Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

A snapshot of equity and inclusion in OECD education systems: Findings from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey

OECD Education Working Paper No. 284

Samo Varsik (OECD)

This working paper has been authorised by Andreas Schleicher, Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD.

Samo Varsik, samo.varsik@oecd.org

JT03510022

OECD EDUCATION WORKING PAPERS SERIES

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The Strength through Diversity Policy Survey collected information from 34 education systems on their policies and practices for equity/inclusion. The Survey revealed a great variation among the definitions of equity/inclusion, as well as among the definitions for the analysed dimensions of diversity. Education systems identified equity/inclusion as policy priorities in 2021/22 and, accordingly, changed their curriculum strategies and tailored the provision of instructional and non-instructional support to students. Education systems provided guidelines to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities, and to help stakeholders respond to the diversity of student populations. Distribution of resources accounted especially for students with special education needs. Most education systems did not implement policies to promote diversity among school staff. Monitoring of diversity was unbalanced and relied heavily on academic outcomes. Few education systems used the term intersectionality in their jurisdictions, although several had policies that target the intersection of student groups.

Table of contents

Tables

Figures

1 Introduction

On 15 March 2022, the Strength through Diversity Project (hereinafter "Project") asked OECD countries to respond to the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey (hereinafter "Survey"). The Survey aimed to collect comparative information on education systems' policies for equity and inclusion, and provide a unique opportunity to compare education jurisdictions' definitions, data collection policies and practices in the areas of equity and inclusion. No such comparable data is regularly obtained from OECD countries.

There are important differences between countries with respect to the formulation of policies to promote equity and inclusion in education. However, detailed information on policy approaches to equity and inclusion in education is limited. Furthermore, the Project takes a holistic view to analysing equity and inclusion by considering five policy areas: governance, resourcing, developing capacity, promoting school-level interventions, and monitoring and evaluation. Information on country-level practices in each of these areas is often limited and unbalanced. The main objective of the Survey was to take stock of current policies and practices for each of these strands. Efforts were made to create a comprehensive data collection. However, the findings cannot be regarded as exhaustive of the topics covered due to various limitations, such as Survey length, international comparability, and the balance between clarity and concision.

The Survey was divided in 4 modules with 39 items. The first three modules were content-related: module 1 regarded definitions and information on data collection; module 2 concerned the policy framework of the education system; and module 3 included a couple of items about intersectionality. Module 4 contained a few follow-up questions on the Survey. Countries were asked to fill out the Survey considering lower secondary education (ISCED 2) as the education level of reference.

Countries in which education is a devolved responsibility were asked to fill out a separate response for each sub-national entity. Some countries decided to follow this advice (Belgium and the United Kingdom), while others collated the information and sent one response (e.g., Australia, Canada and the United States). Given the combination of national and sub-national entities in the Survey responses, we refer to the responding participants as "education systems".

Education systems were responding to the Survey in an electronic format using LimeSurvey throughout March, April, May and June with a couple of answers received in July and August. In total, 34 education systems sent their responses: Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England (United Kingdom), Estonia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, Finland, France, the French Community of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), Norway, Portugal, Scotland (United Kingdom), the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye and the United States. Six OECD countries did not participate in the Survey: Austria, Costa Rica, Germany, Hungary, Israel and Poland. Given that policy contexts change in time, it is important to regard this information as representative of the year 2022 (school year 2021/22) in the participating education systems. In some cases, education systems provided additional information using the available text boxes or via email. These are used to complement and specify quantitative information. Whenever these replies are used, they are quoted.

Despite a wide coverage of OECD education systems, not all items were equally responded to. Therefore, caution needs to be exercised when generalising these results beyond the education systems covered in the responses.

The Project takes a holistic approach to research the ways in which education systems can support learning and well-being outcomes of diverse populations. This strand of research also covers how education systems can be more inclusive (Cerna et al., 2021[1]) and is the focus of the Survey. To approach this line of research, the Project developed a framework that is built around six dimensions of diversity within education systems. These dimensions of diversity are also widely present in the Survey:

- immigrant background;
- ethnic groups, national minorities and Indigenous peoples background (Indigenous peoples are regarded separately in the Survey);
- gender;
- gender identity and sexual orientation (gender identity is not part of the Survey);
- special education needs (SEN); and
- giftedness.

Furthermore, there are two overarching factors, socio-economic status and geographic location, that affect all of the dimensions above (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Dimensions of diversity and overarching factors
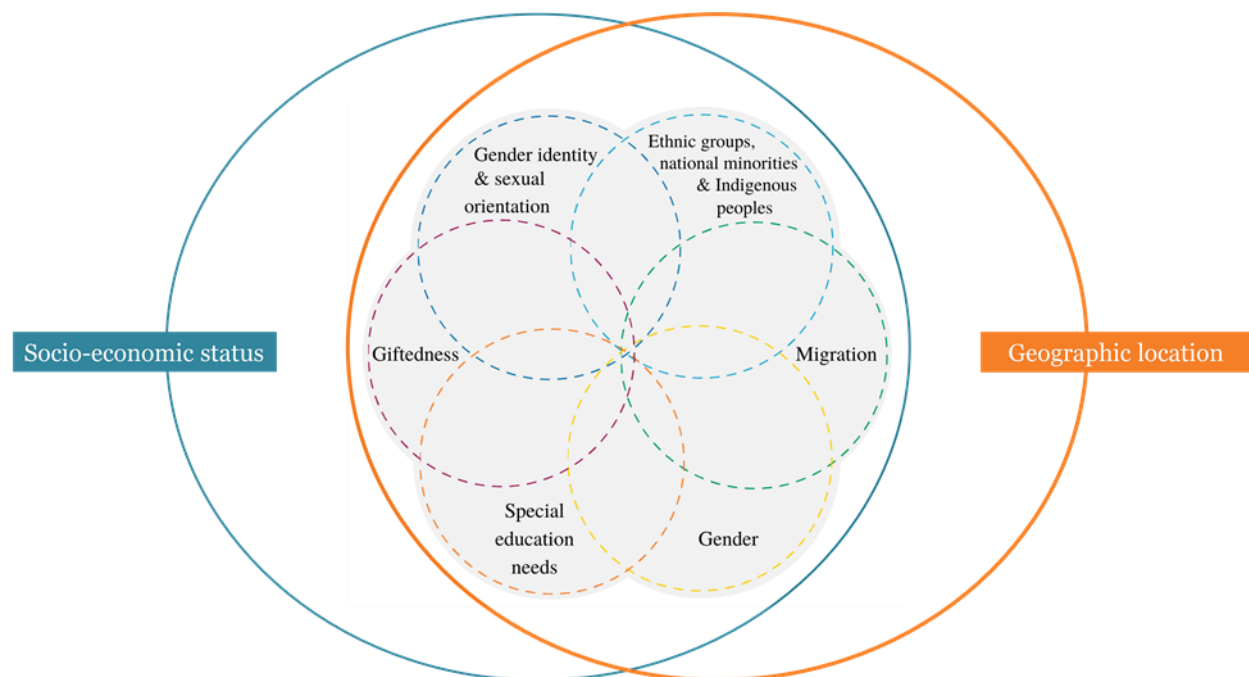
Source: Cerna et al. (2021[1]), Promoting inclusive education for diverse societies: A conceptual framework, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/94ab68c6-en.

There are many possible intersections between dimensions of diversity, but also with overarching factors such as socio-economic status and geographical location (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Identities overlap and intersect and form new, more specific identities with new implications. Thus, one module of the Survey was devoted to explore policies around intersectionality in education.

2 **Governing education systems to promote equity and inclusion in education**

Governance and design of education systems can impact equity and inclusion in a context of increasing diversity. Governance can relate to system features, such as educational goals and student learning objectives (including curriculum policies) and the regulatory framework for diversity and inclusion (e.g., recognition of diversity and the need for specific provisions, rights of specific student groups). Another aspect concerns the responsibilities for and the administration of diversity (e.g., distribution of responsibilities, stakeholder engagement, organisation and supervision) and the education provisions to account for diversity including diversity offerings, learning environment, choice and selection (Cerna et al., 2021[1]).

Definitions and regulatory framework

Policies to promote equity and inclusion in education are developed within regulatory frameworks, both inside and outside the education system. Countries typically establish legislation to protect the rights of individuals within society, such as the right to non-discrimination, and institute special provisions for specific groups of individuals in recognition of diversity and distinct needs (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). At the heart of any regulatory framework are definitions of the main concepts: equity, inclusion and the dimensions of diversity. The Survey therefore asked for education systems' review of guidelines, legislation and regulations that frame such definitions.

Most education systems that responded to the Survey had a definition of equity and/or inclusion embedded in legislative framework or as part of documents published by a national (or sub-national) authority (Figure 2.1). The concept of equity or inclusion was defined in 32 education systems. In fact, 28 education systems defined both concepts. Finland and New Zealand did not define either equity or inclusion.

Figure 2.1. Definitions of equity and inclusion (2022)
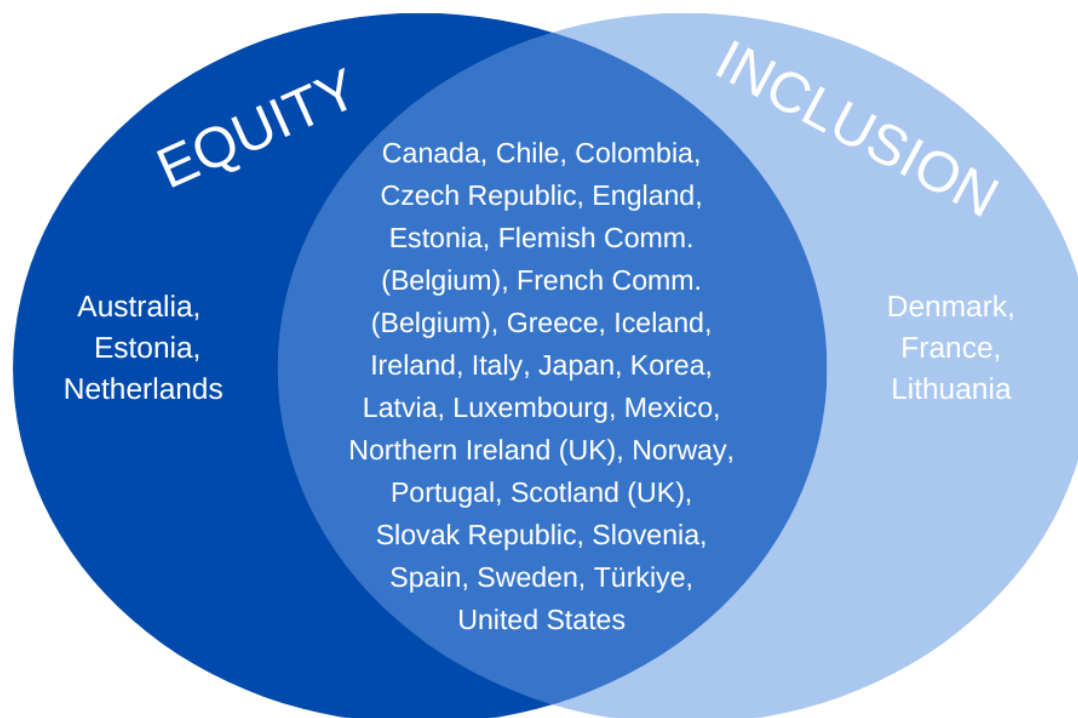
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "If available, please provide an English translation of the definition of equity in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by a national (or sub-national) authority" and "If available, please provide an English translation of the definition of inclusion in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by a national (or sub-national) authority.". Thirty-four education systems responded to these questions.

