insufficient competence to deal with students from different social and cultural backgrounds. Teachers also feel that collaboration between subject colleagues and opportunities for skills development have declined. At the same time as the proportion of students with special supports in schools increased, there is greater focus on individual students' needs.

In addition, an evaluation research of teacher education on intercultural education showed that intercultural education programmes in teacher education were marginalised and generally provided as optional courses to student teachers (Norberg, 2000).

Unfavourable learning environments for immigrant students, in particular for the newly arrived

As noted earlier, research shows that there is a strong association between student performance and family background. Social and cultural capital that parents can pass down to the child is of particular importance. This includes helping with homework, access to educational resources at home, learning about how to search for and obtain future life choices (Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, 2004; Jonsson and Erikson, 2000).

Immigrant students, in particular newly arrived students often are cut off from such social and cultural capital. They tend to reside in disadvantaged areas. During the initial settlement period, immigrant families are likely to concentrate in the specific areas due to such reasons as family unification, guidance from acquaintances, and financial constraints. The home environment is often very crowded and small for students to prepare their school work. The review team visited a school which has long opening hours for those students whose house is too crowded to do homework – two to four families may be living in one apartment – or those whose parents have psychological problems.

Under such circumstances, learning environments at home and of neighbourhood may considerably hinder language acquisition and adaptation of new education of host country for newly arrived students. In order to compensate for impoverished home learning environments of newly arrived students, it is critical that schools and communities provide sufficient additional supports for their learning.

PISA 2006 data indicates that immigrant students from low socio-economic backgrounds have fewer educational resources at home and attend schools with high concentration of immigrants and students from low socio-economic backgrounds, compared to their native counterparts (Table 2.1). For instance, among students from low socio-economic backgrounds, low performers are less likely to have classical literature and textbooks for school work at home. This implies that it is important to provide these students with more instruction time in schools and/or better access to libraries.

Table 2.1. Home resources and school environment for disadvantaged students at age 15

By immigrant status and reading performance (PISA 2006)

	Immigrant students		Native students	
	Bottom 25% of students in reading performance	Top 25% of students in reading performance	Bottom 25% of students in reading performance	Top 25% of students in reading performance
Mean socio-economic background of schools	-0.14	0.08	0.02	0.12
Concentration of immigrants at schools (%)	37.0	34.4	9.0	7.7
Mother without educational degree (%)	27.7	27.3	1.4	0.0
Predominantly speaking foreign language at home (%)	94.4	76.1	2.6	1.1
Having textbooks for school work at home (%)	53.5	77.8	59.9	77.1
Classical literature at home (%)	11.4	35.7	16.9	38.3
Room of own (%)	75.8	76.7	96.7	95.5

Note: For both immigrant students and native students, results are presented for the 25% least advantaged students as measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status.

Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

The Inspectorate has evaluated schools for year eight and nine in compulsory and upper secondary education in 14 municipalities. The municipalities considered as challenging schools were selected against their quality standards. The quality standards were collected from the Swedish Education act, the National Curriculum and the General Guidelines developed by the National Agency for Education. The inspectorate concludes that all the evaluated municipalities to some extent have failed to ensure the right of the newly arrived students to education. The municipalities assuming that all have the same needs, contrary to law (Skolinspektionen, 2009). The evaluation points out that: 1) newly arrived students are rarely assessed for their prior knowledge in different subjects; 2) in most cases they only receive teaching and support in Swedish and Mathematics; 3) individual action and development plans are not made, even though that is

required by law; 4) they spend a very long time in preparation classes – sometimes more than one year; 5) principals seldom take responsibility for the education of newly arrived students; and 6) these students tend to be taught in separate tracks – separated from the regular quality development of the school. The inspectorate concluded that schools need to raise literacy in Swedish and knowledge in other subjects at the same time.

Given that immigrant students perform less well in literacy tests than their native peers, it may be important to raise basic skills at the same time as language skills, numeracy and scientific literacy. Svensson argues that the biggest problem is the large differences in the mathematics grades of the various groups, and recommends that targeted measures to increase participation of disadvantaged students in the national science programme (Svensson, 2002). These measures should be implemented in the early stages of compulsory school and preferably as early as pre-school (Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, 2004).

Poor understanding of rights to language support for immigrants and responsibilities

The first experiences in the receiving country are of critical importance for newly arrived immigrants. Introduction programmes generally include three main components: language support, civic orientation and vocational training for labour market integration (Niessen and Schibel, 2004). In Sweden, municipalities organise such introduction programmes.

Although newly arrived immigrants do receive the introduction programme, the interviews during the policy review visit confirmed the findings of the Schools Inspectorate and the NAE and revealed that that immigrants and their children are often unaware of their rights and responsibilities, especially with regard to language support and, what is more, principals and teachers often seem to be unaware of these rights and responsibilities.

The degree and type of language support depend on education levels, demands and available resources. In summary, legislation guarantees:

- Mother tongue assistance/support at pre-school;
- Mother tongue tuition at compulsory school, if certain criteria are met;
- Swedish as a Second Language as a subject in compulsory and upper secondary school;
- Mother tongue study guidance for those who need extra support in their mother language; and
- Language support (Swedish for Immigrants) for adult immigrants looking for a job.

According to the NAE's statistical yearbook, in the school year 2005/06, the proportion of students who spoke languages other than Swedish was 15% of all students in compulsory schools. Of entitled pupils 55% took part in mother tongue tuition. The proportion of students who received tuition in Swedish as a second language was about 46% in the same school year.

The review team has found that the complexity of the rights to language support may hinder immigrants from exercising those rights. The challenge is greatest for those immigrant students: 1) whose school system in the home country is quite different from that of Sweden; 2) whose parents have had only basic education level and, therefore, lack literacy even in their home language; and 3) who reside in municipalities where introduction programmes are poorly adapted to needs facing particular groups of migrants.

Niessen and Schibel (2004) identified different groups of migrants with different needs: *e.g.* recognised refugees with third country nationals, temporary immigrants, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, asylum seekers, long established immigrants, returning nationals, and undocumented

immigrants. They report that some countries provide extensive introduction programmes for certain categories of newly arrivals.

The interviews during the OECD policy review also point to the importance of the more customised introduction programmes, especially for those most challenging immigrant groups. Stakeholders with immigrant backgrounds expressed a need for more, repeated and face-to-face consultation with interpreters and translated materials in municipalities.

Lack of research on effective arrangements for language support

Research suggests that language support is most effective when: 1) it is systemic and based on centrally developed curriculum documents; 2) teachers are specifically trained in second language acquisition; and 3) programmes are time-intensive and offered in a continuous way throughout primary and secondary schools (Christensen and Stanat, 2007).

However, the PISA 2003 thematic report on immigrant students reported that Sweden has an immersion programme with systemic language support both for primary and lower secondary education (Annex D). The practice of systemic language support, as in so-called "preparatory classes", has been criticised when immigrant students spend too long in these classes and they tend to fall behind in other subject areas. The School Inspectorate places a priority on integrating newly arrived immigrant students. The theme has become a priority 2009. Although there is no solid research that can inform policy and practice as to whether students would benefit most from immersion programmes, withdrawal classes, or an appropriate mix of the two approaches, the recently published thematic evaluation provides useful insights to school leaders.

No language support in special need education

It has been estimated that about 18% of immigrant students are in compulsory level special needs education (*obligatoriska sarskolan*) and 13% in upper secondary level special needs education (*gymnasiesarskolan*). Research commissioned by the Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education concluded that special needs education did not take into account the linguistic and cultural contexts of these students (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). For instance, mother language tuition is non-existent in special education, even though immigrant children are heavily over-represented and they have the same rights as students in regular education (OECD, 2005a).

Policy options

Increase after-school and summer holiday support and the quantity of teaching time, especially for low-performing immigrant students

Immigrant students often have lower socioeconomic status and poorer learning conditions at home. During the policy review, some parents reported that the nature of "homework" is changing from doing written exercises individually to doing a "project", which would require even more support at home. To prevent those students from losing their aspirations because of the lack of stimulus in learning at home, municipalities can provide measures to complement or compensate poor conditions. The means may include *e.g.* providing homework assistance, setting role models, giving emotional support, and ensuring access to specialised educational resources.

Within school, Sweden has relatively fewer hours of intended instruction time in public institutions than other OECD countries (Figure 2.2). Although the quality of teaching may not depend solely on hours of instruction (class size and the quality of teachers may also come in to play), teaching time does matter. The results of empirical studies on the effect of instruction time on students' learning indicate that the

number of minutes in class has positive effect on students' achievement (Aksoy and Link, 2000), while spending less time than needed causes lower learning outcomes and lower retention later on (Gettinger, 1985). Greater instructional time at school may give immigrant children the opportunity to develop their full potential, especially when their out-of-school learning environments are unfavourable. This is particularly important where extra language support risks crowding out time in other subjects.

Figure 2.2. Total number of intended instruction hours in public institutions between ages 7 and 14

2006
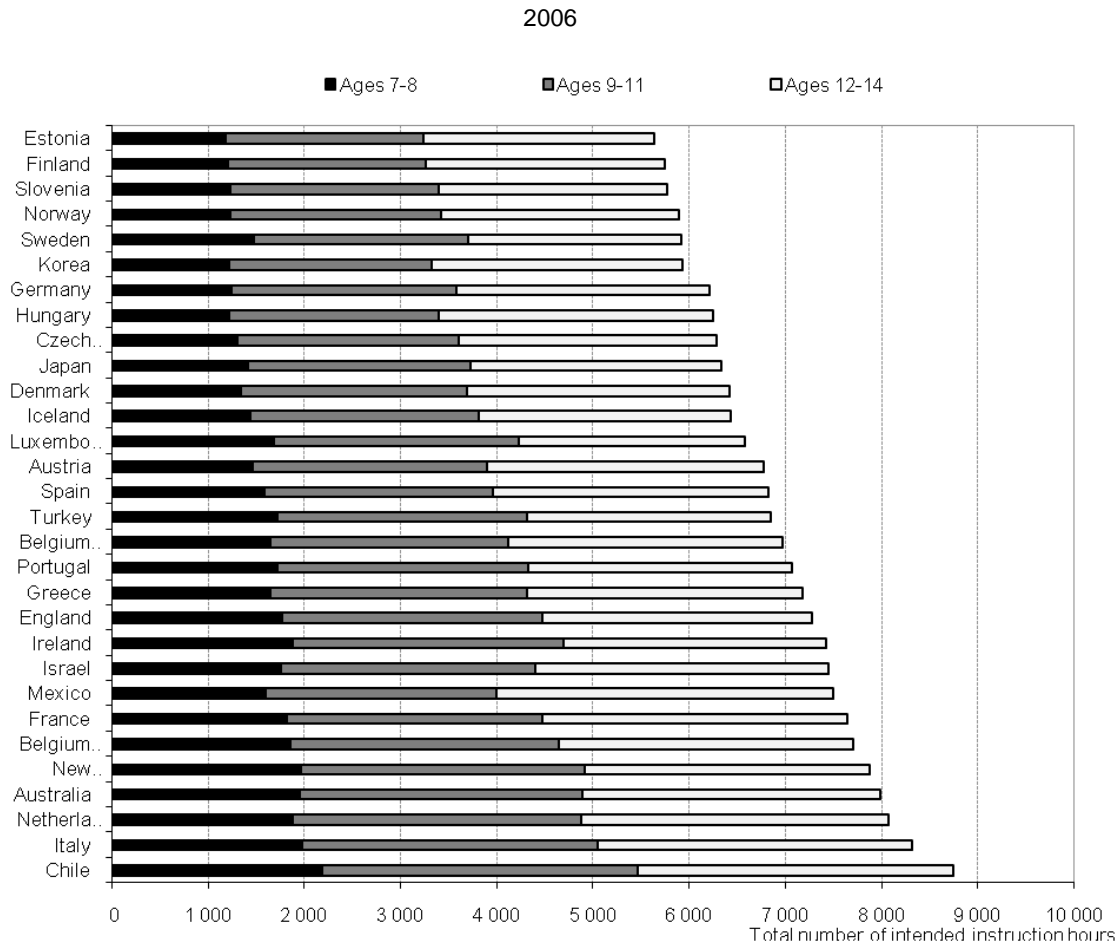
Note: See Annex 3 in Education at a Glance 2008; for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2008).[11]

Source: OECD, 2008a, Table D1.1.

Immigrant students with low proficiency in Swedish and who are deprived of good home learning environments in particular may need more teaching time. More time in school may also lead to better outcomes of second language acquisition and a higher degree of integration for immigrant students in a host country, with a right combination of schooling time and after-school programmes (London *et al.*, 2008). In the US, for example, the "Expanded Learning Time" (ELT) initiative in Massachusetts that extended the school day of children was found to have a positive effect on students' achievement (Mass 2020, 2009).

Box 2.2. The Expanded Learning Time initiative in Massachusetts, the United States

In 2006, the Massachusetts Department of Education and Mass 2020, a Boston-based "action tank" began an experiment to lengthen the school day in ten schools in five districts. The Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative has grown markedly since then and today 26 public schools, serving a total of 13 500 students in 12 districts are participating in the ELT initiative. The Massachusetts state government provides extra financial funding to schools that participate in the ELT.

The initiative includes more project-based and experiential learning, afterschool activities and community-based partnership for students. It also provides for regular professional development and common planning time for teachers. Preliminary results from the Massachusetts experiment suggest that the longer school day has positive effects on students' achievement in English, mathematics and science. Furthermore, ELT appears to help mitigate the achievement gap between white and minority students, in part by providing enrichment activities for minority students with disadvantaged home learning environment.