Definitions of equity

A deeper analysis of the definitions of equity revealed a wide-ranging array of approaches. While most education systems were able to reflect on the concept of equity, in several of them equity was not defined *per se,* but its principles were embedded in various legislative acts or documents and has been described and defined depending on the purpose. Such approach was found in Australia, Canada[1], Ireland, Japan and the United States.

The concept of equity was often part of legislation/constitution that defined equal access to education. For instance, Article 26 of the Constitution of Japan states that "all people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law". Indeed, equity was often defined (or indirectly defined) as part of legislation or constitution. This was the case in England (United Kingdom), Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden and Türkiye.

---

[1] Definitions of equity vary by provinces and territories.

Despite a wide range of definitions, some common features can be found (Figure 2.2 and Annex A). A common theme was the focus on diversity and different student characteristics. In these systems, 23 in total, the definitions highlighted that education should be provided without prejudice. In Estonia, for example, "everyone has the right to education and is equal before the law and may not be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other views, property or social status, or on other grounds"[2]. Related to this was the concept of discrimination that was brought forward in 12 systems. The definition in Colombia, for instance, "focuses on promoting the comprehensive development and participation of all people, in a learning environment without any discrimination or exclusion, guaranteeing, within the framework of human rights, the support and reasonable adjustments required, reducing the gaps through practices, policies and cultures that eliminate existing barriers in the educational context".

Figure 2.2. Key elements in definitions of equity (2022)

Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "If available, please provide an English translation of the definition of equity in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by a national (or sub-national) authority.". Thirty education systems provided a definition. The size of the words is proportional to the number of education systems that mentioned the keyword based on the analysis of the definitions.

A closely related concept to equity is that of equality of opportunity (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[2]). This is also reflected in the national definitions with 15 education systems underlining the importance of ensuring equality of opportunity between students. Under this concept, educational outcomes should be a result of actions in individuals' control and not of circumstances beyond their control so that they can reach their full potential (Ibid). In Slovenia, for instance, as outlined in the white book on education "equity in education is understood as equality of educational opportunities, which are essential for all citizens in contemporary societies and based on liberal and democratic principles to have an equal opportunity to succeed in life" (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2011[3]). Another common concept to define equity was the universal provision of education (in nine education systems). The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, for example, stipulates that "everyone has the right to education and is equal before the law and may not be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or

---

[2] The information in quotation marks throughout this working paper was provided by education systems in the Survey text boxes or via email.

other views, property or social status, or on other grounds." In fact, education "for all" was also often highlighted in the definitions of inclusion.

Definitions of inclusion

Definitions of inclusion varied significantly across education systems (Figure 2.3 and Annex A). However, by far the most common element in the definitions was the provision of education for all students (in 20 education systems). In Scotland (United Kingdom), "inclusive education is an approach that recognises and values the diversity of learners and is able to respond flexibly to that diversity in such a way that barriers to participation, learning and achievement are removed and a high-quality education for all is developed and sustained." Indeed, 12 education systems highlighted access or participation in their definitions of inclusion.

Figure 2.3. Key elements in definitions of inclusion (2022)

Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "If available, please provide an English translation of the definition of inclusion in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by a national (or sub-national) authority.". Thirty education systems provided a definition. The size of the words is proportional to the number of education systems that mentioned the keyword based on the analysis of the definitions.

In 11 education systems, the definition of inclusion focused on students with SEN specifically (either exclusively or in relation to other groups). In Ireland, for instance, "a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this [Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs] Act, or (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated."

Other elements mentioned in the definitions of inclusion included those of diversity, discrimination/exclusion, mainstream education, support/accommodation and equality of opportunity. As can be seen, a wide range of concepts was used to describe inclusion in OECD education systems. Furthermore, some key elements in the definitions of inclusion overlap with those of equity and there is no clear distinction between the two concepts.

Equity and inclusion as priorities

While equity and inclusion were identified as priorities in all education systems that provided an answer, there was an equal split in whether there is or is not a distinction between the concepts. In Colombia, the Czech Republic, England (United Kingdom), Finland, France, French Community of Belgium, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), Portugal, Scotland (United Kingdom), Spain, Sweden and the United States, equity and inclusion were identified as priorities in the education jurisdiction *with* a distinction between the concepts. In Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Türkiye, equity and inclusion were identified as priorities *without* a distinction between the concepts. These results are generally in line with answers to the definitional questions about equity and inclusion: there is a wide variety of definitions, no clear distinction between the concepts and an overlap between the definitions of equity and inclusion.

Definitions of dimensions of diversity

In addition to the concepts of equity and inclusion, the Survey also explored definitions for the individual dimensions of diversity (Figure 2.4). Most education systems defined the concept of special education needs (31), immigrant background (28), socio-economic disadvantage (21), ethnic groups or national minorities (20), gifted students (19) and specific geographic areas (14). LGBTQI+ students and students belonging to Indigenous communities were defined in ten and eight education systems respectively. The following sections provide more information about how education systems defined these characteristics.

Figure 2.4. Definitions of dimensions of diversity (2022)

Number of education systems that indicated that they attribute an official or administrative term/name or have definitions of the following groups of students (ISCED 2)
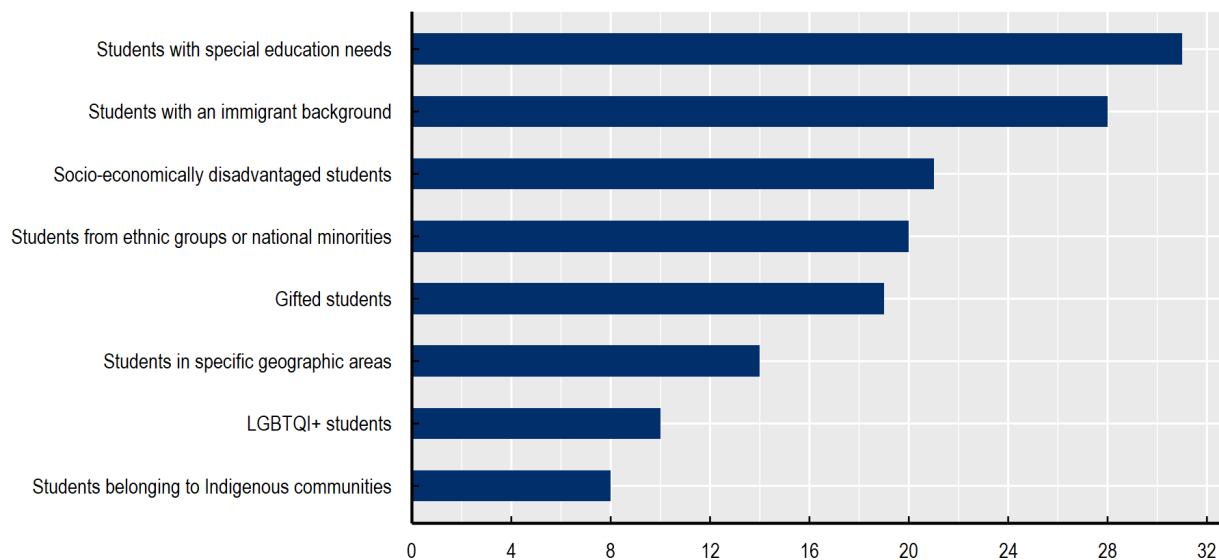
Note: This figure is based on collated answers to the questions from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Please select all the student groups to which your education jurisdiction attributes an official or administrative term/name. This administrative term/name does not have to be embedded within the education jurisdiction, but can be part of other (e.g. social, health) jurisdictions." and "If available, please provide English translations of formal definitions for the following groups at ISCED 2 level. Such definitions can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of documents published by a national (or sub-national) authority.". Thirty-three and thirty-one education systems responded to these questions respectively. Response options were not mutually exclusive. Some education systems use terms that have been proxied for the categories considered by the Strength through Diversity Project, although their definitions do not overlap exactly.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

Students with special education needs

Countries defined student groups considered by the Project to varying extents (Figure 2.4 above). Most education systems (31) provided a definition for student with SEN. However, significant differences exist with respect to how "special education needs" are defined. In some education systems, the definition was limited to disabilities. In fact, sometimes, such definitions were provided by institutions outside of the education system. For instance, in Australia, "the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides all people with disability with information and connections to services in their communities including schools, as well as information about what support is provided by each state and territory government." Several education systems defined specific typologies (often limited to disabilities) of SEN. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, for example, students with disabilities were classified into eight types based on the nature of the disability. Other countries with a similar approach were England (United Kingdom), Greece, Iceland, Korea, Mexico, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the United States.

Many other education systems used the term more broadly to refer to any kind of students' needs not necessarily tied to a particular disadvantage or disability. Indeed, such needs-based systems are becoming more prevalent in the OECD and can be seen in Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, the French Community of Belgium, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland (United Kingdom), Spain and Sweden. In the Czech Republic, for instance, "a student with special education needs is a person who, in order to fulfil [his]/her educational opportunities or to exert or exercise [his]/her rights on an equal basis as others needs the provision of support measures. Support measures are necessary adjustments of education and school services corresponding to the state of health, cultural environment or other living

conditions of the child, pupil or student." It should also be noted that in many of these systems, many of the student groups that follow were incorporated under the "needs-based" label of a student.

Students with an immigrant background

Students with an immigrant background were defined in 28 education systems (Figure 2.4 above). In some, the definitions were tied to the country of birth (or country of birth of their parents), nationality, citizenship, or asylum-seeking or refugee status (Chile, Colombia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Türkiye). Other education systems focused on students with insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction (Australia, Canada, Estonia, Iceland, Japan, Norway and the United States), though some of them did not label them as students with an "immigrant background". Finally, several education systems used broader categories (e.g., "multicultural students" in Korea) or a combination of the above to define students with an immigrant background (the Czech Republic, Finland, the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, Korea and Portugal). For instance, in the Flemish Community of Belgium "students who were born in another country or of whose (grand)parent(s) were born in another country, students with a language other than Dutch, residents in asylum centres, students with immediate and temporary protection [and] nationality of students" were all considered.