Source: Massachusetts 2020 Foundation, 2009.

Coordinate capacity building with a whole school approach

Research points to the importance of the whole school approach in making schools responsive to linguistic and cultural diversity (Ofsted, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Brind *et al.*, 2008; Nusche, 2009; Ofsted, 2009). The key components of this approach are summarised in Table 2.2. Language support should not be regarded as an issue exclusively for language teachers but as an issue for subject and mainstream teachers, school managers. Language support can also be seen as a collective challenge for the school, parents and communities and the municipality of the region as a whole. The main actors in a whole school approach are: municipality leaders and school leaders; teachers and other support staff; and parents and communities. The following policy suggestions aim to enhance the capacity of these actors to work in a concerted manner, in the same direction.

Table 2.2. Summary of the successful whole-school approach

Main actors, success factors and key characteristics

Main actors	Success factors	Key characteristics
Municipality leaders and school leaders	* Good management of the school * Good school equipment * Good co-operation among staff * Curriculum	* Schools where there is a culture for critical reflection * Induction strategies for "newly arrived" immigrant students - including children of asylum seeker or refugee families Strong school leadership with a vision and commitment to addressing * inequality and to mainstreaming initiatives to raise achievement * Schools where inclusion and diversity are reflected in the curriculum and school organisation
Teachers and other support staff	* Good quality of teaching * High expectations of teachers towards students coupled with readiness to give support * Student development and support services	* High quality training so that staff can tackle the needs of immigrant students with confidence * High expectations from teachers and all school staff of their students, and the availability of mentoring programmes * Utilising "restorative" and "preventative" approaches to behaviour management that seek to mediate the root causes of conflict rather than simply punishing students
Parents and communities	* Involvement of parents and community	* High and meaningful involvement of parents and community

Source: Ofsted, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Brind *et al.*, 2008.

Provide peer-learning opportunities and knowledge-brokering for municipality leaders

Municipal leaders play a critical role in putting the whole school approach into practice and making schools responsive to linguistic and cultural diversity. In the United Kingdom, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) focuses on the whole-school approach in allocating funding for underachieving immigrant groups. The objective is to narrow achievement gaps and to meet the specific needs of these students. Local authorities play a strong role in supporting schools in implementing the grant.

The outcome of the programme are mixed: among the immigrant students, certain groups (*i.e.* Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean students) continued to rank poorly; but the rates of improvement were greater for Pakistani and Bangladeshi students than for other groups (Tikly *et al*., 2005).

The evaluation of the programme suggests that funding is most effectively used where local authorities perform multiple tasks. The key tasks include providing active management support, good practice guidelines, advisory services, and professional development opportunities for school leaders, sharing information, and monitoring progress (Tikly *et al.,* 2006). The information on language support should be included in the "introductory information package" which immigrant families receive in the initial settlement stage. And it should be communicated repeatedly. An evaluation of introduction or settlement programmes often points to a lack of information such as employment opportunities (Akoita and Naidoo, 1998). The same can be true for educational opportunities (for both adult immigrants and their children).

On language support, municipalities would benefit from knowledge-brokering of good practice. The government agency (Swedish Schools Inspectorate), the National Agency for Education or the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) could play the role. They can identify good examples from "experienced municipalities" and have them share their experience on key issues such as developing cost-effective mother language support models, effectively organising training for SSL and SFI teachers, etc. The policy review visit confirmed that the SSI and SALAR are both aware of such needs and have started to play an active role in making knowledge available for municipalities especially on "language support" and "newly arrived students".[12]

Train school leaders for cultural diversity with an emphasis on induction programmes

Given the high degree of autonomy that schools in Sweden enjoy, school leaders play a key role. The state and municipalities should facilitate peer-learning among school leaders. Good practices of school leaders (and teachers) in achieving extraordinary results for education of immigrant students should be recognised through monitoring and evaluation by the National Agency for Education, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate and/or the municipalities' visits to schools, disseminating good practices among schools. The state has indeed attempted to collect good practice with an initiative called "Schools of Ideas for Diversity".[13] During the policy review, however, the review team constantly heard that in general school leaders are not aware of the existence of such information, or even if they knew, they had no time to talk to the school leaders from these schools, reflect on the ideas, and apply them into their own schools. Some ideas are not shared because of "competition" among schools.

Under such circumstances, school leaders should be given time and opportunities for training as well as incentives for taking up the training. To make the training most effective, municipalities can make it "mandatory" for school leaders who have immigrant students in their schools or newly appointed leaders. In England, for example, new school leaders are required to complete pre-service leadership training and meet the "National Professional Qualification for Headship" (Pont *et al*., 2008) and, in Scotland, the "Standard for Headship" (OECD, 2007c).

The key components of such training may include: how to organise introduction programmes for newly arrived immigrant students, especially children of refugees and asylum seekers; how to mainstream language support, along with other types of support, into the overall curriculum; how to organise school activities which are responsive to the needs of immigrant students and their parents; how to cultivate a culture of critical reflection on cultural diversity in school; how to promote better communication among staff (Table 2.2; Grubb, 2008).

Recruit more school leaders and teachers with immigrant backgrounds

Although there is growing awareness of the benefit of hiring teaching and support staff (*e.g.* the cultural coordinator) with immigrant backgrounds, the majority of teaching staff is still native Swedish. Currently there are approximately 2 000 teaching staff with immigrant backgrounds; but they serve mainly as instructors for mother tongue tuition. An empirical study from Sweden shows that students with immigrant backgrounds on average performed better on the national test in mathematics for grade nine if the share of ethnic minority teachers increases (Lindahl, 2007).

Municipalities and schools should recruit more school leaders and teachers with immigrant backgrounds. Current initiatives should be expanded: *i.e.* attracting more immigrant students and providing extra support for Swedish in teacher education in universities, and accrediting foreign qualifications and prior learning.

To attract more students with immigrant backgrounds to teacher education, universities need to cooperate more actively with upper secondary schools, municipalities and immigrant communities. Some countries have started to hire immigrants for the teaching professions to support immigrant students more effectively. For instance, in England and Wales the Teacher Training Agency has introduced measures to attract ethnic minorities to the teaching profession (Carrington and Skelton, 2003).

Stockholm University has introduced several projects in teacher education providing extra supports to students with immigrant backgrounds. One project targets students with difficulties with Swedish language in the college year of educational science. During this year, they have strong instruction in Swedish, political science, pedagogy and practices through the programme. Despite the efforts, and the drop-out rate in this programmes is relatively high (around 25%) and the number of participants is relatively small (*i.e.* around 20 students attended in this programme in 2008). The low proficiency of Swedish is a major barrier for students with immigrant backgrounds in teacher education when they prepare for academic studies in university. To increase the completion rate of the programmes, it is critical for them to receive extra support during the first year of university.

A teacher with a teacher education from another country needs a teaching certificate issued by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to teach in Swedish schools. In order to apply for the certificate, students with a foreign teaching qualification must submit a certificate of upper secondary level of Swedish proficiency. During the policy review visit, it has been reported as a challenge for these students to master Swedish proficiency to obtain the certificate.

In Ireland, the government allows primary schools to hire individuals with a foreign qualification with a conditional reservation, *i.e.* achieving Irish proficiency within five years. Through this arrangement, teachers with a foreign qualification will be given an opportunity to acquire the proficiency in English and Irish while practicing their teaching profession.

Concentrate efforts on raising quality of all teachers, with a special focus on "formative assessment", "action research", "second language acquisition" and "intercultural education"

Research shows that the quality of teachers makes a big difference to students' learning outcomes (OECD, 2005b). Some research uses teachers' qualification as a proxy of the quality of teaching and shows that teachers' qualification is a significant factor in raising students' learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hanushek, 2005).

In Sweden, the percentage of non-certified teachers in public compulsory schools has increased considerably, and an empirical study identified a negative correlation between the shares of non-certified teachers and student achievement in Sweden (Andersson and Waldenström, 2007). The evaluation by the NAE also confirms that the extent to which school staff undertake teacher training and education in the subject positively correlate with student performance in the national tests in both Swedish and English for students in grade nine (Skolverket, 2006b).

The government places a high priority on improving the quality of teaching by providing extra funding to teachers' education and training. The "Boost for Teachers" initiative may be a remedy for the fact that some teachers teach subjects in which they have had no formal training. There are also government initiatives to provide in-service training and initial teacher education for teachers who have no formal teacher training.

Chapter 1 identified as the areas where immigrant students face the biggest challenges as "access to national upper-secondary programmes" and "completion rate in upper secondary education". To effectively address these issues, the policy goal should be to enhance "critical teaching" skills in addition to the mastery of subject matter. The education and training programmes should include the critical teaching skills, from which not only immigrant students but also all students may benefit. Such skills will include "formative assessment", "action-research", "teaching to second language speakers", and "teaching intercultural education".

Formative assessment skills

The Swedish school system heavily relies on teachers' assessment of student performance in determining students' eligibility for the national programmes in upper secondary schools, as the final grades for year nine are determined by teachers. Under curriculum reforms to be introduced in the third or fourth quarter of autumn 2011, assessment will be more challenging for teachers because of the new, more detailed grading system. In preparing for implementation of the 2011 reforms, teachers should strengthen their capacity to carry out formative assessment.

All students, especially low-performing students or students with different needs, can benefit from formative assessment (Black and William, 1998; OECD, 2005c) and the implementation of such assessment should take account of the needs of migrant education.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, increasing completion rates should be one of the priorities for Sweden. Drop-outs are often preceded by absenteeism. To reduce absenteeism, schools should take preventive measures. Once students have dropped out, it will require huge efforts to reintegrate students so that they resume studying or find a job. Formative assessment is found to be effective in raising overall levels of student achievement as well as promoting high-equity (OECD, 2005c). Keeping track of a student's progress as well as absenteeism should be part of formative assessment. Research shows that keeping a record of a student's progress towards his/her own learning objective is more effective than comparing him/her with their peers because low-performing students would "absorb the idea that they lack ability, and thus lose motivation and confidence" (OECD, 2005c).

The review team found some of the essential elements of formative assessment in some innovative schools.[14] In one school they are asked to set their goals at the beginning of the school year and keep the record of their progress based on self-assessment as well as teachers assessment. They are also given lessons on skills for critical thinking as well as learning strategies, actively getting them involved in their learning.

Action-research skills

Furthermore, formative assessment will improve not only students' learning but also teachers' teaching. With the results of the assessment or any other available data, teachers should be able to develop their skills to investigate and improve their teaching practices in order to enhance students' learning outcomes in a given classroom environment. For this purpose, "action research" could be embedded into teacher education and in-service training programmes. In Finland, research-based teacher education has been of great interest so that teachers can advance research as well as connect between research and their everyday work. Different teacher education programmes serve different purposes; however, teacher educators find the research-based approach as the cross-cutting theme for any teacher education programmes with an aim to educate practitioner researchers, teachers who develop their work through practical inquiry (Toon *et al.,* 2008).

Second language acquisition

The emphasis on the second language acquisition is of particular relevance for all teachers. Language proficiency is a major success factor in learning outcomes for immigrant students in Sweden as mentioned earlier. It is critical that all teachers – not only language teachers but also mainstream and subject teachers – be trained in teaching second language speakers. Vollmer (2009) emphases that the importance of teachers of all subjects to become more language-sensitive.

In England, for example, all teachers are expected to provide English as Additional Language (EAL) development opportunities through special curriculum activities. In addition, EAL specialist teachers provide advice and guidance to subject teachers on how to include English language learning opportunities in mainstream teaching (Leung, 2004).

Intercultural education

The EU emphasises that teachers need the skills necessary to work in multicultural settings including an understanding of the value of diversity and respect for difference as common principles to improve the quality of teachers (European Commission, 2007). In Ireland, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has prepared intercultural guidelines for primary and post-primary schools. The guidelines support primary and post-primary teachers and schools in developing a more inclusive learning environment and providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in an intercultural world (Irish Department of Education and Science, 2009).

Provide practical tools to specialised teachers: "integrating contents and language learning" and "assessing language proficiency for feedback"

As Chapter 1 indicated, first-generation immigrant students, especially in secondary schools, should be a priority group of effective policy interventions. For this group, it would be most efficient to target specialised teachers, such as Swedish as a Second Language (SSL) teachers and special needs teachers.

Swedish as a Second Language (SSL) teachers

The review team often heard that SSL teachers – and teachers in general – very often feel isolated and are not given enough support in trying to respond to the learning needs of migrant students. Support can be provided in a form of well-designed training and a "tool box", the use of which can be on a voluntary

basis. Some expressed an interest in attending training workshops where they could meet with their peers and share their challenges, while others were sceptical of such training due to the lack of understanding of school leaders for their attending and the lack of relevance of such training to their immediate needs. To design the training, a careful needs assessment should be carried out first. SSL teachers as well as teachers in general expressed a high level of interest in receiving a pool of lesson plans, like a box of "practical tools", "good ideas", and "solutions". The essential skills to be covered in the training and the "tool box" should focus on "integrating contents into language teaching" and "assessing language proficiency for feedback".

The review team had a general perception that the SSL classes focus more and more on integrating the teaching of subject matters in their classes rather than Swedish language. This way, students in "preparatory classes" can minimise the risk of falling behind in their subject learning. Research supports this approach. Cognitive skills and language proficiency develop hand-in-hand and students may learn the language most effectively when they are taught for a specific purpose (Au, 1998), and when they are taught academic subjects before fully mastering the language of instruction (Watts-Taffe and Truscott, 2000).

In Ireland, "intercultural guidelines" are available for both primary and post-primary school teachers and provide some concrete ideas about how to integrate contents and intercultural education.[15] Such guidelines on how to integrate contents with language teaching can be a practical support for SSL teachers. During the review visit, key stakeholders repeatedly emphasised the importance of immigrant students mastering English and Mathematics, as well as Swedish language, in order to access national upper secondary programmes. As seen in Chapter 1, access to the national programme is a critical challenge for immigrant students and they have lower performance in science and mathematics. Therefore, these subjects should receive a special attention. Mastery of new technologies also is becoming increasingly important (OECD, 2007b).

The review team found that the frequency and methods of language assessment for immigrant students to vary considerably among schools. It is essential that students have clear goals for improvement, and that, as noted earlier, "formative assessment" be used to monitor their progress and motivate them to learn.

In Ireland, the English Language Assessment Kits were prepared by the state and sent to all primary schools in 2008. In the following year, the kits were distributed to all post-primary level schools. The kits aim to be a practical tool for teachers. They can use it as an initial test when migrant students first arrive, and as follow-up tests to monitor learning progress. With this, they can identify the initial language proficiency of newly arrived students' areas for language support, monitor progress and give feedback. The kits are developed in line with the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. During the policy review visit to Ireland, teachers expressed appreciation of the kits, but underlined the associated training requirement.

Special education teachers

In 2008, the government reintroduced a separate qualification for special needs teachers after it had been abolished in the 1990s. Special needs teachers are meant to be specialised in teaching not only students with disabilities but also students with learning difficulties. It is thus important to ensure that special education teachers receive sufficient training to teach immigrant students as well as that the students will be regularly assessed so that they may be transferred to regular classes when appropriate. As immigrant students seem to be over-represented in special needs education, it is important that teachers in these forms of education also receive sufficient training to teach immigrant students.

Encourage schools to work more closely with parents and communities

Parents and communities have a lot to offer for their children with their knowledge in their mother language and culture, accumulated experience in finding ways to adapt themselves, collected information that is essential to live in the host country, and their networks among their own communities as well as with the host country.

To find mentors and role models:

Schools can benefit from meaningful networks with local enterprises and communities, especially when resources are limited. The networks which the review team found to "added value", set up hands-on learning projects in collaboration with local enterprises; invite university students or alumni with immigrant backgrounds as mentors or role models; offer stimulating after-school programmes; and support the most disadvantaged immigrant students with NGOs such as Red Cross.

For example, the review team visited a school with a high level of concentration of immigrant students. The school leader has a strong connection with the local community including a research centre, enterprises and a professional sport team in Sweden. The school tailored its curriculum to meet the needs of its students. The school has set up a "learning-by-doing project" in which an employer from a local electronic company becomes a project leader and works with students. The project leader designs a mini-project, depending on the needs and interests of the students involved. Students are taught mathematics in the process of carrying out the project. Through this arrangement, students are given the opportunity to see how a subject matter is actually used in real-life working situations and the project leader can also become a mentor and role model for the students. School leaders need capacities to build such network with local communities. Companies believing in "social corporate responsibilities" or having a large number of immigrant workers may be interested in the working with schools.

In the Netherlands, "Mentoring projects" are built based on school networks. In these projects, ethnic minority secondary school students receive support from a mentor, often a higher education student or other person from their own ethnic group, who acts as a role model. The mentoring includes socio-emotional support, support with studies and/or help in choosing further courses. The reported benefits of mentoring include reduced school drop-out and increased number of students going on to further education (Herweijer, 2009).

To tackle absenteeism and prevent dropouts:

School dropout and absenteeism among immigrant pupils are a serious concern for education policy makers. If the family and socio-economic backgrounds of immigrant pupils are unsettled, they are a potentially vulnerable group. Accordingly, countries such as Belgium (the French and Flemish Communities), Spain and the Netherlands have introduced programmes designed to prevent and fight school failure among these children (Eurydice, 2004).

Youths with chronic school absenteeism and school refusal behaviour are at risk of delinquency and school dropout in adolescence and various economic, social and mental problems at later stages. The effects of truancy on the academic and social outcomes of students are highly interrelated. Truancy can also lead to, in the worst scenario cases, destructive social effects such as drug or alcohol abuse, violence, and crime. It is thus necessary to bridge institutions such as community-based organisations and schools in order to reduce truancy and dropout.

Students who find their school experience unpleasant or non-rewarding are less likely to attend school. The review team has heard from practitioners varied reasons for absenteeism, depending on the different backgrounds of the student. They may include lack of interest in the curriculum or school work, learning

problems, particularly caused by language problems, bullying, and emotional disorder due to unstable home environments or traumatic experiences in the home country. Immigrant parents who lack resources and social support are likely to have more difficulties in getting their child to school.

Studies show that children in afterschool programs spent more time on academic activities than children in other types of care (Sarampote *et al*., 2004). Research shows strong positive effects of formal afterschool programs for children from a lower SES. Participation in these programs lead to better behaviour in school, better grades, better emotional adjustment, and better peer relations compared to other children (Posner and Vandell, 1994).

Effective strategies to avoid truancy and absenteeism can be the provision of alternative educational opportunities and individualized instruction, increased parental involvement and incentives for attendance, the assignment of adult and peer mentors to students at-risk. Studies further list various systemic strategies, among them the reduction of violence and bullying, increased parent-teacher collaboration, customized curricula and school-based social workers (Kearney, 2008).

Box 2.3. Policy recommendations: schools and communities

- Increase after-school and summer holiday support and the quantity of teaching time, especially for low-performing immigrant students.

- Coordinate capacity building with a whole school approach.

- Provide peer-learning opportunities and knowledge-brokering for municipality leaders.

- Train school leaders for cultural diversity with an emphasis on induction programmes.

- Recruit more school leaders and teachers with immigrant backgrounds.

- Concentrate efforts on raising quality of all teachers with a special focus on:

  – Formative assessment;
  – Action research;
  – Second language acquisition; and
  – Intercultural education.

- Provide practical tools to specialized teachers (language teachers and special needs teachers) such as:

  – Integrating contents and language learning; and
  – Assessing language proficiency for feedback.

- Encourage school to work more closely with parents and communities to:

  – Find mentors and role models; and
  – Tackle absenteeism and prevent dropouts.

System management

This section focuses on the means of linking national objectives of high performance, equity and innovation with local objectives of decentralised decision making and responsiveness to local needs and preferences. It also examines the role of evidence based policy making for achieving objectives. The discussion includes three cross-cutting and inter-related issues: 1) managing variation among municipalities and schools in the highly decentralised system; 2) balancing school choice, equity and integration; and 3) linking research to policy design and implementation.

Strengths

Policy infrastructure in support of equity and innovation

The Swedish Education Act has enshrined the right to equity and excellence for children. It states, "All children and young people shall, regardless of gender, geographic residence, social and economic situation, have equal access to education in the public school system… The education provided within each type of school should be of equivalent value, irrespective of where in the country it is provided." To achieve this goal, a sophisticated value system of equal access, equivalent education and equal value of education (as measured by pursuit of higher education and preparation for the work place) has been promulgated (Wildt-Persson and Rosengren, 2001). These concepts increase the tolerance for multiple and innovative means to achieve equitable results.

When actions are firmly harnessed to explicit national goals, decentralised systems have high potential for innovation. Sweden has increasingly decentralised its school system through successive reforms and has attempted to use the strengths of decentralization to achieve these educational objectives. The main advantages of decentralisation are the ability for local decision making to be based on local needs.

School autonomy has the potential to increase responsiveness to changing local needs, especially those arising from waves of immigration. However, the capacity to respond can be affected by available local resources. Sweden believes in "the compensatory principle" to ensure equity in performance and hence has put in place an equalizing funding scheme to address the unequal resources among municipalities.

Valuing school choice as an expression of consumer confidence in the school system

A proposal for a new Education Act was recently distributed for comments by the Ministry of Education and Research. The proposal entitled "An Education Act for Knowledge, Choice and Security" (July, 2009) manifests the importance that Sweden places on school choice. The draft Education Act contains proposals that reinforce the "right of pupils to learn as much as possible". The government plans to present a proposition to the Riksdag in March 2010.

Whether school choice will raise individual and school performance has been an issue of debate among policy makers and researchers in many countries. In Sweden, it continues to serve as a means to provide equal opportunity and equal access for many actors in the system. Parents given clear information about school performance, programs, and services and they can choose the best fitted educational institution for their children. If they are not satisfied, they can exercise the right to move their children to another school. Local authorities and school principals aim to administer and mange their schools to achieve high performance, while responding to local needs and preferences. The national school system aims to encourage good school performance through comparisons by different approaches to teaching and learning while increasing the diversity of the student body.

School choice was also intended to diminish segregation and to increase integration. Though schools cannot be held responsible for rectifying neighbourhood segregation, school choice is a means to reduce income segregation in schools. If all children are offered high quality education, a major disadvantage of residential segregation would be neutralized. A review of the experience with school choice in New Zealand showed that income segregation in state schools fell in 1991 and that ethnic residential segregation was greater than school segregation in all years studied (LaRocque, 2005)

Sweden has had a mixed management model for schools since 1992. In addition to the public schools there are about 800 grant-aided independent schools that enrol about 13% of students in primary and secondary education. A major review of the mixed model shows that the vast majority of children attend the schools in their neighbourhood; however, more highly educated parents make use of the option of choice, which in many cities and suburbs has resulted in school segregation, particularly of ethnic minorities (Skolverket, 2003). But there is some evidence that immigrant parents also demanded the choice of better schools (Raham, 2003). Thus the "polarisation" is due, in some measure, to the heterogeneity of the immigrant population where more educated, immigrant parents of higher socio-economic status behave much like more educated Swedish parents. This tendency has also been noted in other countries such as Canada and the United States.

Seeding innovative local solutions with national initiatives

Schools are caught in a web of interactive factors, where their best response is to develop context-specific strategies that result in improved and more equitable school performance. However, innovations at the local level take resources and effort, and there is national-level recognition of the need to support the capacity for strategic innovation at the local level. A good example of such national support was the Swedish national program for ICT for the development of internet access in schools which could be used for teaching as well as in-service training for teachers. Funding and training was provided to schools from 1999 to 2002. Sixty percent of all teachers participated in training, working in inter-disciplinary teams, and developing problem-based learning. All teachers were offered computers (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). Without such national support for local solutions using information technology, low income immigrant students can be doubly disadvantaged. However, with such support, schools are able to institute learner centred strategies, often in the mother tongue of students.

New Zealand has a national initiative that has resulted in a pioneering program called "Alternative education". Under the programme started in 1997, the government funds delivery of education in non-school settings for students aged 13 to 15. This innovation targets students who are alienated from school and are disenchanted with learning. Children remain enrolled in school but are provided customized education by schools or contractors on or off-site with the goal of eventually getting the students back to mainstream education or preparing them for tertiary training or employment at an appropriate age (New Zealand Education Review Office, 2004). This type of thinking "outside the box" can be incited by national policy flexibility and financial support.

National investments for evidence for better national policy, local administration and school management

For policies such as school choice, school effectiveness and improved school performance, evidence is essential. This requires the regular collection of data, rigorous analysis, comparative studies and wide dissemination. Sweden has a long tradition of supporting data collection and research. Statistics Sweden was established in 1858. The Ministry for Education and Research links education and research in its title and function. Sweden has invested in national and international assessments that provide feedback on individual student performance in relation to curricula, schools and student background.

Challenges

Managing integration to keep up with immigration

The issues arising from high immigration are relatively new for Sweden. The rate of immigration has been increasing steadily. According to Statistics Sweden in February 2009, more than 100 000 people immigrated to Sweden in 2008, up by 1.7% since the previous year. The source countries and therefore the mother tongue of immigrants are also diversifying. Iraq, Poland, Denmark, Somalia and Germany were the top five source countries in 2007.

Despite large enclaves in larger cities, the "dispersal policies" may have evened out the settlement of immigrants in even small and medium towns. Having immigrant children in schools, though still an urban phenomenon, is not uncommon in most municipalities. Segregation of residential neighbourhoods has been cited as a growing problem across Sweden with consequences for local schools (Statistics Sweden, 2007). Homogeneous schools may suddenly be faced with issues of initiating integration while other schools, struggling with growing pressures from rapid growth in immigrants, may be aiming for faster integration. And they may experience drops in performance if they cannot keep up with the needs of increasingly diverse school populations.

Figure 2.3. Municipalities with a high level of concentration of immigrant populations

Source: Statistics Sweden, 2007.

Local context is important. For instance, the problems of Piteå, where immigrant students speaking 21 languages comprise only 4% of the students, is quite different from Malmö where immigrant students with primarily Arabic background comprise 40% of the students. This complexity is unlikely to diminish. With waves of immigration, the rate of integration of first and second generation immigrants is likely to also vary.

Furthermore, the high concentration of problems in certain areas (Rosengård, Botkyrka), detracts from a national perspective on such problems. Still, the high dropout rates among immigrant youth and the over-representation of immigrant students in individual programmes and special education can be seen as national issues as can the variation in performance among schools and municipalities. It is clear, that the rate of immigration requires both preparatory and responsive action at both the national, municipal and school levels.