Socio-economically disadvantaged students

While only 21 education systems indicated that they attribute an official or administrative term/name or have definitions of socio-economically disadvantaged students (Figure 2.4 above), other questions in the Survey revealed that almost all (31) education systems estimated the socio-economic background of students (Figure 2.5). Some education systems estimated it based on a threshold for family income levels (4), by parents' employment status/education level/standardised set of home possessions (3), or by whether families are eligible or receive social assistance benefits (2). However, in most education systems (18), a combination of these factors was used to estimate the socio-economic background of students.

Other modalities used by countries not mentioned above include the socio-economic development of the school area (Australia (to a limited extent), Finland, Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, Ireland, New Zealand[3] and Scotland (United Kingdom)). In Finland, for instance, the definition considered the "unemployment rate, share of 35–60-year-old people with no higher than basic education, [and the] share of people with mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish." The Flemish Community of Belgium considered whether the students live outside of the family, whether they are part of a Travelling community and whether their first language is the language of instruction in addition to mother's education level. Whether or not a student receives a school allowance, too, forms part of the (combined) definition of socio-economically disadvantaged students. Lithuania defined socio-economically disadvantaged students as those "living in families at social risk". In the Czech Republic, school leaders reported the numbers of disadvantaged students. These disadvantages can be related to various cultural environments or living conditions that prevent the fulfilment of students' educational opportunities. In Portugal, mothers' literacy levels were used to estimate the socio-economic background of students. In several systems, the estimation of socio-economic disadvantage remained at the discretion of municipal authorities or individual schools.

---

[3] The current decile system is under review and expected to be changed.

Number of education systems that use the following modalities to estimate the socio-economic background of students (ISCED 2)

Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Which modalities are used to estimate the socio-economic background of students at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-three education systems responded to this question. The option "Other" is not mutually exclusive with any of the other options.

Students from ethnic groups or national minorities

More than half (20) of education systems that participated in the Survey indicated that they attribute an official or administrative term/name or have definitions of students from ethnic groups or national minorities (Figure 2.4 above). A closer inspection of the definitions from education systems revealed these common elements:

- In several education systems, ethnic groups or national minorities were narrowed to Travelling populations including Roma. This was the case in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Ireland and Portugal. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, for instance, these were defined as "Rom, Manush, Voyageurs and other people with a nomadic culture, [and] Roma".
- In several other education systems, officially recognised national minorities (often also including Roma populations) were used. This was the case in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States ("ethnic groups/national minorities"). In Latvia, for example, "a national minority means citizens of Latvia who differ from Latvians in culture, religion or language, who have traditionally lived in Latvia for generations, who consider themselves to belong to the Latvian state and society, and who wish to preserve and develop their culture, religion or language".
- Chile and Mexico specified Indigenous populations (further elaborated on below).
- Other approaches were also used. For instance, in Italy, ethnic groups or national minorities were defined as "students in areas where minority languages are protected, and Roma, Sinti and Caminanti students" and in Japan as "Korean residents".

Gifted students

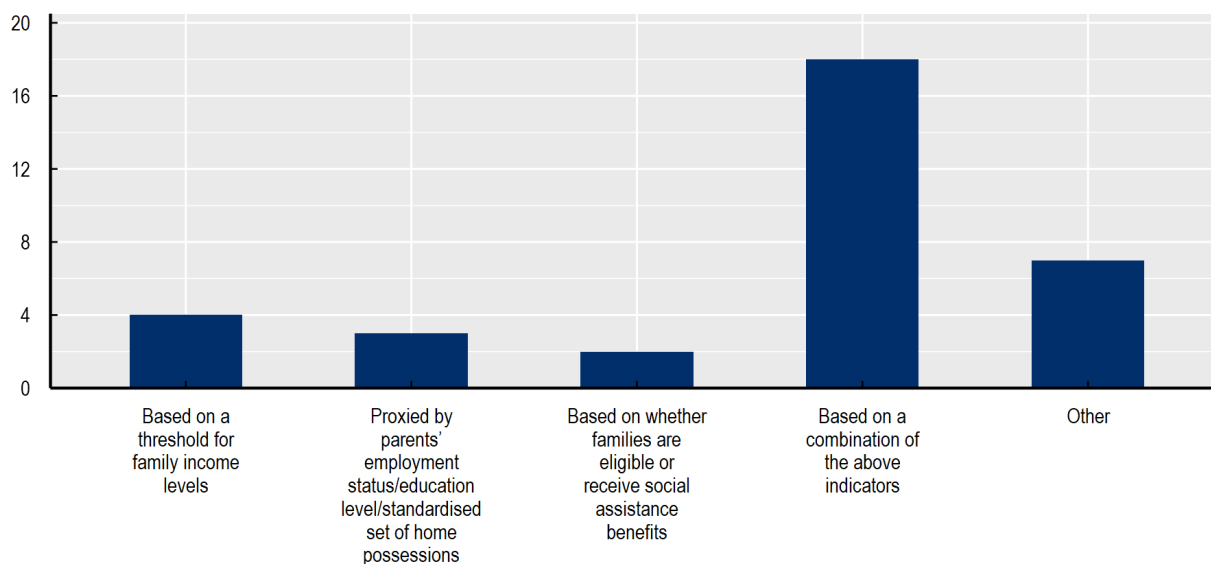There is a wide variety of definitions for the concept of giftedness (19 education systems indicated that they attribute an official or administrative term/name or have definitions of gifted students) (Figure 2.4 above). While some education systems did not use the term "gifted", they still operationalised the concept using other terminology. Most of the education systems highlighted that these students need opportunities for enrichment that go beyond those of the general school population. While a deeper analysis of the definitions revealed some key characteristics, these should be viewed with caution and there can be an overlap in the characteristics for individual education systems:

- The Flemish Community of Belgium, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Spain used the terms "ability", "high cognitive skills", "exceptionally able" and combinations or variations of these to describe giftedness. Some of these education systems also specified that these students belong to the top 10% in terms of cognitive skills or abilities. At the same time, several of these education systems stressed that the 10% benchmark should not be used too strictly and that these students are evenly distributed in the population. Furthermore, they often highlighted that the definition should not be limited to measurements of intelligence.

- The French Community of Belgium, Italy and Norway defined gifted students in terms of their high potential. The French Community of Belgium also highlighted that "it is the interactions between biological, psychical, affective, family and environmental factors that will influence the development of these potentialities".

- Korea, Türkiye and the United States used the word "talent" or its variations. In Türkiye, for instance, a talented individual is "an individual who learns faster than his/her peers, is ahead in creativity, art and leadership capacity, has special academic abilities, can understand abstract ideas, likes to act independently in his/her interests, and performs at a high level".

- The Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia highlighted a range of areas in the development of gifted students, such as intellects, arts and sport talents. For instance, in the Slovak Republic a "gifted student is a student who has above-average abilities in intellects, arts or [a] sports field".

Students in specific geographic areas

Most education systems targeted students from different geographical areas. These geographic areas can have varying definitions (Figure 2.6). In most education systems, the geographical areas were defined in terms of their remoteness (12), followed by their socio-economic or development level (9). Nine education systems also pinpointed regions/provinces/states to target students in specific geographic areas. Chile, Lithuania and Mexico targeted students in urban vs. rural areas, Portugal and Spain students in low density areas, and Norway the Svalbard and Sami students in specific administrative areas. England (United Kingdom) designed the Levelling Up Premium policy to increase teacher recruitment and retention in certain geographical areas (Education Investment Areas).

Number of education systems that target students from different geographical areas based on the following definitions (ISCED 2)
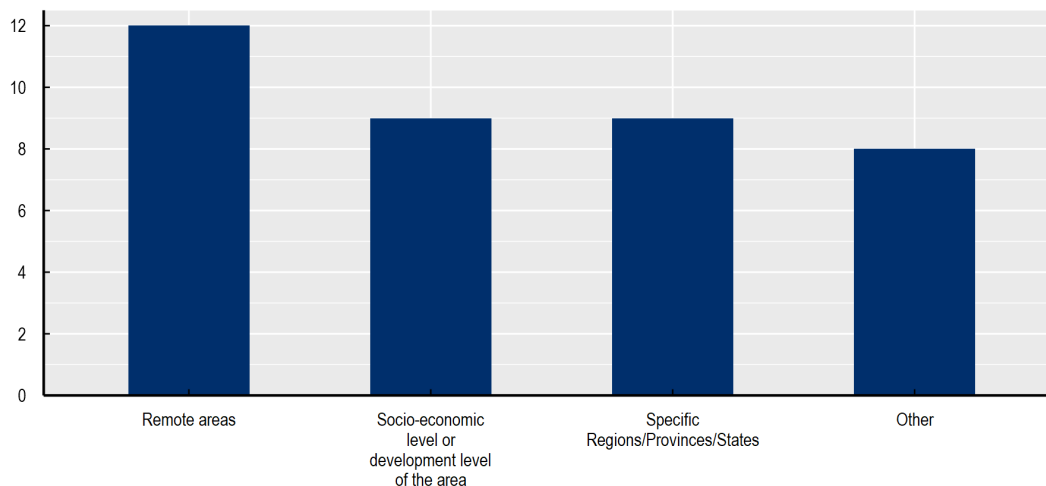
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "If your education jurisdiction targets students from different geographical areas at ISCED 2 level, how are these areas defined?". Thirty-four education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.

LGBTQI+ students

Ten education systems indicated that they attribute an official or administrative term/name or have other definitions of LGBTQI+ students (Figure 2.4 above). Several education systems highlighted that the principles of equity, inclusion and/or non-discrimination extend to all students and thus also to LGBTQI+ students (Chile, Flemish Community of Belgium and Norway). For instance, in Chile "Law No. 20,845 on School Inclusion that regulates the admission of students … [e]liminates arbitrary discrimination in the admission process for boys, girls and students. Therefore, it obliges educational establishments to ensure the full inclusion in the educational system of all, and by extension of LGBTI children and students." In Spain, the national Education law explicitly mentions LGBTQI+ students: the first Article establishes "as a principle of the education system the quality of education for all students, without any discrimination based on birth, sex, racial, ethnic or geographic origin, disability, age, illness, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation or sexual identity, or any other personal or social condition or circumstance. The second Article establishes that the Spanish educational system will be oriented towards achieving an education that respects fundamental rights and freedoms, equal rights and opportunities between men and women, and [an] equal treatment and non-discrimination of people based on birth, racial or ethnic origin, religion, belief, age, disability, sexual orientation or identity, illness, or any other condition or circumstance."

Students belonging to Indigenous communities

In total, eight education systems indicated that they attribute an official or administrative term/name or have definitions of students belonging to Indigenous communities (Figure 2.4 above). As mentioned before, several education systems viewed Indigenous populations as part of ethnic groups or national minorities. Some education systems had clearly defined groups of people that belong to Indigenous populations (Australia, Norway and Sweden). In Australia, for instance, these are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In Norway and Sweden, these are Sami students. Other educations systems remained broad in their definitions and did not specify the groups (Chile, Mexico and the United States).