Need for national tools to provide local support

There is a need for nationally developed strategies to support schools with high concentrations of immigrant children in need of specialised help. Administrative challenges arise when resources are spread too thin in schools. Performance reports alone are insufficient to diagnose and respond to immigrant related issues. The risk is that of "bottom end inequality" where reasonable average performance hides the concentration of immigrants and other disadvantaged groups at the bottom of the scale. A UNICEF study points out that high absolute standards of educational achievement (measured by the percentage of students achieving a given benchmark) are not incompatible with low levels of relative disadvantage (measured by how far low-achieving pupils are allowed to fall behind the average). The study calculated the extent of the difference in achievement between children at the bottom and at the middle of each country's achievement range. It used the average rank in five measures of relative disadvantage: the difference in the score between the fifth and the fiftieth percentile in each country in surveys of reading, math and science literacy of 15-year-olds (PISA) and of math and science eighth grade achievement (TIMSS). The results are presented in Figure 2.4. Sweden ranks ninth out of 24 with a score of 10.2. It trails its Nordic neighbours Finland and Iceland, but is ahead of Norway and Denmark (UNICEF, 2002).

Figure 2.4. The relative educational disadvantage league

Average rank in five measures of relative educational disadvantage
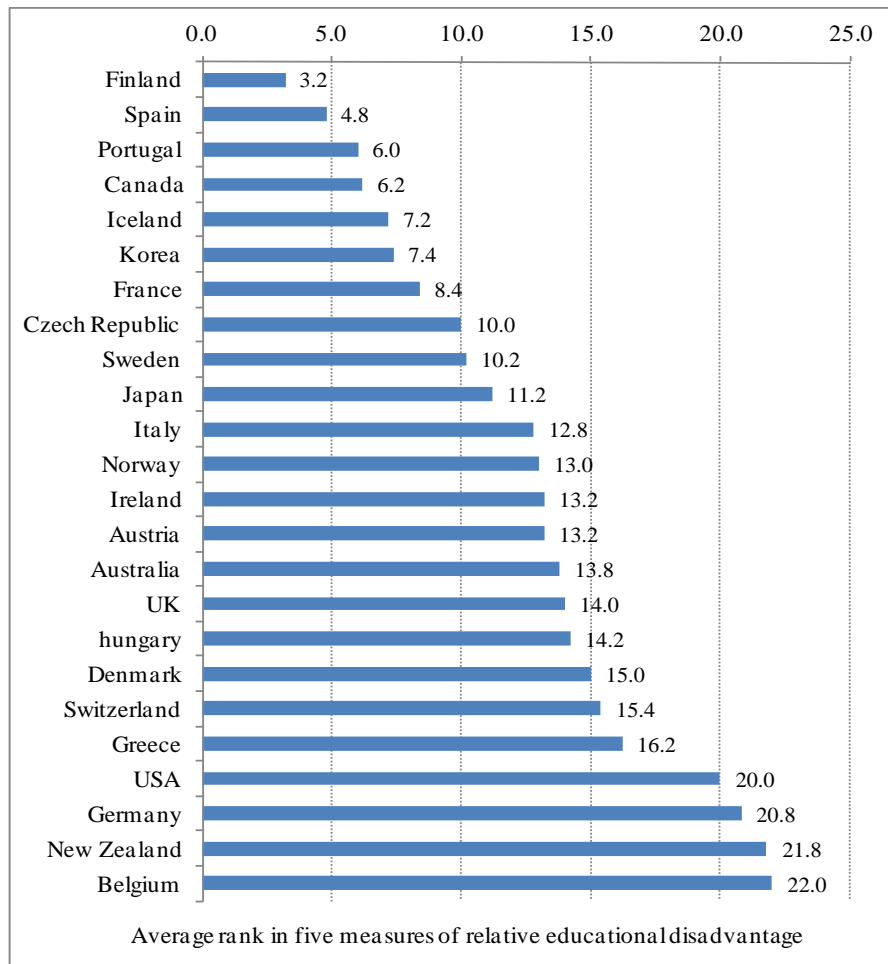
Note: The figure ranks countries by the extent of the difference in achievement between children at the bottom and at the middle of each country's achievement range. It shows the average rank in five measures of relative educational disadvantage: the difference in test score between the 5th and 50th percentiles in each country in surveys of reading, math, and science literacy of 15 year-olds (PISA), and of math and science 8th-grade achievement (TIMSS).

Source: UNICEF, 2002.

Does Sweden, similar to other countries, have concentrations of immigrant children in the lower tail of the performance distribution? Can this be due to segregation in residential neighbourhoods? Do immigrant families move out of these areas of immigrant concentration as their situation improves over time or do they continue to stay because of other benefits gained from their cultural and language community in these areas? Is the duration of stay an underlying factor partly explaining the findings?

The most immigrant dense areas and schools are also areas and schools characterised by a heavy over-representation of newly arrived pupils. From the perspective of schools and municipalities, concentrations of children from low socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds or both can arise for two reasons: residential segregation and school choice. Statistics Sweden (2007) has found that segregated housing increased during the 1990s, which could not be fully explained by social and economic factors. In other words, people were residing communities with persons having similar backgrounds, either by choice, or because options elsewhere were limited. Of the 7 971 Small Area Market Statistics Areas (SAMS areas developed by Statistics Sweden by dividing the nation into homogeneous housing areas), about 60% of all areas in Sweden are "Swedish dense" (95 to 100% Swedish children) and 55% of Swedish children live in "Swedish dense" areas. In contrast, 48% of children with a foreign background live in 450 "immigrant dense" (40% of children of foreign background) areas, most of them in the south. The study showed that 276 children from migrant dense neighbourhoods attended Swedish dense schools while 305 children from Swedish dense neighbourhoods attended immigrant dense schools. In addition, her research demonstrated that there was, indeed, some evidence for bottom end inequality in the grades attained by immigrant children (Figure 2.5). The greatest risk of poor performance is among immigrant children from immigrant dense neighbourhoods attending immigrant dense schools. The fact that the risk of children from immigrant dense areas attending Swedish dense schools achieving poor grades was also high, points out the need for nationally developed tools to ensure that school choice results in the objectives of better integration and high performance.

Figure 2.5. Relationship between student achievement and concentration by residential area
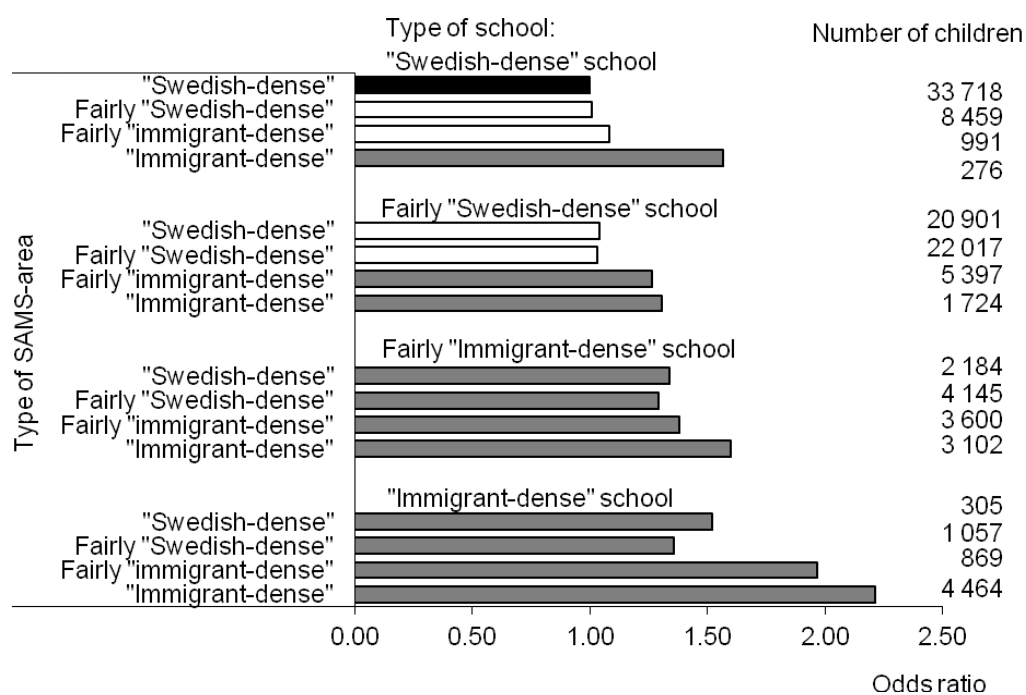
Source: Statistics Sweden, 2007.

The age at which immigrant children join the Swedish school system and the age at which they are mainstreamed into the system affect their performance. There is some evidence to suggest that the critical age at arrival for success at school is about ten, and arrival after that age has a strong negative impact on performance (Böhlmark, 2005). This is similar to research using PISA data from Canada that showed that children arriving at the age of 8 had a smoother transition. A Canadian study showed that there was a small negative effect if the language spoken at home was different from the test language regardless of the migrant or native status (Gluszynski and Dhawan Biswal, 2008). The fact (noted in chapter 1) that second-generation migrants perform so much better than first generation migrants is further evidence that the needs of new-comers are not being well met. All of this would suggest that it is important to have strategies to speed up mainstreaming and development of what Bohlmark calls "Sweden-specific skills".

School districts with a high concentration of immigrant children may face a dilemma, where they would prefer to have earlier, shorter, more intensive programming for newcomers, particularly young children. This would certainly be a preventive measure to avoid later issues. However, newcomers of later ages may require more time and more sustained programming. Furthermore, immigrant children who have resided in Sweden for a period of time but still have issues would require yet another strategy. Thus, the diversity of needs among immigrant children requires personalized varied approaches (rather than the same approaches for all immigrant children) to ensure equity of outcomes within immigrant students as well as compared to Swedish children.

To maintain excellence in outcomes, both the teaching and learning experience has to be adapted to raising the bar by which student performance is judged. In order for individual schools not to lose ground nationally, developed aids and tools would be helpful to schools under stress and would spare individual schools the effort of developing responses to shared challenges. Though the government has moved away from the provision of tools in recent reforms, the suggestion here is to provide a "residual" service rather than a prescriptive one. Since the development of aids and tools can be labour and time intensive, competing against more primary activities of schools, generic tools that can be customised to the local situation can be provided as a resource. Such resources would be an inventory that would be "idea generators" that schools can choose according to the closest match to their local situation, once they have adapted them to their specific needs. The documentation on the success of the approach in best practices increases the confidence with which they can be applied. This type of resource would be particularly valuable where schools need a mix of strategies from which personalised approaches can be developed.

Ensuring equal opportunity for immigrant children through a package of inter-related strategies

Complex issues are rarely solved by simple solutions working in isolation. The challenge is to determine the best package for a systemic response and to ensure that all elements work together coherently to achieve positive results.

The responses required must build on a good understanding of the issues facing individual school authorities as well as the school system as a whole. A key issue is the high correlation between migrant and low socio-economic background. The National Agency for Education showed that "visible" school segregation with respect to socioeconomic background increased by 10 per cent between 1998 and 2004 because of the correlation between migrant background and socio-economic status (Skolverket, 2006c). This had a substantial negative impact on performance, even after controlling for socioeconomic status for students born outside of Sweden. The effect of migrant background for those born in Sweden continued to be small after controlling for socioeconomic background (Skolverket, 2006c).

The success of the Swedish school system ultimately depends on the solid performance of all children in every school in order to achieve the twin goals of excellence and equity. Skolverket (2006c) found that equity in achievement in the Swedish school system has fallen because of increasing school segregation

amplifying the impact of contextual effects with results being related to the school which the student attends. The school effects with respect to both socioeconomic and migrant status increased substantially between 1998 and 2004. The study points out that, if segregation continues to rise, this may diminish the roles that schools play in socialisation imparting common democratic values to all children.

Steering based on results in a decentralized school system

The challenge is to foster variation in approaches but to achieve equity in results through soft means such as the publication of comparative performance. While equity of results may be easier to achieve in a centralised system with a homogeneous population, it is natural in a decentralised system to vary approaches according to local needs.

Steering based on results by the national government may require hard decisions at the local level. For instance, school choice and performance information can expose failing schools which would require courage and political will to close them down.

The national results achieved through steering also benefits from a strong feedback loop. While inspections, evaluations and assessments can provide an overview, it is also useful to feed back to central government information on processes and transactions that affect efficiency and effectiveness of schools.

A variety of approaches are needed to disseminate information on performance, as well as information on how to achieve better performance. A key approach is "best practices" or even experiments or pilots. During the policy mission the experts spoke with stakeholders who identified pros and cons of best practices for absorbing evidence and applying it to local situations. Some questioned who would decide whether a practice was the "best". Others felt that sharing of experiences with new approaches was valuable if users decided the value for their own use. Many stakeholders mentioned the need for a common framework and language that would allow judgments regarding the success of the practice and the appropriateness for application at another setting. The demands included improved training, greater sharing of practices, more guidelines for local customisation and quicker responses to the results of evaluations. Exchanging information on practices could yield "early warning indicators", and facilitate early and intensive interventions and successful combinations of programs for wider application

Linking research to policy

The lack of solid evidence was a recurring theme during the policy review meetings with stakeholders in Sweden. Research is a process of knowledge creation, evaluation, consolidation and dissemination of resulting evidence. A weakness in any of these functions can diminish the construction of reliable evidence. In particular, there was a clear demand for evidence and more analysis from representative statistical data to support policy analysis, benchmarking, monitoring and comparisons.

However, it is important to be realistic about what can be accomplished with a closer link between research and policy. The impact of a reform generally can be observed at a national level five to six years after its introduction. Where inter-related or overlapping reforms are introduced in quick succession, it is practically impossible to disentangle the results of each reform, even with good data.