Curriculum strategies

The curriculum is a key means for enacting principles and rights of inclusion and equity within education systems (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). The type of curriculum taught in education systems and the flexibility to organise curriculum so that it responds to the needs of students can greatly affect whether a system is equitable and inclusive. This includes the choice of subjects, textbooks and topics covered in grades as well as the flexibility at the school level to adjust the curriculum to local needs (Ibid). The Survey focused on several curriculum strategies to encourage the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion.

Figure 2.7 shows that most education systems used at least one curriculum strategy to encourage the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion. Incorporating the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion as a cross-curricular theme or competency was the most common approach used in 26 education systems. Integrating the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion into one or several subjects was used in 25 education systems. In Greece, for instance, the principles and values are fostered in Skills Labs "with programmes implementing human rights, volunteering, mediation, inclusion, mutual respect and diversity." In Luxembourg, "the principles and values of diversity and inclusion are promoted via a compulsory course called *Vie et Société*".

Figure 2.7. Curriculum strategies (2022)

Number of education systems that use the following curriculum strategies to encourage the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion (ISCED 2)
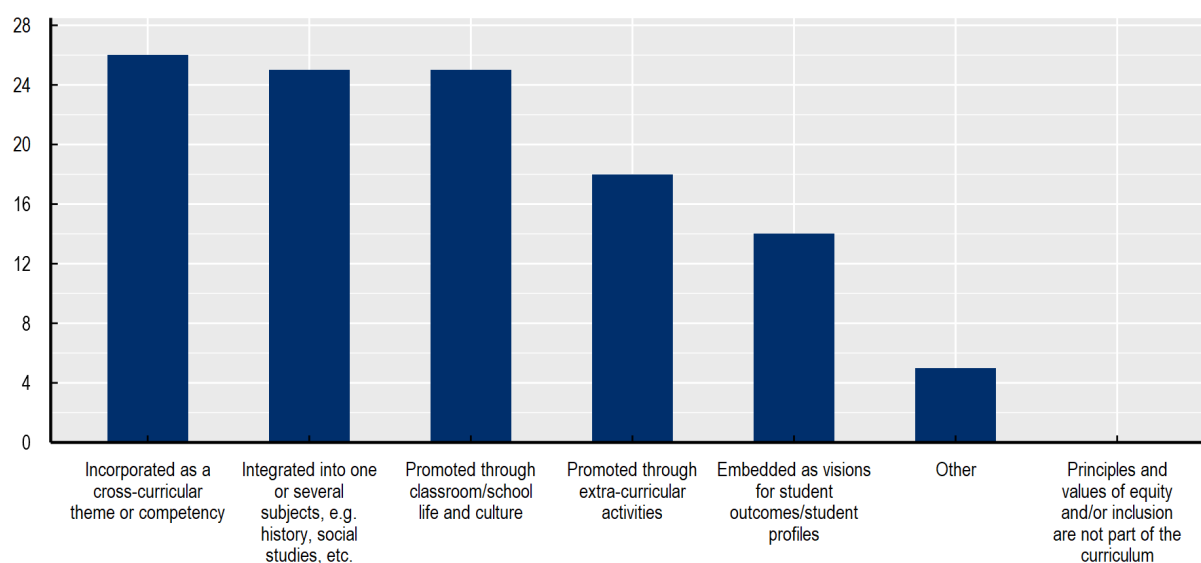
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Which curriculum strategies are used in your education jurisdiction to encourage the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-two education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

Several education systems promoted the principles and values through classroom/school life and culture (25). In Denmark, "ensuring an inclusive learning environment as well as teaching differentiation is a basic framework for the organisation of teaching and classroom/school life and culture." The principles and values of equity and/or inclusion were not promoted through extra-curricular activities to the same extent (18 education systems). Finally, 14 education systems embedded the principles and values as visions for student outcomes/student profiles. Policies that promote inclusion through the curriculum might,

among other elements, include the flexibility for accommodations and modifications (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). These are summarised in Section 5.

Learning settings

Education provision to account for diversity in education can have a variety of forms. The Survey considered seven types of education settings:

- Mainstream classes: regular classrooms within regular school settings;
- Mainstream classes with indirect support: the student is placed in a mainstream class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialised consultative services;
- Mainstream classes with resource support: the student is placed in the mainstream class for most or all of the day and receives specialised instruction, individually or in a small group, within the mainstream classroom from a qualified teacher;
- Mainstream classes with withdrawal assistance: the student is placed in the mainstream class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50% of the school day, from qualified teachers;
- Dedicated classes with partial integration: the student is placed in a dedicated class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards, for at least 50% of the school day, but is integrated with a mainstream class for at least one instructional period daily;
- Dedicated classes (full-time): the student is placed in a dedicated class outside of a mainstream class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards, for the entire school day;
- Dedicated schools: the student can apply to specific schools outside of mainstream school settings.

The Survey respondents were asked to evaluate which of these settings are provided for the student groups considered by the Project.

Figure 2.8 shows each student group on the vertical axis and each type of learning setting on the horizontal axis[4]. The size of the bubbles illustrates how many education systems responded positively to the provision of that learning setting for that particular student group. The numbers of education systems are also indicated inside the bubbles. Thus, large bubbles on the left-hand side indicate that many education systems provided dedicated settings. Large bubbles on the right-hand side indicate that more education systems provided mainstream settings. To the very right are standard mainstream classes in mainstream schools.

For all student groups, except for students with SEN and to some extent students belonging to Indigenous communities, learning settings are skewed towards mainstreaming students. In fact, no more than six education systems provided dedicated schools for students from any of the groups apart from students with SEN. Indeed, except for students with SEN and students with an immigrant background, no more than five education systems provided dedicated classes. For all student groups, except for students with SEN, most education systems provided full-time mainstream classes, followed by mainstream classes with resource or indirect support.

In respect to students with SEN, the picture is mixed. All types of learning settings were common in the education systems participating in the Survey. Most education systems provided mainstream classes with

---

[4] A note regarding female/male students: in some education systems, school provision is on a gender segregated basis. In Ireland, for instance, "this is a historical context factor, with movement towards co-education. For over 20 years, it has been Department of Education policy to establish single gender schools, and many single gender schools have become mixed gender schools, or amalgamations have occurred."

resource support (29), followed by dedicated schools (28) and full-time mainstream classes (26). However, a great variety of approaches in learning settings was adopted across the participating education systems.

Several education systems indicated that they provide various learning settings to students irrespective of specific student groups. This is understandable given that several education systems have "needs-based" approaches in which they evaluate student placements based on their needs rather than specific labels.

Finally, given the recent inclusive reforms in several education systems, it is worth highlighting, that Chile, France, Italy, Portugal and the United States did not indicate provision of dedicated schools for any of the student groups. Furthermore, Chile, Colombia, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal did not indicate the provision of dedicated classes (full-time or with partial integration).

Figure 2.8. Learning settings (2022)

Number of education systems that provide the following settings (ISCED 2)
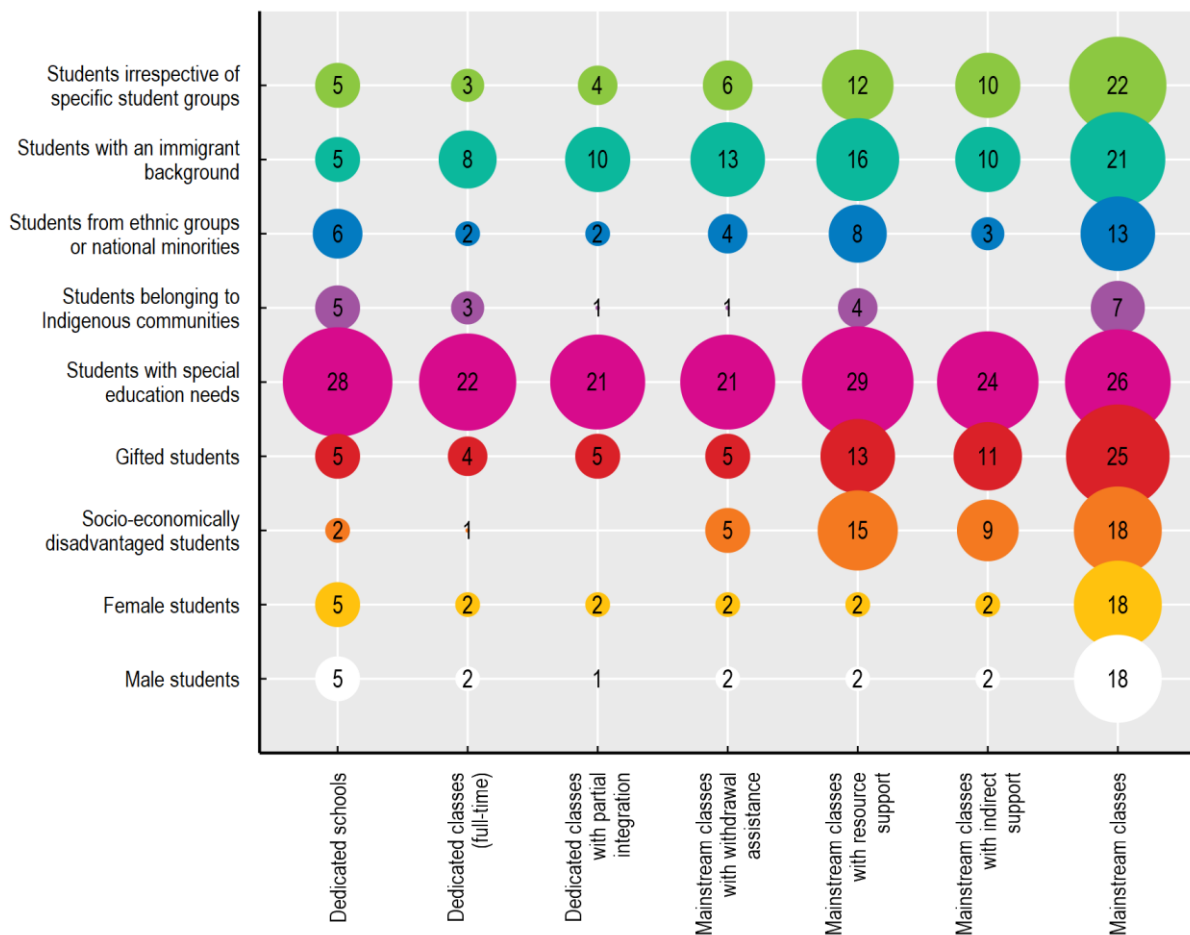
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Which education settings does the policy framework in your education jurisdiction provide for diverse groups of students at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-three education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive. The numbers inside the bubbles indicate the sum of education systems that responded positively to the question above for that specific student group. Sizes of the bubbles are proportional to these sums.

Caution should be exercised when making conclusions about inclusion or exclusion of students based on these results, because the distribution of students in these settings is not known. For instance, while most education systems provided both full-time mainstream classes and dedicated schools to students with

SEN, practices to what extent they are placed in these settings might vary. In other words, some systems might place most students with SEN into mainstream classes while others to dedicated schools.