Sweden has used evidence extensively for problem identification but less so for the other steps of policy development. Major evaluations were standard practice, as for example, the evaluation of the pre-school reforms, ten years after their introduction. However, results of evaluations were not always incorporated into decisions about new program expenditures.

Greater exploitation of existing data for policy analysis could add value to them. There appears to be little secondary analyses of major data investments such as PISA. The Göteborg Longitudinal Database

with eight cohorts of 10 000 students, each with both background and sequential assessment data is useful resource with great potential. But it is underused for research on policy issues such as immigrant education. The existing data system could also benefit from additional policy driven data for the purposes of identifying emerging issues (growth and decline in the immigrant child population by geographic divisions) as well as for policy analysis and development.

Greater explanatory analysis of outcomes, tracking performance would be beneficial. The additional assessment in grade three, in addition to assessments in grades five and nine form a good foundation. While such an investment allows the tracking of children and comparison to aggregate performance, the absence of reliable background information and school data makes it impossible to explain results or to predict performance based on effect sizes of explanatory variables. There are individual statistics available thus far for students from year nine and upper secondary education and since 2009, data is collected for younger students. However, information on first- and second-generation immigrants is not always available due to privacy restrictions thus rendering it far less useful as a tool for analysing issues related to migrant education.

Stakeholders expressed a need for generaliseable and transferable policy and program information, based on well designed evaluation using *a priori* criteria for success. When new or complex policy and programs are initiated, the need for rigorous evaluation is higher, for reasons of government accountability, but also to facilitate the process of learning from mistakes and improving on initiatives. One missed opportunity for measuring the achievement of policy objectives linked to resources was the introduction of the innovative "comprehensive strategy" where agreements were made with 38 geographical areas by the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality. Twenty-seven indicators were developed after the fact rather than being designed to link specific performance goals for the indicators at the time of project initiation. It is particularly important to build in feedback and establish criteria for judging performance at the outset to maximise the chance that investments in one policy domain can pay off in another, or have spin-off effects in multiple policy domains. Without this structure and information results cannot be compared and an informed decision for national application would be difficult. The United States builds in mandatory evaluation with the introduction of new education initiatives.

Policy options

Improve information for informed choices by different levels of government, educators and parents

Unique responses to local context require the evaluation of available information on policy implementation and practice and its judicious application to local situations to create a customised solution. If such critical information is nationally available for informed decision making, it would exemplify the principle: "Globalize the evidence, localize the decision" (Eisenberg, 2002). The national government could work with municipalities to jointly review schools and municipalities that consistently engage in good practice, in order to develop a common framework within which such practices could be documented. Efficiencies can be gained in three ways from such a framework: by reducing duplication, by facilitating more informed decisions about which policies and practices are most likely to succeed in a particular local context, and by facilitating more general and faster adoption of proven approaches.

An explicit national framework for new practices and case studies will enable the systematic documentation of field tested practices using common categories and classifications of information and language (terms, definitions). This will ensure that the content and the implementation of such solution-oriented action research at the municipality, school and class room is documented in a commonly understood manner. This will facilitate comparisons to evaluate the new practices against the ones in use and to judge applicability to local conditions.

An example from the United States, which has a decentralised education system, can be useful for Sweden, in developing a tool such as an information framework at a central level. The "Best Practice Framework" was developed by the National Centre for Educational Achievement for the Just for kids initiative.[16] Best practice information is catalogued by type at the district, school and classroom level to reach different clients. The way high performing schools are identified is transparent. Users can set parameters and actually review only case studies in schools that have similar student populations as their own. Table 2.3 outlines the framework.

Table 2.3. Best Practice Framework

	District	School	Classroom
Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustment	Recognize, intervene, or adjust based on school performance	Recognize, intervene, or adjust based on teacher performance	Recognize, intervene, or adjust based on student performance
Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis, and Use of Data	Develop student assessment and data monitoring systems to monitor school performance	Monitor teacher performance and student learning	Monitor student learning
Instructional Programs, Practices, and Arrangements	Provide evidence-based instructional programs	Ensure the use of evidence-based programs, practices, and arrangements in every classroom	Use evidence-based programs, practices, and arrangements
Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building	Provide strong leaders, highly qualified teachers, and aligned professional development	Select, develop, and allocate staff based on student learning	Collaborate in grade level/subject teams focused on student learning
Student Learning: Expectations and Goals	Provide clear, prioritized academic objectives by grade and subject that all students are expected to master	Implement the district's written curriculum and ensure that all students achieve specific academic goals	Ensure the district's written curriculum is taught to and mastered by all students

Source: National Centre for Educational Achievement, 2009.

The search for new ideas by practitioners and policy makers could be made faster and surer with a one-stop website that could serve as a repository of the results of on-the-ground applications of policy and practice. A framework such as the "Best Practices Framework" illustrated above would help simplify the search for new ideas. Ideally, it is best when tools like this are managed by the system itself (the Ministry or the Board of Education). However, it could also be supported by a knowledge broker (though this would require dedicated resources). *Skolporten* (The School Portal), a private enterprise, appears to be filling a need for exchange.

Ownership and participatory approaches to mutual learning are crucial to engage schools and municipalities. The best practice framework encourages them to critically evaluate their own approaches with their consequences of success and failure and to open them for public scrutiny as well as wider testing in other contexts. Schools that are leaders in good practice can be identified for leading workshops and developing networks, such as the former project of idea schools. Regular exchanges could reduce the variation in results while encouraging experimentation. Furthermore, when a practice has been validated widely, it can be fed into teacher education programs for application anywhere in Sweden. Additionally, it can also be used as a means to advertise training opportunities and to share information about new techniques, or resources.

Embed quality enhancement in the accountability system

The "quality dialogues", where there is an open discussion about how outcomes were achieved (rather than only what was achieved) between administrators and principals and staff can be an excellent tool to embed quality enhancement into the accountability system. Municipalities should encourage the wider use of this tool to understand better the relationship between program initiatives and performance indicators, examining both positive and negative shifts. Such dialogues should be based on multiple sources of information including the tracking of students through assessments in grades three, five and nine, as well as the effectiveness of school processes in relation to the top performing schools with similar characteristics.

The combination of decentralization and varying local circumstances increases the need for common indicators of performance. But the national role of "steering by goals and results" appears to be undermined by a reluctance to choose performance indicators. This reluctance may be rooted in what appears to be fears (probably misplaced) that central "steering" implicit in such indicators impinges on local discretion. In fact, analysis of PISA data suggests that equity and quality objectives are served best by a combination of higher level steering towards common objectives, and lower-level autonomy over decisions about how to adapt to local circumstances in order to achieve common objectives (Wößmann *et al.*, 2007a and 2007b). If steering is to be successful, there should be consensus around the indicators at all levels of authority and there should be a mechanism by which descriptions of successful school and local management resulting in positive indicator growth can be disseminated

The indicator framework can be jointly developed for transparency and meaningfulness in relation to the expectations of performance at all levels of government. Such a strategy will facilitate "steering by results" on one hand and focus effort to perform better on the other. Since the indicators are intended not only to identify problems but the rate at which a turnaround is accomplished, a three-year average can be used so a single year of poor performance is not detrimental, and the improvement trend can be identified.

Quality enhancement should be considered an integral part of the school system accountability. Accountability processes have undergone a shift from a focus on controls and financial audits to an emphasis on improved performance and how they were achieved. [17] Thus, accountability at all levels should include a framework of quality and improvement indicators to ensure continuous improvement in student and school performance. Such a framework should be wider than input and output factors or assessments.

For instance, the Education Quality Indicators Framework of The Education Quality and Accountability Office of Ontario, Canada has a framework that consists of four groups of indicators, which are regularly published for the province:

1. Contextual factors: which describe the economic and social forces that have an effect on the education system, but are beyond the direct control of the system. These include enrolment, socio-economic status, country of birth and language background, categories of special needs and student mobility.

2. Input factors: which describe the resources that go into the system. They include student attendance, support personnel, teachers' qualifications and experience, accessibility and use of instructional materials, and use of computers in selected subjects.

3. Process factors: which describe the activities resulting from the use and management of the input indicators within the school. Among these process factors are teachers' professional development, planning, and collaboration.

4. Output factors: which describe students' development while they are still in school, and include students' attitudes and achievement results (EQAO).

Even with a sophisticated framework of indicators for accountability, the poor performance of migrants in a high performing school can be masked. The evaluation of performance of schools with migrant students should be undertaken in the context of "diversity indicators" which would facilitate the provision of targeted programs such as language support and induction programs. Such indicators could include:

- the amount of time taken for a migrant student of a certain age to perform as well as the national average;

- the performance gap at a certain age/grade;

- rates of learning gains when students experience problems;

- the rate of dropping out or shifting to non-academic education, etc.

The first two examples are used by many US states within the framework of federal legislation "No Child Left Behind" (OECD, 2007d).

Improvements in indicators can be encouraged through incentives and enabling strategies, such as special government grants and user-to-user exchanges. Such specialized indicators can be used in parallel with mainstream measures. Australia, for example has "Dare to Lead", a program for principals working to improve indigenous student outcomes, that has attracted 53% of the schools with such students. There are instructive examples in Sweden. "Alternatives for success" developed by the University College of Malmo and 15 schools with high proportions of immigrants has developed alternate methods for measuring success at school other than traditional academic knowledge. Such alternate measures validate alternative means of knowing and marketable non-academic competencies. However, sooner or later such locally adapted indicators have to be reconciled higher level criteria for measuring and judging performance.

In embedding quality improvement in the accountability system it is important that the possibility of failure be acknowledged, and that a certain amount be tolerated; otherwise the security of the status quo will outweigh the risk of innovation. But it is important as well that the cost of failure be reduced by making it easier to learn from mistakes.

Build capacity of municipalities and schools to successfully exercise autonomy and innovation

School autonomy should promote innovation. However, innovation will be burdensome and generate a smaller learning premium if key players do not have the capacity to develop and effectively use feedback and evaluation systems. While usually there is investment in teacher recruitment and training, two areas which receive less attention are the obligation for continuous improvement and the preparation of school leaders to manage such positive change. During the consultation, municipal school leaders in Sweden reported that there was no specialized training for them. The commitment to change and continuous improvement can be institutionalized as it has been in Singapore. The Ministry of Education has developed "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" to meet the need for a higher threshold of experimentation and innovation where the output is not always guaranteed or easily assessed. One of the four major thrusts is administrative excellence, promoted by leadership training using the school excellence model which relies on Gardner's multiple intelligences (Gopinathan, 2006). The Ministry of Education, working collaboratively with the National Institute for Education, has developed a leadership program, and funds potential school leaders to attend this program for a year. The flagship "Leaders in education program" is intended to help leaders "confront the cutting edge of leadership knowledge in education so that they can heighten corporate capability in schools and take their operations to new realms of excellence" (Choy *et al.*, 2003). Trainees are attached to a school during the entire program and they spend time each week carrying out a major innovative project. In Sweden, school principals would benefit from regular leadership training and peer-learning. This could be mandatory for new appointments, so that momentum is not lost.

The allocation of funding on the basis of multiple indicators is suggested instead of a single indicator, so that additional funding is available to schools on the basis of most relevant factors in combination such as proportion of students with low performance, with parents with low levels of education and different home language.[18] The Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands have adopted this multiple indicators' approach for their funding formula (Box 2.4.)

Box 2.4. Funding strategy on the basis of multiple indicators

The Flemish Community of Belgium has developed multiple indicators. They are designed to include:

- low socio-economic status;
- low performance (living in the area where a high level of grade repetition is observed);
- language spoken at home;
- low level of mother's education.[19,20]

In the Netherlands, a weighted funding system for primary schools has been in place since 1985. The target group has always been students from disadvantaged background, but until August 2006, extra weight was given to immigrant students as follows: 0.25 for native students whose parents have a low level of education; 0.9 for ethnic minority students whose parents have a low level of education. This meant that, primary schools received more money for immigrant students with poorly educated parents than for their native counterparts.

Since August 2006, students' immigrant status is no longer included in the weighting system. Instead, parents' level of education is the sole criterion and the following weights are used: 0.3 for students whose parents have no more than lower vocational training (LBO) or prevocational education (VBO) qualifications; 1.2 for students who have one parent with only a primary education and one parent with no more than a LBO/VBO qualification. The extra funding based on the weighting system goes directly to schools who can decide how to use the funds to support education for students with a potential educational disadvantage. Although an accurate evaluation on the effectiveness of the weighting system overall is not feasible due to the universal nature of the weighting system (*i.e.* there are no schools with similar students who do not receive additional funding), from the end of the 1990s schools receiving extra funds have shown improvement.

Source: OECD, 2010.

The interactive "school district demographic profile analyst to assess school and school district potential and effectiveness" developed by Proximity is a useful model tool. It allows comparative demographic information for individual schools to be linked to socioeconomic factors, including foreign born and limited English proficiency. These school tables can also be linked to individual student assessment data. This tool can generate customized tables for use by decision makers or for developing funding formulae.

However, such social adjustments to performance of schools, though valuable for gauging the net value added of schools after the fact, should not be used to institutionalise low expectations regarding future performance of students and schools by providing the basis for explaining away poor results. Rather, such evidence based resource planning should be used to help local decision making regarding allocation of resources for extra support to meet particular needs. Municipalities have the clearest understanding of the changing context in terms of student population and they should plan for extra resources to support integration related issues such as low teacher expectations of migrant or ethnic students, school selection policies etc, as has been demonstrated by Botkyrka.

Complex problems may require a bundle of policy initiatives working together, which could only be undertaken by collaboration of the national and municipal governments. A good example is the discussion of a set of initiatives, based on a major evaluation of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) conducted by the Swedish Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret, 2009). Results were compared between students enrolled in SFI before and after the introduction of a new curriculum in 2003, and found that it had no measurable impact on performance. The evaluation found that more than one in three students failed to

complete the program within three years. Even if students completed the curriculum, only half manage a passing grade at the highest course after the third year. The agency made some concrete suggestions including: better student placement in classes based on educational background; more individualized instruction and a Swedish curriculum related to careers. The government will support the improvement of qualifications of SFI teachers.

One option is for municipalities to plan across the entire school system to create "magnet schools" that encourage affirmative action (including targets or quotas) and school and classroom processes that result in better integration and more equitable student performance. Within the school board, such schools could work on areas of specialization such as math, science or ICT at upper secondary level, so that they can develop strategies that work for these disciplines.

Ensure data and research investments for evidence based policy and practice

Since immigrants are important for the Swedish economy and society, it is in the national interest to ensure that immigrant education policies are effective. Moreover, the collection of national data, the preparation of national guidelines and the conduct of evaluations to measure equity and performance are best done at by the national government. Therefore, the suggested policy options are directed mainly to the national government.

Before embarking on new data collection efforts it would be essential to review available statistics on immigrants in light of current demands on policy and practice. The process of language acquisition and immigrant integration in schools and communities takes years and therefore, reliable longitudinal statistics on immigrants, which allow the analysis of integration trajectories, will deliver necessary information. The ability to link student performance information from the third, fifth and ninth grades would be a good first step. Seven countries already link PISA data with longitudinal follow ups and the benefits have been reported. Because of the heterogeneity of immigrant backgrounds, languages and source countries as well as the environment faced by each wave of immigrants, it would be critical to have data on first and second generation immigrants, language spoken at home and education of parents before and after immigration. Issues of privacy could hamper the collection of data on ethnicity, however, solutions could be found. For example, the person number could be linked to the type of Swedish or language courses taken. For a full understanding of equity, it would be important to study intergenerational upward (and downward) economic and social mobility of immigrants. This would require linked data from the first and second generation of immigrants. Canada has benefited from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) which was designed to provide information on how new immigrants adjust to life in Canada and to understand the factors that can help or hinder their integration. The survey also has a child component (Statistics Canada).

Investments in data must be accompanied by support to research to exploit the data and glean lessons for policy and practice. The diversification of the type and producer of research is only possible by flexible supports. Financial support for researchers in universities, institutes and agencies to conduct research on existing data bases, such as those in Statistics Sweden, Göteborg Longitudinal database, TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA as well as data collected during evaluations, could be provided for commissioned policy relevant investigations. Researchers should also be encouraged to use formative and performance assessment data, pre and post tests of students to assess learning gain related to teaching practice, and longitudinal data. Syntheses, meta-analyses and systematic reviews should be supported as well as interdisciplinary research. Policies under consideration for 2009 are, time limits for time spent in SFI, monetary bonus for students with good performance as well as new national tests. The bonus will be tested in 15 interested municipalities which will be ideal for a random control experiment to provide solid evidence. Research funding should be contingent on a dissemination plan.

Since NAE has a broad mandate, it should maintain the capacity to commission internal and external research on the effectiveness of various school interventions (teacher in-service training) and programs (mother language tuition) as well as collaborative research with related organizations (Statskontoret, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, etc.). It could also encourage leveraging of other research funding by researchers as well as schools, universities and municipalities by offering top-up funding. A good example to be emulated is the NAE study "More languages – more opportunities", which had an impact on policy decisions related to mother tongue and Swedish language courses at school.

The link between research, policy and practice is a hard nut to crack despite the best of intentions. When new programs (such as the new expenditures for training of teachers for SFI or Boost for teachers) are submitted for funding approval, the design should include implementation and evaluation plans. Evaluation should include *a priori*, the choice of policy success indicators as well as process implementation indicators. This more transparent the approach, the easier it is to align all actors as well as a framework for accountability at all levels. Many good policies have failed due to poor implementation. In Australia, expenditure approvals for programs require a detailed well thought out implementation plan.

The teaching of education at universities would benefit from the conduct of research in schools and municipalities by university professors. Such research could be quantitative, qualitative or action research. The successful "research circles" bring university professors and teachers together for monthly sessions over a year for focussed learning with established outcomes. This co-learning model could result in quicker flow of teacher practice advances into teacher education. Co-funding by the state and municipalities is a possibility. Financial support could be provided for such research circles as well to teachers through vouchers or tax benefits.

Research related to practice at the classroom to improve effective learning and teaching strategies for immigrant students has no dedicated funding. Funding for such "action research" can result in legitimizing such research as well as providing a link to the accountability system. It is important to ensure that teachers and school leaders are the requisite skills and knowledge to conduct action research and identify the lessons, so as to increase the likelihood of realising the potential for improvement.

An open archival system of all research, well categorized according to user needs (rather than research needs such as research type or data source) with an easy to manage retrieval system will ensure wider use of research findings. Key words and a search function will be useful. School inspectorate evaluation and audit reports can be included as well. This could also be a bulletin board for Skolverket to post research gaps, research opportunities or ongoing research to facilitate the research agenda. In the English language, the Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) in the United States is a well recognized digital library of educational research, which vets material for quality and reliability. The "ERIC digests" provide a synthesis of recent research. A Swedish equivalent, without hindrances of restricted membership would be valuable. This could be operated by a knowledge broker or by a research institution on behalf of Skolverket.

Box 2.5. Policy recommendations: system management

- Improve information for informed choices by different levels of government, educators and parents.

    − Review schools and municipalities and develop a common framework for good practices and case studies to be documented.

    − Ensure ownership by schools and municipalities so that the framework will facilitate regular exchanges and wider application of good practices to manage variations.

- Embed quality enhancement in the accountability system.

    − Encourage a wider use of "quality dialogues" between municipalities and schools.

    − Build consensus around the common indicators of performance in order to "steer by goals and results".

    − Use the indicators to ensure continuous improvement in student and school performance.

    − Acknowledge the possibility of failure and be prepared to learn from mistakes.

- Build capacity of municipalities and schools to successfully exercise autonomy and innovation.

    − Provide leadership training for school leaders to carry out innovative projects.

    − Allocate funding on the basis of multiple indicators instead of a single indicator without institutionalizing low expectations for low-performing immigrant students.

    − Facilitate creating more "Magnet Schools" that encourage affirmative action for immigrant students.

- Ensure data and research investments for evidence based policy and practice.

    − Review available statistics on immigrant and longitudinal studies in light of current demands on policy and practice.

    − Provide support for researchers to exploit the existing data and student performance test results and to investigate the effectiveness of various school interventions.

    − Require a well-thought out implementation and evaluation plan for expenditure approvals for new programmes.

    − Expand the "research circles" as an effective co-learning model for researchers and teaching practitioners and fund capacity-building for action-research.

    − Build an open archival system of all research, which will include evaluation and audit reports.

NOTES

8.	Upper secondary education in Sweden is non-compulsory but free of charge. It aims to provide individualised learning pathways to meet different students' needs. There are 17 national programmes, among which 14 programmes are for vocational education, specially designed programmes, and individual programmes. Individual programmes are for those students who cannot start a national or specially designed programme immediately after the completion of lower-secondary education because they do not have passing grades or other reasons. Admission to upper secondary education is based on the students' academic record in ninth grade of compulsory education.

9.	See *http://modersmal.skolverket.se/engelska/index.php*.

10.	Although there are no national guidelines, the curricula for the different forms of education all emphasise the importance of multiculturalism, and teacher training is obliged to prepare teachers to apply the steering documents.

11.	The caution should be made in interpreting the figure in several ways. First, the figures for Sweden underestimate the hours of tuition. The hours are taken from the Swedish time plan that guarantees a lowest acceptable number of hours in tuition. Second, the time plan guarantees a certain number of hours for the entire period between 7 and 16 years; no separation is made between years. Third, Sweden probably has less hours in tuition than several other countries, but the figure is not reliable to estimate "by how many hours". In the highly decentralised education system, the number of instruction time varies between schools and municipalities.

12.	The Swedish School Inspectorate conducts "Quality Evaluation" to examine how well educational activities and schools are functioning in relation to the national curriculum and the criteria set up by the Inspectorate. For 2009, six topics have been selected as a focus, which includes "Education for Newly Arrived Pupils". Other topics include: teaching mathematics; teachers' level of education; dropout; education for pupils with disabilities; and adult education performance. The Swedish Association of Local Administrations and Regions (SALAR) looks at overall issues covering economies, employment, health, science and technology, environment, education, etc. On migrant education, SALAR's focus is "an effective introduction programme for newly arrived", which aims to include language support, knowledge about society, and support for finding a job for adult immigrants; and meeting specific needs for immigrant children.

13.	The former Swedish National Agency for School Improvement (closed in 2008) selected 20 pre-schools and compulsory schools with an aim to spread the good ideas about how to work successfully with diversity issues to other pre-schools and schools.

14.	The OECD "What Works" case studies on formative assessment (2005) have set out a formative assessment framework. It builds on six elements: 1) establishment of a classroom culture that encourages interaction and the use of assessment tools; 2) establishment of learning goals, and tracking of individual student progress toward those goals; 3) use of varied instruction methods to meet diverse student needs; 4) use of varied approaches to assessing student understanding; 5)

feedback on student performance and adaptation of instruction to meet identified needs; and 6) Active involvement of students in the learning.

15. The general guidelines have been also prepared specifically for EAL teachers (English as an Additional Language): "Guidelines for Teachers" for primary school teachers and "Integrating non-English speaking students into the school and curriculum" for post- primary teachers.

16. NCEA's Just for the Kids (JFTK) initiative began more than ten years ago and continues to provide the public with important information about school success. Today, JFTK web-based resources have grown to include, College and Career Readiness (CCR) School Performance Reports, interactive lists of Higher Performing Schools, Higher Performing School profile reports, and Self Reflections spotlighting successful practices shared by educators from Higher Performing Schools.

17. Earlier work of the OECD attempted to identify system level variables that were associated with high quality and more equitable education outcomes as measured by PISA. It underlined the importance of central steering and evaluation regimes (such as central exit examinations), and concluded more broadly that strong accountability mechanisms combined with local autonomy were associated with better quality and greater equity of outcomes (Wößmann *et al.* 2007a and 2007b). Subsequently the OECD has broadened its work examining evaluation and assessment to encompass a broader agenda that goes beyond accountability and focuses on school improvement (OECD, 2008b and 2008c).

18. In Sweden, the national government does not allocate funds to schools. Allocation of funds is the responsibility of municipalities, and the models they use vary.

19. Low socio-economic status is identified by students' eligibility for scholarship that depends on family income. The Ministry of Flemish community has implemented a family-income-based scholarship scheme in which 25% of students in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools receive a scholarship.

20. The Flemish decree can be found at *http://jsp.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2007-2008/g1667-5.pdf* and the parliamentary documents can be found at *http://jsp.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2007-2008/g1667-1.pdf*.

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ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

National policy context

Sweden has a highly decentralised school system with a high degree of autonomy for both municipalities and individual schools. Even though the state is responsible for ensuring equal quality nationally, the organisation of schools and methods used varies significantly between different municipalities schools. This system is meant to allow schools to adapt education to local conditions and to make the most possible use of the knowledge and competence of teachers and school leaders.

The Swedish school system is currently undergoing several major reforms. The curriculum and syllabi for compulsory education are about to be changed in order to make the education goals more clear to students, parents and teachers. Evaluation of students' knowledge will be strengthened further by the introduction of national goals in the third year of compulsory education, the diversification of grade levels and the development of the individual development plan. Teacher training and qualification is being revised and a major reform of upper secondary education is planned for 2011. A renewal of the Education Act is also planned to take effect in 2010.

Purpose of the review

Country specific priority questions need to be in line with the overarching policy question of the Thematic Review on Migrant Education: what policies will promote successful education outcomes for first and second generation migrants? To make the country review visits as focused and relevant as possible, the review will focus on:

1. Policies that will effectively help low-performing immigrant students raise their learning outcomes.
2. Induction programmes for newly arrived immigrant students, particularly students who arrive in the country during the later years of their school career.
3. Ensuring strategies favouring school choice and school autonomy do not undermine equity of education outcomes of immigrant students.
4. Interventions to prevent immigrant students from dropping out from upper-secondary school and increase the completion rates.

Scope

The level of education will include: pre-primary, primary and secondary education with a specific focus on upper-secondary with respect to the drop-out issues.

Main questions to be addressed

- How do the educational factors relate to immigrant students' completion rates and better performance?

- What are the major challenges in raising student performance and improving completion rates? Do current reform(s), comprehensive and universal measure(s), and targeted intervention(s) address the challenges sufficiently – what is working/not working?

- Are there international insights in overcoming the challenges from which your country might draw? If so, what appear to be the principal benefits and advantages of these approaches to your country? And what are the most feasible strategies to overcome the challenges in a manner that respects the culture, values and traditions of your education system? Which are the most important challenges requiring urgent attention?

- To implement such strategies, what initiatives might be pursued by the state, municipalities, schools and other key stakeholders in your country?

Specific questions to be addressed

- What policies and practices can effectively raise language proficiency of immigrant students (especially for those who arrive at their later age) and their parents (immersion, bilingual education or mother tongue education at school or language support programmes outside school)?

- What policies and practices can effectively support immigrant students and their children other than language proficiency?

- What are the effective preventive interventions for potential early school leaving immigrant students? What are the effective outreach strategies to provide second chance to those who have dropped out and encourage them to resume learning or find employment?