Moreover, results should be read with caution regarding systems that base their support based on needs. These systems might have provided answers to this question based on proxies and various practices, but the fact remains that these policy frameworks provide support based on needs and not student characteristics.

Guidelines for specific provisions

Education systems can use a variety of tools to respond to the diversity of student populations. In the Survey, education systems responded to several questions regarding presence of national (or sub-national) guidelines that can help stakeholders in the areas of accessibility, extra-curricular activities, flexibility in the use of student learning time and flexibility in the use of learning approaches (Figure 2.9). Accessibility and safety of school spaces for all students (e.g., students with physical impairments) were covered in 27 education systems and accessibility and availability of school services that can accommodate the diverse needs of all students (e.g., food that fits cultural or religious requirement) was covered in 18 education systems' guidelines. Flexibility in the use of student learning time to accommodate a diversity of student needs and flexibility in learning approaches to accommodate diverse student needs (e.g., individual, small group, whole class) were covered in 23 and 28 education systems' guidelines respectively. These flexibilities can relate, for instance, to modifications in the use of learning time, accommodations in curricula or adjustments in teaching methods for diverse students or students with SEN specifically. Finally, the topic of accessibility/availability of extra-curricular activities for all students that accommodate diverse student needs was part of guidelines in 19 education systems.

Figure 2.9. Guidelines for specific provisions (2022)

Number of education systems that have national (or sub-national) guidelines (legislative or non-legislative) regarding any of the following topics and/or issues (ISCED 2)
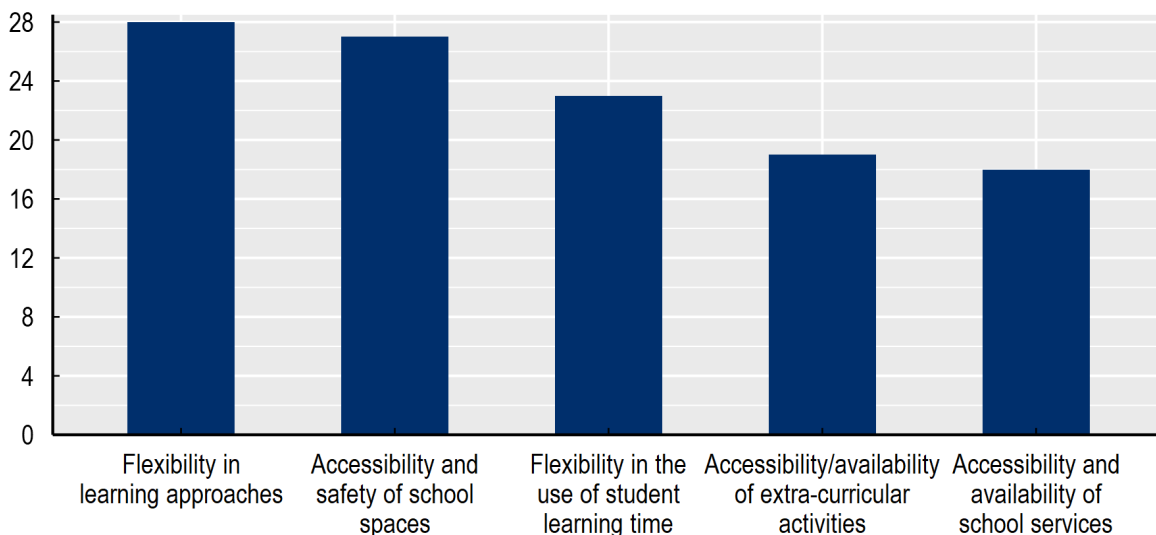
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Are there national (or sub-national) guidelines (legislative or non-legislative) regarding any of the following topics and/or issues.". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive. Labels were shortened for presentation purposes.

3 Resourcing education systems to foster equity and inclusion

Given that diverse student needs require a variety of responses at the system, local and school level, the question of how these responses are resourced becomes highly relevant. Yet, there is very little internationally comparable data on resourcing education systems to foster equity and inclusion. In general, resourcing systems rely on two main allocation mechanisms to provide resources for equity and inclusion goals.

Education systems use the main allocation mechanism (also defined as regular funding) to provide financial transfers, human and physical resources from the central level to lower administrative levels. The redistribution is often operationalised using a funding formula. Education systems also use targeted allocation of resources to supplement regular funding. They can provide specific financial transfers, allocate physical resources and redistribute human resources to selected student groups. These two types of allocation mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and often work in tandem.

Main allocation mechanisms

A key concern in designing funding allocation mechanisms is to ensure that funding is allocated equitably to schools according to their needs (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Under the main allocation mechanism, resources are often allocated based on a funding formula. This formula can then take into account the diverse population of schools by, e.g., including weightings in the funding formula to systematically allocate additional resources to certain categories/groups of students (Ibid). For example, in recognition of higher educational needs, schools' funding per student with SEN is higher than their funding per student without SEN. Indeed, as Figure 3.1 shows, most education systems (27) that responded to the Survey accounted for students with SEN in their funding formulas. Several education systems also considered the socio-economic background of students (21), immigrant background (17) (e.g., to cover additional language instruction) and specific geographic areas (12). For instance, schools in remote areas can be allocated additional funding (e.g., in Estonia and New Zealand). Six education systems also considered gifted students, and students from ethnic groups or national minorities. Three systems accounted for Indigenous students. No education system differentiated funding formulas by gender or sexual orientation of students. Luxembourg did not account for any of the student characteristics in the funding formula, and France, Norway and Sweden did not adopt a funding formula. In these cases, municipalities or other regional authorities usually have significant responsibilities in redistributing block grants from the central government.

Some education systems do not use the main allocation mechanism to distribute resources to schools directly, but first allocate funding to local education authorities who then redistribute this to individual schools – with this redistribution not being part of a centralised funding formula (such as in Finland, Greece, Scotland (United Kingdom)).

Figure 3.1. Funding formulas (2022)

Number of education systems that account for the following groups in the funding formulas (ISCED 2)
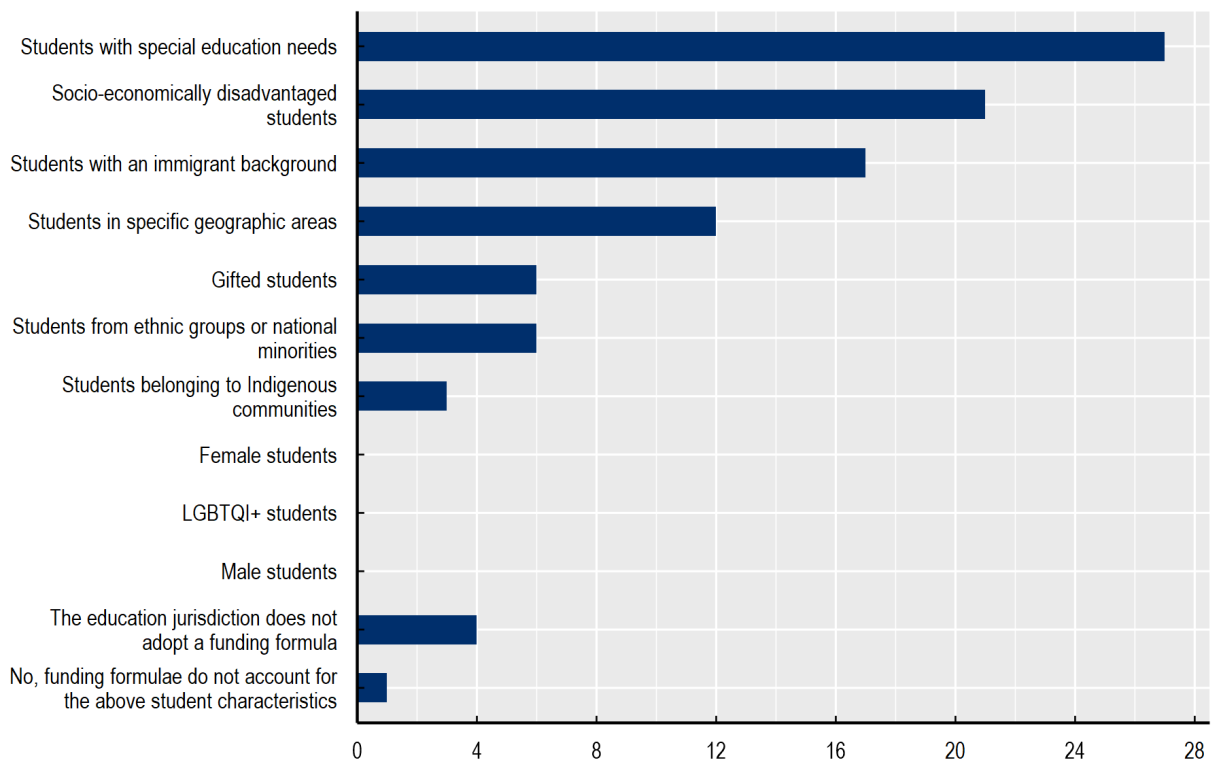
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Are any of the following groups of students accounted for in the funding formulae in your education jurisdiction at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-two education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive (except for the last two).
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

Targeted distribution of resources

In several education systems, the main allocation mechanism is not the only source of income. Schools and local education authorities can apply for additional grants, calls and programmes provided by the government. Targeted programmes provide funding to be used by schools for specific purposes, and thereby ensure responsiveness to emerging priorities and the identified needs of particular groups (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Examples include extra resources for student tutoring at the school or remediation classes; school meals programmes; resources to hire additional specialised teachers (e.g., extra classes of the language of instruction to immigrant students); resources for physical infrastructure (e.g., to ensure the mobility of students with disabilities in schools); and programmes to train teachers to address diversity in classrooms. To what extent these are provided is further explored in Section 5. In this section, targeted resourcing is examined.

Similarly to the main allocation mechanisms, additional resources were targeting mostly students with SEN (in 22 education systems), socio-economically disadvantaged students (17), students with an immigrant background (14) and students in specific geographic areas (13). In six education systems, schools received additional resources based on the enrolment of students from ethnic groups or national minorities and in four systems based on the enrolment of gifted students (Figure 3.2). In Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), schools received additional resources based on the enrolment of students belonging to Indigenous communities.

Figure 3.2. Additional resources (2022)

Number of education systems where schools received additional resources based on the enrolment of students from the following groups in the previous school year (ISCED 2)

Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "In the previous school year, did schools receive additional resources based on the enrolment of students from any of the following groups at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

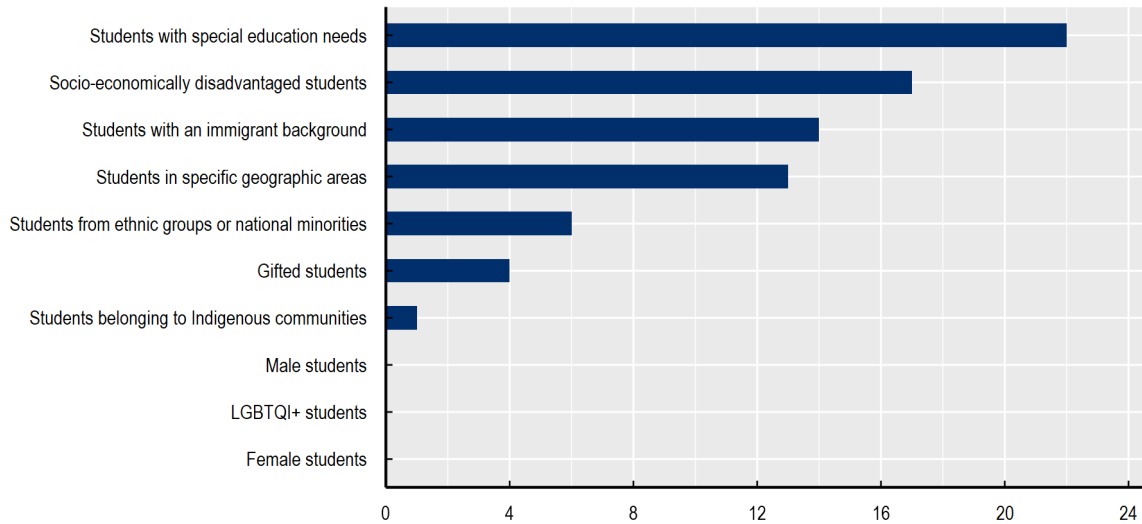# **4** Building capacity to foster equity and inclusion in education

Building capacity to foster equity and inclusion in education is concerned with three aspects (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). First, it is about how to build awareness of diversity in education at the system level among all students and across society. The second aspect is about how to recruit, retain, prepare, and evaluate school staff such as teachers, school leaders and support staff. This also concerns professional learning and mentoring. The third aspect is about how to prepare all students for diversity, including by student-to-student mentoring. The focus in this section is on the second aspect: recruitment, retention, preparation and evaluation of school staff.

Recruitment, retention, preparation and evaluation of school staff

Capacity development within an education system plays a key role in supporting diversity, equity and inclusion (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Teacher quality has been acknowledged as having a powerful impact on students' learning outcomes (OECD, 2022[4]). Moreover, teachers can also raise students' social and emotional skills (Blazar and Kraft, 2017[5]; Jackson, 2018[6]; OECD, 2022[4]), and their dispositions and competences can influence students' engagement, drive and self-beliefs (Rutigliano and Quarshie, 2021[7]). Teachers' attitudes, will and training can also play an important role in identification of student needs, e.g., special education needs and giftedness (Brussino, 2020[8]; Rutigliano and Quarshie, 2021[7]). Thus, developing teachers' capacity to manage diversity and respond to students' needs has been recognised as a key policy lever in advancing equity in education (OECD, 2018[9]).

This involves not only the development of skills among school staff to address diversity in education, but also recruitment practices that ensure the profile of staff closely matches the diversity of the student body (Brussino, 2021[10]). Indeed, research demonstrates positive impacts of teacher-student congruence in terms of shared belonging to ethnic groups or national minorities and gender not just on learning outcomes, but also students' well-being, engagement and participation in education (Ibid). Teacher-student congruence in terms of shared belonging to marginalised groups and shared ethnic background may also have positive effects on reducing student absences, suspensions and early drop-outs (Ibid). Despite these benefits, there is currently a lack of diversity in the teaching profession across OECD countries. Teachers are predominantly women from the dominant cultural groups in their countries (Forghani-Arani, Cerna and Bannon, 2019[11]; OECD, 2019[12]). Furthermore, little data are available on the proportions of Indigenous teaching workforce (United Nations, n.d.[13]), teachers with disabilities (Brussino, 2021[10]), and sexual orientation and gender identity of teachers (Bell, 2017[14]).

Several strategies were proposed to attract diverse and high-quality teachers. In terms of admissions, various OECD countries have prioritised and followed up with applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds to build support and relationships (Brussino, 2021[10]). Countries have also used awareness-raising campaigns to attract students belonging to groups that may otherwise not consider pursuing a career in the teaching profession (Ibid). Teacher residences can also have positive impacts in building a diverse teaching force. The Boston Teacher Residency in the United States, for instance, groups student cohorts into classes and campus sites, and once residents become teachers, they are provided with regular

mentoring and support (Bireda and Chait, 2011[15]). As a result, Boston Teacher Residents are more likely to continue teaching and are twice as likely to be rated as exemplary teachers compared to other novice teachers (Ibid). Various financial and non-financial incentives can also help build a diverse teaching force. Financial incentives include scholarship programmes that attract prospective students from minority, immigrant or disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, as well as relocation assistance, loan forgiveness, and rewarding excellence in teaching in less desirable locations (Brussino, 2021[10]). Non-financial incentives include offering initial teacher education programmes to those belonging to national minority groups, programmes that offer language and specific support for prospective teachers, and re-qualification and certification programmes that help attract teachers from diverse (e.g., refugee) backgrounds (Ibid). However, there are considerable gaps in regard to an internationally comparable overview of policies that promote diversity among school staff. Given this limitation, the Survey aimed to collect data on such policies while also distinguishing between teaching and learning support staff.

For the most part, education systems did not implement recruitment and retention policies to promote diversity among school staff (Figure 4.1). In fact, only three education systems (Canada, the Netherlands and Scotland (United Kingdom)) had specific policies to promote diversity among LGBTQI+ staff, four systems among female staff members (Canada, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) and Scotland (United Kingdom)), and five education systems among staff belonging to Indigenous communities (Canada, Chile, Colombia, New Zealand and Norway). Six education systems implemented specific policies to promote diversity among staff members belonging to ethnic groups or national minorities, in specific geographic areas and male staff members. Finally, policies that promote diversity among staff most often targeted teaching or learning support staff with an immigrant background, and with physical impairments, learning disabilities and/or mental health disorders (nine and ten education systems respectively). In fact, policies generally targeted teaching staff more often than learning support staff.

Figure 4.1. Recruitment and retention policies to promote diversity (2022)

Number of education systems that implement specific policies to promote diversity among teaching staff and/or learning support staff at ISCED 2 level based on the following characteristics
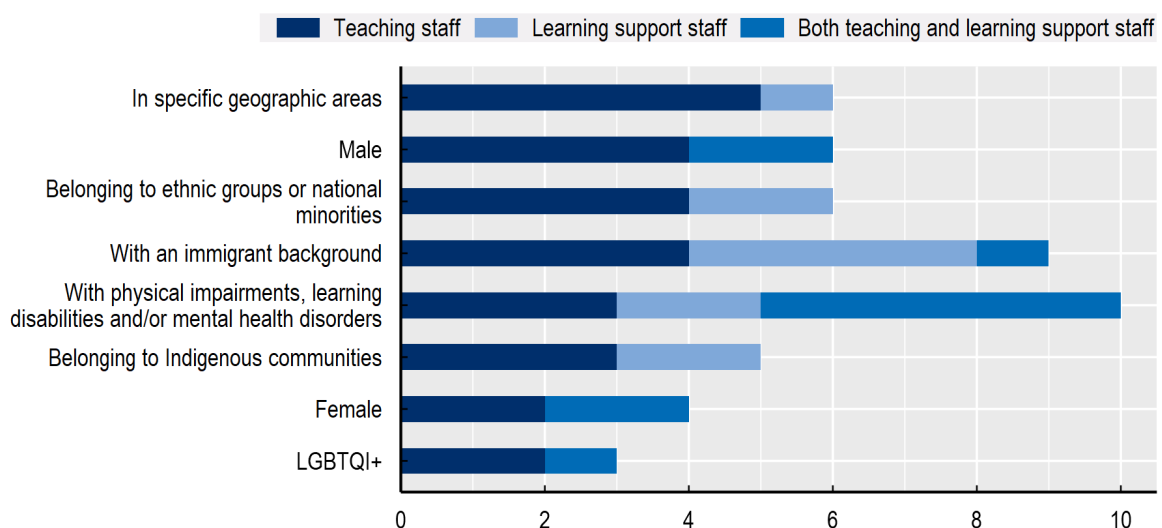
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the education policy framework in your jurisdiction implement specific policies (e.g. recruitment and retention) to promote diversity among teaching staff and/or learning support staff at ISCED 2 level based on any of the following personal characteristics?". Twenty-eight education systems responded to this question. *Options have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems that implemented specific policies to promote diversity among teaching staff.*

5 Promoting equity and inclusion through school-level interventions

Matching resources within schools to individual student learning needs

There are many ways how schools can match resources to individual student learning needs. The Survey generally divided these into two types: instructional and non-instructional support. Instructional support includes assigning more than one teaching staff to a given student group – e.g., one teacher with one teaching assistant, two teachers, etc. Similarly, teachers and teaching support staff might be allocated after instruction to support students in the form of small group or one-to-one tuition, help with homework, etc.

Schools also need to manage their digital technologies infrastructure to ensure these technologies provide the necessary classroom support to all students, and more specifically to students with the greatest learning needs (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). This involves the allocation of digital technologies resources to classrooms and across specific groups of students and the acquisition of digital technologies materials that fit the needs of particular groups of students. For example, digital technologies can provide greater access to learning for students with SEN or they can serve as a translation device to students with an immigrant background (Ibid). Finally, schools might also provide specific educational materials, such as textbooks, to students. Teachers can use these to ensure that instruction is responsive to students' diverse needs (OECD, 2020[16]).

Figure 5.1 shows two types of instructional support that the policy frameworks in education systems might require or provide. The first three columns display the allocation of more teaching staff or the allocation of learning support staff (e.g., teaching assistants) during or after instruction to specific student groups. The figure shows a wide range of approaches within and between student groups. Most education systems acknowledged the provision of teaching and learning support staff during as well as after instruction for students with SEN. Ten education systems indicated an allocation of teaching or learning support staff during or after instruction for students with an immigrant background. For socio-economically disadvantaged students, seven and five education systems allocated more teaching staff and learning support staff during instruction respectively, and eight education systems allocated both types of staff after instruction. Allocation of staff for the remaining groups of students was much rarer. In education systems where allocating more staff was not necessarily based on student characteristics, 12 education systems indicated allocation of teaching or learning support staff after instruction, followed by six systems that allocated learning support staff during instruction and five that allocated more teaching staff during instruction.

In terms of instructional devices and materials (the last three columns in Figure 5.1), provision of connectivity plans (e.g., broadband connection) to students was the rarest type of support from the available options. Providing students with digital devices was more common, although varied by student groups. Most commonly, these were provided to students irrespective of specific groups (17 education systems), followed by students with SEN (15) and socio-economically disadvantaged students (12). Seven education systems provided digital devices to students in specific geographic areas and six to gifted

students or students with an immigrant background. Other student groups were targeted less with digital devices. Many of these resources can be provided using targeted distribution, as elaborated in Section 3.