- What policies and practices can ensure good learning environments and school responsiveness to cultural diversity to better meet the needs of immigrant students: e.g. teachers; curriculum adaptation and pedagogy; school leadership, and intercultural understanding of the native peer students, etc.?

- What kind of evaluation and monitoring tools may help raise student performance of immigrant students (and also their native peers)?

- What kind of strategies may help manage the balance between the central government and decentralised municipalities and schools?

Timeline

- Agreement on the terms of reference – December 2008.

- First draft – September 2009

- Comments by the country – October 2009

- Validation of the revised country note by the country – March 2010

- Release of the country note – March 2010

ANNEX B: POLICY REVIEW VISIT OF SWEDEN

Programme for Fact Finding Mission to Sweden 17–21 November 2008

Monday 17 November

Discussions at the Ministry of Education and Research – Drottninggatan 16, Stockholm

The Country Background Report	Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education) Mr. Jacob Johansson (MoE – division for upper secondary ed.) Ms. Helena Bjelvenius (MoE – international secretariat)
Integration and the Swedish Education System	Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education) Mr. Christer Toftenius (MoE – Division for Schools – pre-schools) Mr. Jacob Johansson (MoE – Division for Upper Secondary Ed.) Ms. Helena Bjelvenius (MoE – international secretariat) Mr. Mats Björnsson (MoE – unit for policy analysis) Ms. Eva-Lotta Johansson (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality) Mr. Mats Wennerholm (National Agency for Education) Ms. Eva Wirén (National Agency for Education)
Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)	Mr. Jacob Johansson (MoE – Division for Upper Secondary Ed.) Ms. Nina Andersson (SALAR) Mr. Roy Melchert (SALAR) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education)
Statistics	Ms. Christina Sandström (National Agency for Education) Mr. Kenny Pettersson (Statistics Sweden) Mr. Mats Björnsson (MoE – unit for policy analysis) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education)
National Schools Inspectorate	Ms. Marie-Hélène Ahnborg (Swedish Schools Inspectorate) Ms. Cecilia Danielsson (MoE – Division for Upper Secondary Ed.) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education)
Preparation for school visits Tuesday–Thursday	Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education)

Tuesday 18 November

Visits to schools outside in Botkyrka municipality	Mr. Erik Nilsson (Botkyrka municipality – head of administration for preschool and compulsory education) Mr. Arne Stade (Botkyrka municipality – head of administration, upper secondary education) Ms. Annika Löthagen (Botkyrka municipality) Mr. Eric Rudholm (principal of Fittja compulsory school)

	Ms. Susanna Åhs (assistant principal of Fittja compulsory school) Mr. Alf Solander (principal of Tumba upper secondary school) Ms. Gunilla Blomqvist (assistant principal of Tumba upper secondary school) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education) …and various teachers and students.

Wednesday 19 November

Visits to schools in Södertälje	Mr. Thomas Johansson (chairman of the local board of education) Ms. Anita Elénius (head of administration, preschool and compulsory education) Mr. Joakim Graffner (head of administration, upper secondary education) Mr. Gabriel Bozyel (administration Södertälje municipality) Mr. Mohamed Zaalouk (administration Södertälje municipality) Ms. Eva Holmerin (municipal coordination of mother tongue tuition) Ms. Irene Byström (principal of Röstberga pre-school centre) Ms. Lena Eriksson (assistant principal of Ronna compulsory school) Ms. Annika Setterquist (principal of Ekenbergska upper secondary school) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Mr. Christer Toftenius (MoE) …and various teachers and students.

Thursday 20 November

Multicultural research centre, Botkyrka	Mr. Leif Magnusson (head of the centre) Mr. Léon Rosales René (researcher) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE)
General integration issues	Mr. Tommi Teljosuo (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality) Ms. Johanna Fryksmark (MoE, division for adult education) Mr. Mårten Svensson (MoE, division for adult education) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE)
Trade union representatives	Ms. Anna Jändel-Holst (National Union of Teachers, LR) Ms. Ann-Kristin Larsson (Swedish Teacher's Union, LF) Ms. Lena Linnerborg (The Swedish Association of School Principals and Directors of Education) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE)

Friday 21 November

Closing discussions at the Ministry of Education and Research Discussion about findings	Ms. Eva Durhán (MoE – Head of Division for Schools) Mr. Mats Miljand (MoE – Head of Division for Upper Secondary Ed.) Ms. Elin Landell (MoIG – Head of Division for Integration) Mr. Anders Widholm (MoE) Mr. Jacob Johansson (MoE) Ms. Johanna Fryksmark (MoE)

Policy Mission 2–5 March 2009

Mr. Anders Widholm (Ministry of Education and Research) and Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education) participated throughout the week.

Monday 2 March

Meeting with Municipalities and Schools	Ms. Birgitta Alriksson (municipality of Malmö) Ms. Lena Eriksson (Ronnaskolan compulsory school, Södertälje) Ms. Elisabet Mau (Stenhagsskolan compulsory school, Stockholm) Ms. Annika Setterquist (Ekenbergska upper secondary school, Södertälje) Mr. Anders Widholm (Ministry of Education and Research) Ms. Ann-Kristin Boström (National Agency for Education)
Meeting with local administration representatives	Ms. Margot Edholm (Piteå) Mr. Erik Nilsson (Botkyrka) Mr. Matz Nilsson (Malmö)

Tuesday 3 March

Meeting with The National Agency for Education	Ms. Helén Ängmo (vice head of the agency) Ms. Ingrid Lindskog (head of unit – pre-school and compulsory school) Ms. Christina Sandström (head of unit – statistics) Mr. Mats Wennerholm (mother tongue tuition etc.)
Meeting with The National Schools Inspectorate	Ms. Marie-Hélène Ahnborg
Meeting with SALAR	Ms. Nina Andersson Mr. Roy Melchert Ms. Kristin Karlsson
Meeting with Trade Unions	Ms. Anna Jändel-Holst (National Union of Teachers, LR) Ms. Ann-Kristin Larsson (Swedish Teacher's Union, LF) Ms. Lena Linnerborg (The Swedish Association of School Principals and Directors of Education)

Wednesday 4 March

The Ministry for Education and Research	Mr. Bertil Östberg (state secretary for pre-schools and schools) Ms. Amelie von Zweigbergk (state secretary for adult education) Ms. Eva Durhán (head of division for schools) Mr. Mats Miljand (head of division for upper secondary education) Mr. Geoff Erici (head of division for adult education) Mr. Kjell Nyman (head of unit for policy analysis) Ms. Ursula Armbruster (division for schools) Mr. Jacob Johansson (division for upper secondary education) Ms. Johanna Fryksmark (division for adult education)
Meeting with NGO's	Mr. Miguel Benito (The Immigrant Institute) Mr. Henrik Nilsson (The Swedish Red Cross) Mr. Niklas Delander (Organisation of Student Unions – SECO) Mr. Walter Jakobsson (Swedish Student Councils – SVEA, vice chairman) Mr. Tobias Jobring (Swedish Student Councils – SVEA) Ms. Linda Eriksson (The Parents Alliance, vice chairman) Ms. Johanna Martin (The Parents Alliance)

The Ministry for Integration and Gender Equality	Ms. Catharina Bildt (political advisor) Ms. Elin Landell (head of division for integration) Ms. Eva-Lotta Johansson (division for integration) Mr. Tommi Teljosuo (division for integration)

Thursday 5 March

Meeting with Researchers and representatives from Teacher Training	Ms. Aina Bigestans (National centre for Swedish for immigrants and Swedish as a second language, Stockholm University) Ms. Lisa Öberg (Södertörn University College) Ms. Anna Hagborg (Södertörn University College) Ms. Ingrid Hårsman (Stockholm University, Department of Special Education) Ms. Oraib Qumhawi (Stockholm University)
Meeting with Researchers	Ms. Jenny Berglund (Södertörn University College) Ms. Kerstin von Brömsen (Gothenburg University) Ms. Marie Carlson (Gothenburg University) Ms. Joanna Giota (Gothenburg University) Ms. Trinidad Rivera (National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools) Mr. René León Rosales (Multi Cultural Centre Botkyrka) Ms. Lena Thorsson (National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools) Mr. Mats Björnsson (Ministry of Education and Research – unit for policy analysis) Ms. Maria Caryll (Ministry of Education and Research)

ANNEX C: RECENT MAJOR REFORMS OF THE SWEDISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

Teachers for special needs education

In April 2007, the government decided to bring back the degree in teaching for special needs education which has been abolished in the early 1990s. A special needs teacher is specialised in teaching students with special needs, not only students with disabilities. As of autumn 2008, universities and colleges have once again started training these teachers who are meant to have special knowledge in teaching children to read, write and do maths.

Goals in year 3

In May 2008, the government decided to enhance the already existing goals for the pupils to reach at the end of year five and nine by establishing goals for grade three. These new goals are to be in use from fall semester 2008. National tests in year three (Swedish/SSL and maths) are also mandatory starting in the spring of 2009.

Written assessments in the individual plan

The current government decided to enhance the individual plans that schools are required to draw up for all pupils. The previous government instituted a ban against written information resembling grades in these documents. Grades were not supposed to be set until the eighth school year. The new government decided to lift this ban in 2008. The schools now also have to provide written information about the pupil's results in relation to the national goals to make the pupils results clearer for the parents.

A Boost for teachers

From 2007-11 the government will allocate SEK 3 billion (Swedish kronor) to in-service training and other initiatives for teachers, entitled are teachers that have a teaching exam. The focus is further development in subjects and, included, didactic perspectives and skills. Teachers can keep 80% of their salary, while furthering their education in a subject that they teach. Municipalities and independent schools are entitled to a government grant to compensate for the salary to the participating teachers, equivalent to 70% of the teacher's salary during this period. In February 2009, The Swedish Agency for Public Management (*www.statskontoret.se*) published a report on how to evaluate the boost for teachers.

Agency Reform

In spring 2008, the government decided to establish a new agency, The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (*www.spsm.se*), which was founded on 1 July. The agency took over tasks that previously were handled by two other agencies. The National Agency for School Improvement was closed on 1 October 2008 and most of its tasks and projects transferred to the National Agency for Education (*www.skolverket.se*). At the same time, inspection was transferred from the National Agency for Education to a new agency , The National Schools Inspectorate (*www.skolinspektionen.se*).

Targeted government grant for support of reading, writing and counting

From October 2008 until the end of 2011, Municipalities and independent schools have the possibility of applying for a government grant to strengthen their development of teaching reading, writing and maths. The grant is administered by the National Agency for Education and is mainly designed for teaching children in the early years of compulsory education.

New Education Act

An internal workgroup at the Ministry of Education and Research is preparing a proposal for a new Education Act. A decision by parliament is expected in the spring of 2010 for the act to take effect on 1 July 2010. The changes in the new education act are expected to be mainly structural. Some changes will be presented regarding conditions for independent schools.

Reformed training for School leaders

Since 2003, the National Agency for School Improvement was responsible for arranging voluntary training for school leaders. In the autumn of 2007, the Ministry for Education and Research presented a proposal for a new training programme for school leaders (Ds 2007:34) which was decided in April 2008. The training programme is meant to improve school leader's knowledge of the national goals for education and school leader's knowledge about evaluation and monitoring of pupils' results. The government wants the programme eventually to be mandatory. However, the implementation of the new programme has been delayed because the decision by the NAE to commission training from certain universities and university colleges has been appealed and will be decided in court.

Swedish for Immigrants

Immigrants in Sweden are entitled to take free courses in Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). There are new syllabi for SFI in place since 1 January 2009. The ambition is to make the goals for the education more clear and to increase the national equity of education. The NAE is also working on developing new national tests for SFI. These are expected to be introduced during 2009. An evaluation of SFI (not of the reform) by the Swedish Agency for Public Management was published in February 2009.

Curriculum reform

In April 2007, a government commission came to the conclusion that the national goals for the education in curriculum and syllabi needs to be clearer. In a proposition to parliament, the government suggests that curricula and syllabi for each type of school be integrated. The goals set for each type of education also needs to be clearer. In January 2009, the government gave the task to the National Agency for Education to develop new syllabi.

New grading scale

Since 1994 the grades are goal based, which means that assessment is made in comparison with national goals and criteria for each subject. Grades are set by the teacher, and include one of the following possible grades: Pass (G), Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass with Special Distinction (MVG). Before 1994, the grading was relative (in comparison to other students) and had a numeric grading scale of five steps (1–5).The government plans to introduce a new grading scale after the curriculum reform (in autumn 2011) and to start with giving grades with year six (instead of year eight). This is not yet decided and may be put in place the earliest in 2012.

Evaluation of education policy

In October 2008, the government appointed a commission to revise current resources for evaluation within the area of education. The commission shall map existing resources and judge the need for future evaluation. The commission are also to propose whether evaluation is to continue within the current agency structure or if a new agency is to be introduced. It shall also propose ways in which relevant research can be mapped and disseminated.

Reformed upper secondary education

In March 2008, a government commission presented a proposal for a reform of upper secondary education. The commission basically covers all upper secondary education issues, from eligibility rules to how qualifications and graduation from upper secondary school shall be designed, as well as issues relating to upper secondary adult education. The Commission has given particular emphasis to vocational education. The proposals shall lead to higher quality in both vocational programmes and programmes that prepare students for further study. The proposal includes stronger national steering of the contents of upper secondary education. The commission proposed that individual programmes be abolished. Instead, the commission proposes different alternatives. The proposals are being discussed in the government offices; a decision is expected during 2009.