Finally, several education systems provided educational (instructional) materials (e.g., textbooks) to students (Figure 5.1). Most commonly, this was done irrespective of specific groups (in 20 education systems), but 16 education systems provided these for students with SEN, 11 systems to students with an immigrant background and ten to socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Figure 5.1. Instructional support (2022)

Number of education systems that require the provision of the following resources (ISCED 2)
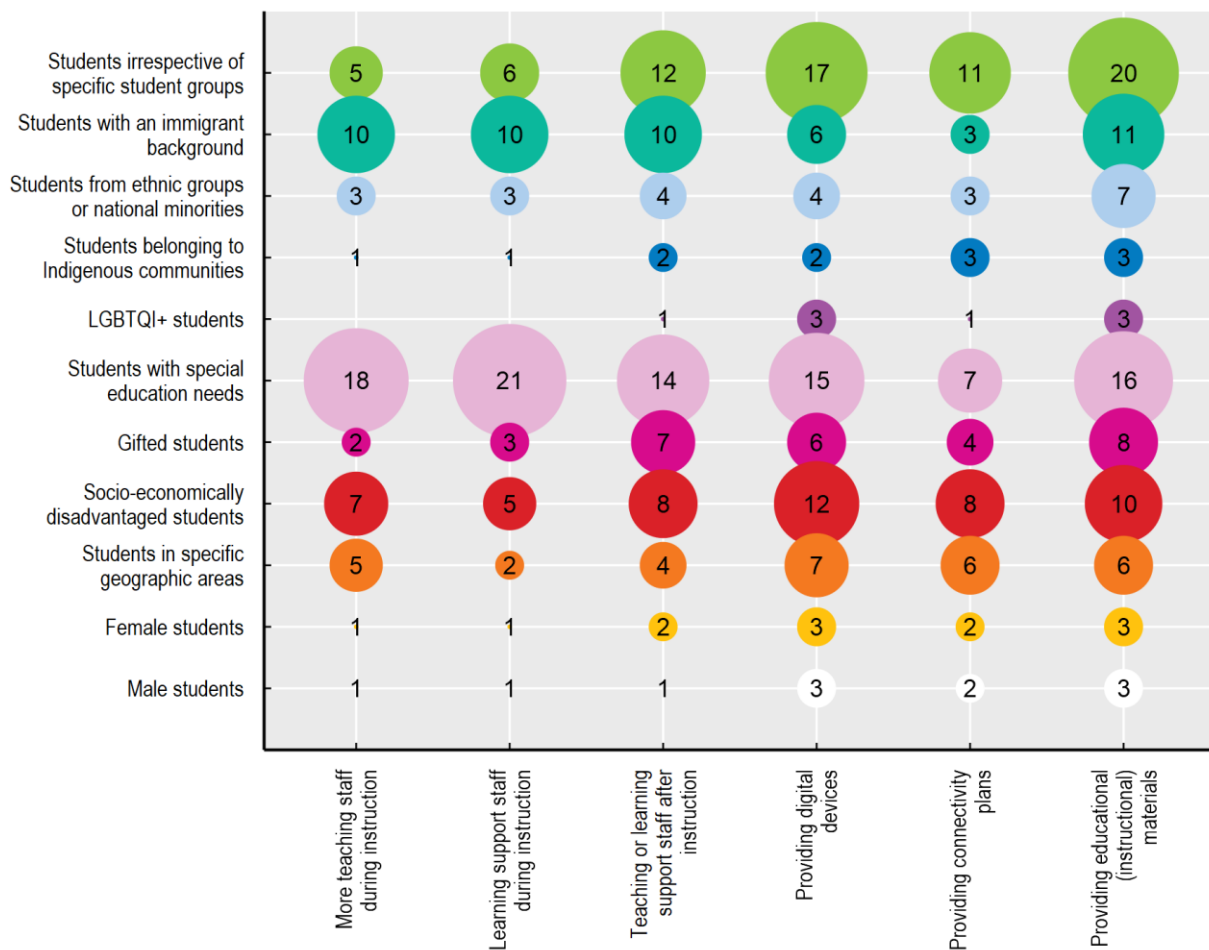
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the education policy framework in your jurisdiction require the provision of any of the following resources at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-two education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive. Labels were shortened for presentation purposes.

Learning strategies to address diversity

Much of the response to the diverse needs of learners takes place in the classroom. This relates to classroom strategies, approaches to student assessment and modifications in the curriculum (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Inclusive student assessment systems are based on the principle that all students have the opportunity to participate in educational activities, including assessment activities, and to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competencies in a fair way. Policies that promote inclusion also include the flexibility

for accommodations and modifications (Ibid). Accommodations are changes to the instruction that concern how students learn (Mezzanotte, 2020[17]). Accommodations are intended to help some students (e.g., students with SEN) learn the same information as other students, through changes to the structures and the environment that provide support (Ibid). Examples of common accommodations that can be offered to students are extra time on tests, instruction and assignments tailored to the child, using technology to assist with tasks, etc. Modifications can involve structural changes in curricula, which can mean learning different material, getting graded or assessed using a different standard than other students, or being excused from particular projects (Ibid). Whereas accommodations allow students to learn the same content as their peers, modifications are actual changes to assignments or the curriculum that make it easier for students to stay on track.

Accommodations and modifications were most commonly required for students with SEN (in 24 education systems) (Figure 5.2). Teachers were also required to make accommodations (in ten systems) and modifications (12) for students with an immigrant background and in 6 and 8 systems for gifted students. Accommodations and modifications for other student groups were much rarer. However, several education systems also required teachers to make accommodations and/or curricular modifications irrespective of student groups.

Figure 5.2. Accommodations and modifications (2022)

Number of education systems that require teachers at ISCED 2 level to provide students with the following
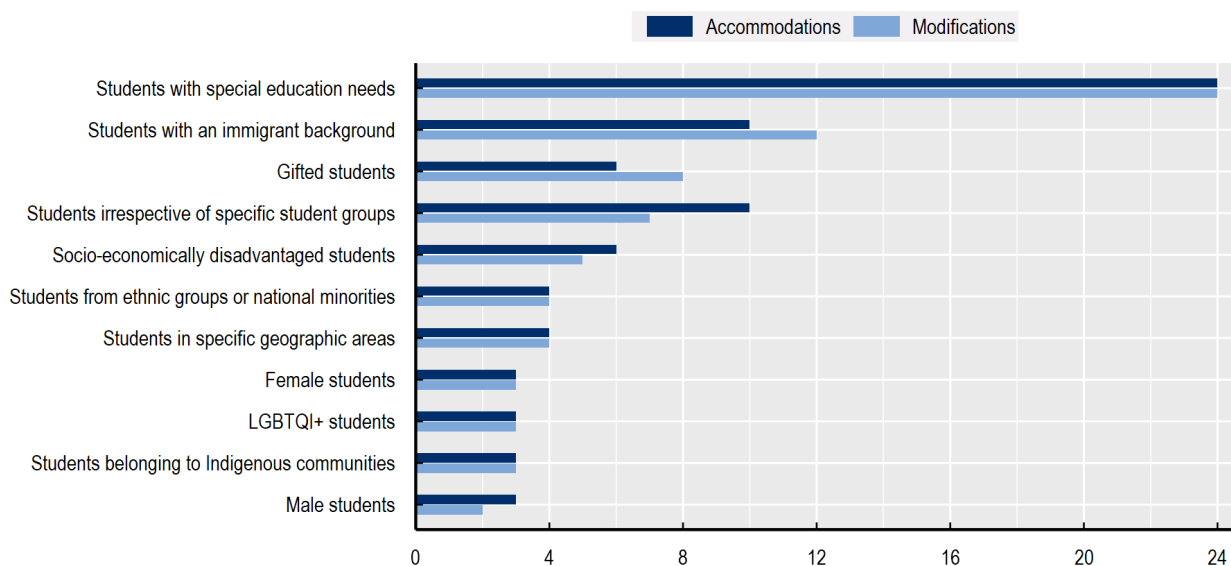
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the education policy framework in your jurisdiction require teachers at ISCED 2 level to provide diverse students with any of the following?". Thirty-two education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems that require the provision of modifications.

"Individual Education Plans" (IEP) are used to meet the needs of individual students who require a range of supports. The IEPs are developed to address students' learning needs and foster a more flexible approach (Mezzanotte, 2020[17]). They can be developed by teachers in co-operation with support teachers, parents/guardians, students and other relevant stakeholders. Figure 5.3 shows that teachers were required to provide IEPs most often for students with SEN (28 education systems), followed by gifted students (12) and students with an immigrant background (10). The requirement to provide an IEP for the

other student groups was much rarer. Several education systems (6), however, required teachers to provide an IEP to students irrespective of specific groups, presumably based on individual student needs.

Figure 5.3. Individual Education Plan (2022)

Number of education systems that require teachers at ISCED 2 level to provide students with an Individual Education Plan (or a similar document)
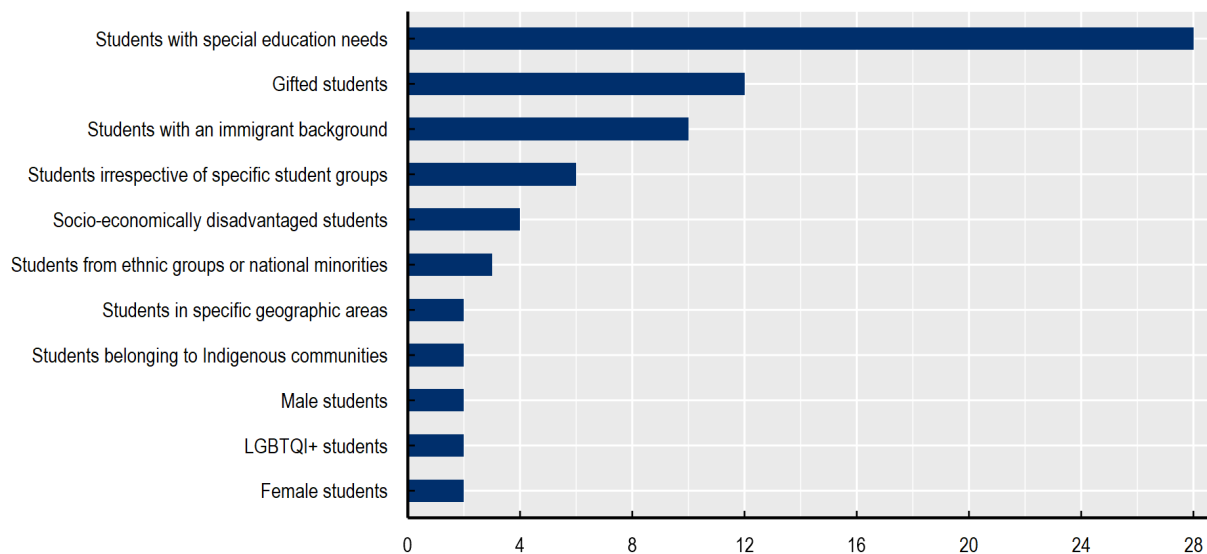
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the education policy framework in your jurisdiction require teachers at ISCED 2 level to provide diverse students with any of the following? [Provision of an Individual Education Plan (or a similar document)]". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive. *Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.*

Various classroom strategies can be leveraged to address the diversity of student needs. These include differentiated teaching, individualised learning, the promotion of student-oriented teaching strategies and other approaches. Addressing diverse needs in a classroom might involve the use of a variety of teaching formats and practices, adopting multiple ways of representing content to different learners, and adopting different rhythms with different students (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Figure 5.4 shows that in most education systems, teachers were required to change their pedagogical approaches for students with SEN (21 systems), gifted students (15), students with an immigrant background (12) and socio-economically disadvantaged students (6). The requirement for changes in pedagogical approaches was much rarer for the other student groups, although 13 education systems required teachers to change their approaches regardless of the student group, presumably based on student or class needs.