Introduction of newly arrived

Municipalities are responsible for assisting newly arrived immigrants. Immigrants are often offered introduction programmes consisting of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) and contacts with the labour market. A government commission in 2008 suggested changes in how introduction of newly arrived is to be regulated, a proposal to the parliament is expected in spring 2009.

New Teacher Training

In December 2008, a government commission presented proposals for a New Teacher Training. The present teacher education programme, with a single teaching qualification, dates from a reform in 2001. In several evaluations, the education programme has been criticised for a lack of sufficient scientific grounding, excessive freedom of choice for students and the absence of important areas of knowledge. The proposal suggests the introduction of two single degrees for primary and secondary education teachers. The commission proposes also that training of mother tongue teachers is resumed. Since 1991, no national training of mother tongue teachers has been organised. The proposals are being discussed in the government offices, and the proposal of the government may not necessarily fully correspond to the commission's proposals. Thus, the new teacher training will be in place at the earliest from autumn 2010.

Qualifications for teachers

In May 2008, a government commission presented proposals for new rules for qualifications for teachers as well as a system of authorisation for teachers. The proposals were to make it clearer what qualifications were needed for teachers in certain subjects and types of education. The commission also proposed a system of authorisation and different career paths for teachers. The proposals are being discussed in the government offices, and the proposal of the government may not necessarily fully correspond to the commission's proposals.

Schooling for "Hidden Children"

In May 2007, a report was presented by the committee on schooling for children in families who have gone into hiding to avoid the enforcement of a refusal-of-entry or expulsion (SOU 2007:34). The

committee proposed that legislation be introduced to give these children the right to education in the state school system for children and young people on largely the same terms as children resident in Sweden. The committee also proposed that these children should have the right to take part in public preschool and school-age child care activities. The issue is currently being discussed by the government and no decision has been taken.

Greater educational emphasis in preschool and preschool boost

The Government wants to strengthen the educational emphasis of preschool in order to better prepare children for school. The objectives in the preschool curriculum are to be made clearer, particularly when it comes to children's linguistic and mathematical development. It is the Government's ambition to have preschool teachers in every preschool and for preschool teachers to be given overall responsibility for preschool children's education. Finally, with a special continuing education initiative – the Boost for Preschool – preschool teachers and childcare workers will be given the opportunity to enhance their skills. The proposals will cost a total of SEK 600 million during the period 2009-11. The task was given to the NAE in September 2008, it is unclear when the new curriculum can be in place.

Table C.1. Summary of major reforms

Title	Timeline	Objectives	Further Description
Teachers for Special Needs Education	April 2007	To re-establish a degree in teaching for special needs education (previous degree has been abolished in the early 1990s)	Universities and colleges training teachers who are meant to have special knowledge in teaching children to read, write and do maths for children with special needs. As of autumn 2008, universities and colleges have once again started training these teachers who are meant to have special knowledge in teaching children to read, write and do maths.
Goals in Year 3	May 2008	To set goals or standards at an earlier year of education.	Government enhancing already existing goals for pupils to reach at the end of year five and nine by establishing goals for grade three. These new goals are to be in use from fall semester 2008.
Written Assessments in the Individual Plan	2008	To enhance the individual plans that schools are required to draw up for all pupils lifting the previous ban against written infor-mation resembling grades in these documents.	
A Boost for teachers	Autumn 2007 (funding will be allocated until 2011)	To further develop teachers' skills and didactic perspectives in subjects.	Government will allocate SEK 3 billion to in-service training and other initiatives for teachers, entitled are teachers that have a teaching exam. Teachers can keep 80% of their salary, while furthering their education in a subject that they teach.
Agency Reform	Spring 2008	To reorganise institutions in order to handle tasks more effectively	The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools took over tasks that previously were handled by two other agencies. The National Agency for School Improvement was closed and most of its tasks and projects transferred to the National Agency for Education. Inspection was transferred from the National Agency for Education to a new agency, The National Schools Inspectorate.
Government Grant for Support of Reading, Writing and Counting	October 2008 to end 2011	To strengthen municipalities and independent schools' development of teaching reading, writing and maths.	Municipalities and independent schools have possibility of applying for government grant. The grant is administered by the National Agency for Education designed for teaching children in the early years of compulsory education.

New Education Act	Spring 2010 to July 2010	To reorganise structural elements of the Swedish educational system and regulations for independent schools	An internal workgroup at the Ministry of Education and Research preparing a proposal for a new Education Act. A decision by parliament is expected in the spring of 2010 for the act to take effect on July 1 2010.
Reformed Training for School Leaders	April 2008	To improve school leader's knowledge of the national goals for education and school leader's knowledge about evaluation and monitoring of pupils' results.	In the autumn of 2007, the Ministry for Education and Research presented a proposal for a new training programme for school leaders (Ds 2007:34). The government wants the programme eventually to be mandatory.
Swedish for Immigrants	January 2009	To make the goals for education more clear and to increase the national equity of education.	These are expected to be introduced during 2009. An evaluation of SFI (not of the reform) by the Swedish Agency for Public Management was published in February 2009. One finding of the evaluation is that more than a third of SFI participants have obtained no certificate three years after their course started. The evaluation investigated the impact of introducing a new syllabus. The results, controlled for student composition and in external factors, prove to be broadly equivalent with previous outcomes. The survey showed municipalities respond to individual students' needs and capacity in different ways and to varying degrees. Most course providers offer no vocationally oriented SFI teaching. In many municipalities, there is no scope for part-time or distance instruction although this is often essential to enable SFI students with jobs to complete their studies. The overall assessment of the Agency for Public Management is, in many municipalities, there is a need to develop more individualised SFI. Refugees who have arrived in Sweden recently are often given higher priority than other SFI students in terms of trainee placement, validation of qualifications and guidance. The evaluation shows more than six out of ten SFI providers regard it as difficult or very difficult to recruit teachers with the desirable skills, and the proportion of teachers with sufficient subject proficiency is low. There is a risk of an inadequate supply of teachers. The NAE is also working on developing new national tests for SFI.
Curriculum Reform	To be in place from autumn 2011	To make the national goals for the education in curriculum and syllabi clearer.	In January 2009, the government gave the task to the National Agency for Education to develop new syllabi. In a proposition to parliament, the government suggests that curricula and syllabi for each type of school be integrated. The goals set for each type of education also need to be clearer.
New Grading Scale	To be in place from autumn 2011	To enhance the grading scale up to six steps and to start grading at year six	Since 1994, grades are goal-based, meaning assessment is made in comparison with national goals and criteria for each subject. Grades are set by the teacher and include: Pass (G), Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass with Special Distinction (MVG). The government plans to introduce a new enhanced grading scale (A–F, where F is equivalent of not reaching the national goals) after the curriculum reform (in autumn 2011) and to start giving grades in year six (instead of year eight).
Evaluation of Education Policy	October 2008	Assess existing resources for policy evaluation and map need for future evaluation	The government appointed commission to map existing education resources and judge the need for future evaluation. The commission is also to propose whether evaluation is to continue within the current agency structure or if a new agency is to be introduced. The commission shall also propose ways in which relevant research can be mapped and disseminated.

Reformed Upper Secondary Education	March 2008	To prepare students for further study. To increase the status of vocational training and to counteract the dropout rates from vocational training.	The proposals for reform of upper secondary education shall lead to higher quality. The proposals are being discussed in the government offices; a decision is expected during 2009. The proposal includes a clear demarcation line between programs for academic preparation and vocational training. Two upper secondary exams are introduced: academic preparation and vocational training. The proposal also seeks to reduce possibilities for municipalities and schools to create local courses and programs. The reform also includes a change of the criteria for qualifying for a program of academic preparation.
Introduction of Newly Arrived	Spring 2009	To strengthen state responsibility for introduction of newly-arrived immigrants.	A government commission in 2008 suggested changes in how introduction of newly arrived is to be regulated, a proposal to the parliament is expected in spring 2009.
New Teacher Training	December 2008	To enhance scientific grounding, reduce freedom of choice for students and to include important areas of knowledge.	The proposal by a government commission for a New Teacher Training suggests the introduction of two degrees for primary and secondary education teachers. The commission proposes that training of mother tongue teachers is resumed. The new teacher training will be in place at the earliest from autumn 2010.
Qualifications for Teachers	May 2008	To make it clearer what qualifications were needed for teachers in certain subjects and types of education.	The proposals presented by a government commission for new rules for qualifications for teachers as well as a system of authorisation for teachers. The proposals are being discussed in the government offices, and the proposal of the government may not necessarily fully correspond to the commission's proposals. The commission also proposed a system of authorisation and different career paths for teachers.
Schooling for "Hidden Children"	May 2007	To give these children the right to education in the state school system for children and young people on largely the same terms as children resident in Sweden.	The issue is currently being discussed by the government and no decision has been taken. The committee on schooling for children in families who have gone into hiding to avoid the enforcement of a refusal-of-entry or expulsion (SOU 2007:34) proposed that legislation be introduced. The committee also proposed that these children should have the right to take part in public preschool and school-age child care activities.
Greater Educational Emphasis in Preschool and Preschool Boost	To be defined during 2009, unclear when to be put in place	To strengthen the educational emphasis of pre-school in order to better prepare children for school. To have preschool teachers in every preschool and for preschool teachers to be given overall response-bility for preschool children's education.	The objectives in the preschool curriculum are to be made clearer, particularly when it comes to children's linguistic and mathematical development. The proposals will cost a total of SEK 600 million during the period 2009-11. The task was given to the NAE in September 2008, it is unclear when the new curriculum can be in place.
Preschool Boost	To be defined during 2009, unclear when to be put in place	To enhance the skills of preschool teachers and childcare workers with a special continuing education initiative.	

ANNEX D: LANGUAGE SUPPORT POLICIES

Table D.1. Existence of an explicit curriculum for the most common language support programmes

2003

Country	Sub-national entity	Primary education		Lower secondary education	
		Immersion with systemic language support	Immersion with a preparatory phase of language support	Immersion with systemic language support	Immersion with a preparatory phase of language support
Australia	New South Wales	Yes	a	Yes	Yes
	Queensland	No	No	No	No
	Victoria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Austria	Vienna	Depends on the school	a	Depends on the school	a
	Vorarlberg	Depends on the school	a	Depends on the school	a
Belgium	French Community	a	No	a	No
Canada	British Columbia	No	a	a	Yes
	Ontario	No	a	Yes	a
Denmark		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland		No	No	No	No
Germany		Yes, in some *länder*	No	No	No
Luxembourg		No	No	No	Yes
Netherlands		Yes	a	No	No
Norway		Yes	m	Yes	m
Spain		a	a	No	a
Sweden[1]		Yes	No	Yes	No
Switzerland	Canton Berne	No	No	No	No
	Canton Geneva	No	a	No	No
	Canton Zurich	No	No	No	No
United Kingdom	England	No	a	No	a

1. A curriculum exists for the school subject *Swedish as a second language* which may be implemented in different types of programmes

Immersion with systematic language support: Students with limited proficiency in the language of instruction are taught in a regular classroom. In addition, they receive specified periods of instruction aimed at the development of language skills in the second language, with primary focus on grammar, vocabulary, and communication rather than academic content areas. Academic content is addressed through mainstream instruction.

Immersion with a preparatory phase of language support: Most students in the programme have limited proficiency in the second language. They initially receive some instruction through their native language, but there is a gradual shift toward instruction in the second language only. The goal of the programme is to make the transition to mainstream classrooms as rapidly as possible.

Source: OECD, 2006.

OECD Reviews of Migrant Education
SWEDEN

Net migration to the OECD has tripled since 1960. There has been extensive research on the successful integration of migrants into labour markets, but very little research at the international level focusing on the education outcomes of their children and the effectiveness of education policy interventions. In many OECD countries, immigrant students tend to have more restricted access to quality education, leave school earlier, and have lower academic achievements than their native peers. Therefore, improving the education of immigrant students is often high on policy agendas.

The OECD Review of Migrant Education was launched to help policy makers to design and implement migrant education policy successfully in their countries. It will provide solid facts about access, participation and student performance of immigrant students in comparison with their native peers and identify a set of policy options based on evidence of what works and examples of experience from many countries.

By international standards, Sweden has an inclusive, democratic education system. However, immigrant students, on average, have weaker education outcomes than their native peers at all levels of education. The performance gaps are especially pronounced for first-generation immigrants (*i.e.* students who were not born in Sweden, nor were their parents born in the country), especially those who arrived at a late age. The toughest challenges appear to be access to national programmes and completion in upper secondary education.

Sweden is undertaking a wide range of universal and targeted measures to improve the situation of immigrant students. Nevertheless, more efforts can be made to ensure successful implementation of migrant education policy, especially in the highly decentralised system. There is scope to:

- Prioritise training of all teachers – not only language teachers but subject and classroom teachers – to be more responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of students.

- Provide leadership training for school leaders to implement a "whole-school approach" to migrant education.

- Strengthen the induction programmes for the newly arrived students, especially those who arrived at an older age.

- Support capacity building of municipality leaders so that they can successfully exercise autonomy and innovation in migrant education in their own local contexts.

- Prioritise alleviating negative effects of concentration on schooling outcomes with the whole-of government approach.

- Better use the available data to advance evidence-based policy and practice.

OECD is conducting policy reviews of migrant education in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. This report is one in the series of country policy reviews and provides country-specific diagnosis and policy recommendations. The overall findings of the OECD Reviews of Migrant Education will be published in 2010 as a concise, action-oriented handbook for policy makers.

Background information and documents are available at www.oecd.org/edu/migration.