Figure 5.4. Pedagogical approaches (2022)

Number of education systems that require teachers to change their pedagogical approaches (ISCED 2)

Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the education policy framework in your jurisdiction require teachers at ISCED 2 level to provide diverse students with any of the following? [Changes in pedagogical approaches (e.g. differentiated pedagogy for gifted students)]". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
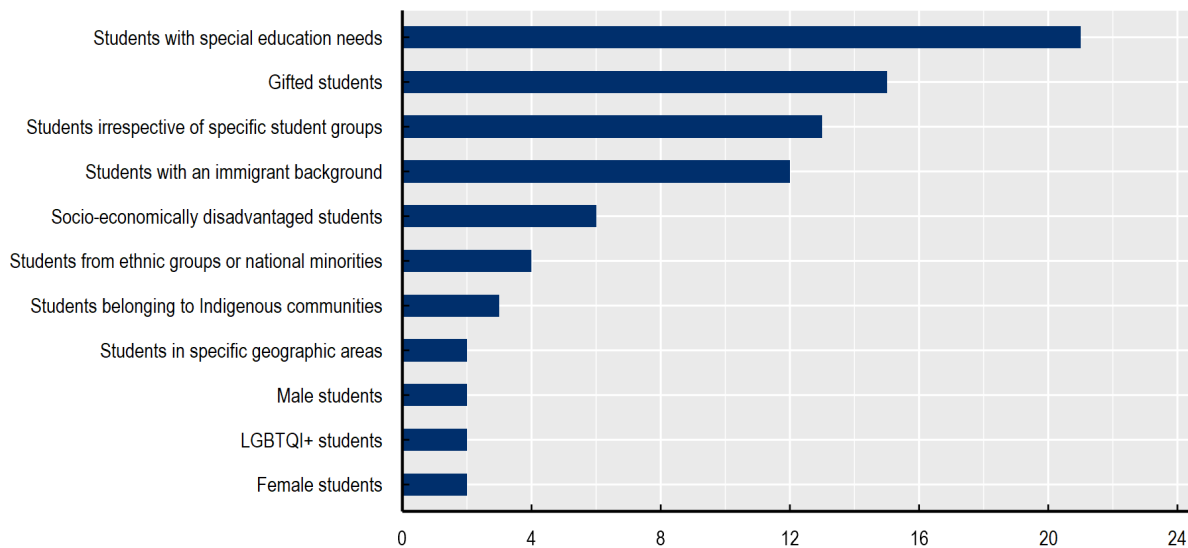*Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.*

Non-instructional support and services

The educational effectiveness of schools depends not only on teachers and school leaders, but also on the availability of non-instructional support and services (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). These can include therapeutic services (such as those provided by psychotherapists and trauma therapists), psychological support or physiotherapy relevant particularly to students with physical impairments. Many of these services are generally associated with the needs of children with mental disorders or with learning disabilities, but they can be relevant for various populations of students. For example, these professionals can support asylum seekers, refugee children and ethnic minority children in their psychological and social well-being as well as in their academic well-being (Ibid).

Additionally, providing effective career and educational guidance can help ensure that the information needs of all students are met and that they receive equal opportunities to achieve throughout education and beyond (Cerna et al., 2019[18]; Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Guidance is particularly important for transitions in the education system (such as between primary and lower secondary level, upper secondary and tertiary level), and between education and the labour market since some students might be left behind (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). For example, effective guidance could be key in helping students to overcome gender-based expectations on their future careers.

Other non-instructional support includes changes to the physical infrastructure of schools, changes in school calendar/timetable to accommodate student needs, or transportation and meal services provided for free or at subsidised costs.

Figure 5.5 displays the number of education systems that provided various types of non-instructional support and services to specific student groups or irrespective of those. The bubbles are proportional to

the number of education systems providing that particular non-instructional support/service to a student group. A great variation of non-instructional support/services is visible.

Non-instructional support services most commonly targeted students with SEN. For these students, more than half of education systems that responded to the Survey (21) provided changing physical school infrastructure and facilities, and transportation to/from school. 19 and 17 education systems also provided targeted therapeutic services (e.g., speech therapy, physical therapy) and targeted psychological support respectively.

Some services were particularly relevant to specific student groups. For instance, 17 education systems provided free (or reduced-price) school meals to socio-economically disadvantaged students. Ten education systems provided transportation to/from school for students in specific geographic areas. Seven education systems also provided transportation to/from school and targeted psychological support for students with an immigrant background.

Some education systems provided non-instructional support and services irrespective of specific student groups. In fact, Estonia and New Zealand offered all of the types of non-instructional support and services under consideration to students irrespective of specific groups. In general, however, transportation to/from school (e.g., school buses, subsidised public transportation) and targeted psychological support were the two most commonly used types of non-instructional support services to students irrespective of specific groups.

In general, the most common non-instructional supports and services provided to at least one student group under consideration were transportation to/from school (in 30 education systems) and targeted psychological support (29 systems). This was followed by free (or reduced-price) school meals (in 28 education systems), targeted therapeutic services (26), changes in physical school infrastructure and facilities (25), and additional hours of career counselling (23). The least common services were changes in school calendar/timetable provided in 19 education systems to at least one of the student groups under consideration.

Figure 5.5. Non-instructional support and services (2022)

Number of education jurisdictions that provide the following non-instructional services for specific groups (ISCED 2)
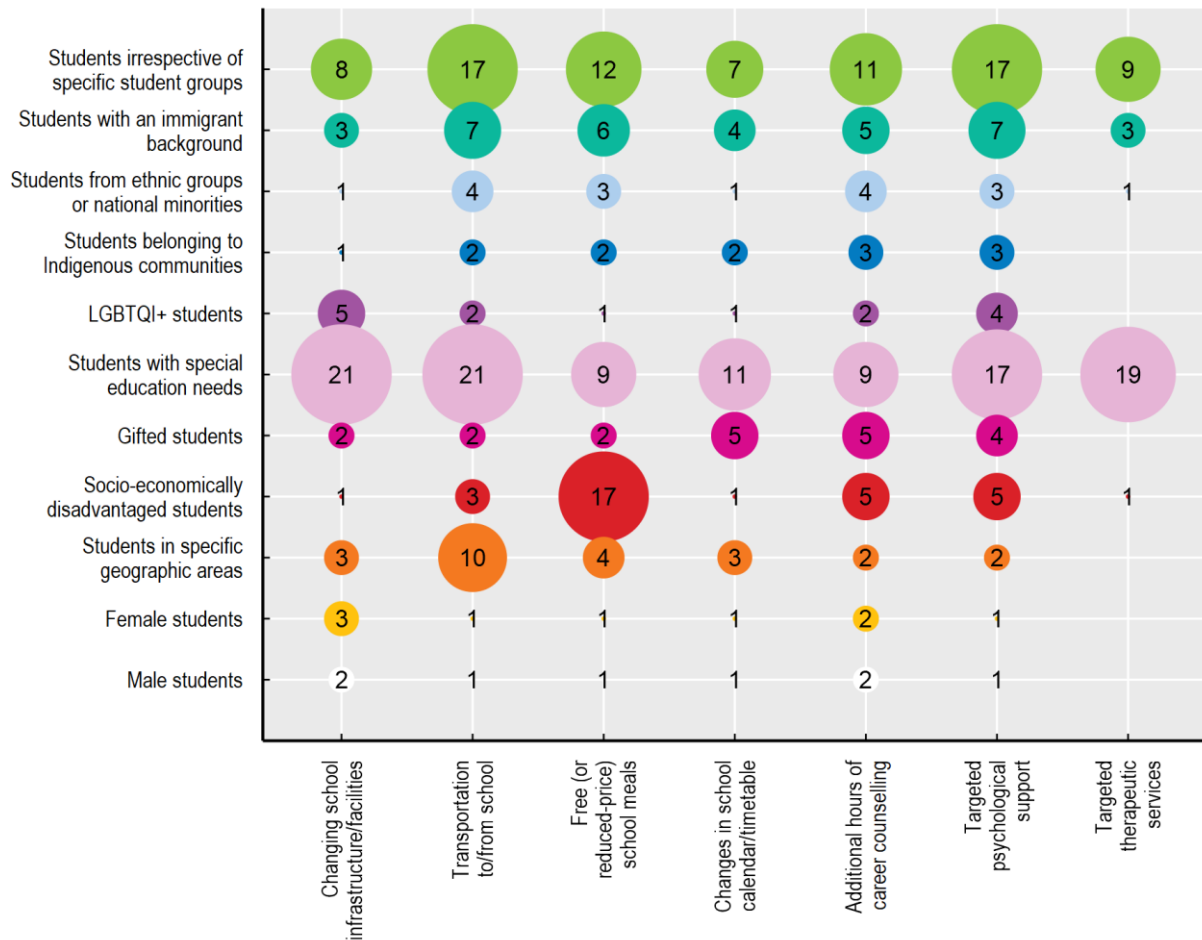
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the policy framework include provision of any of the following non-instructional services for specific groups of students at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-two education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive. Horizontal labels were shortened for presentation purposes.

Engagement with parents and communities

Engaging local communities, parents and families is important for schools who seek to create inclusive and equitable school environments (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Parents are essential in both conveying the needs of their children and in collaborating with the school to address such needs. Furthermore, many education systems involve the whole school community (including parents) in education to foster a positive school climate (Ibid).

Guidelines, programmes and/or regulations to promote teachers and schools' collaboration with families and communities are common in the education systems that responded to the Survey. Only Denmark did not indicate existence of guidelines, programmes and/or regulations to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities. In most education systems, the guidelines programmes and/or regulations concerned students irrespective of student groups (20) (Figure 5.6). If specific student groups were included in the guidelines, programmes and/or regulations, most education systems targeted them towards students with SEN (16), socio-economically disadvantaged students (15) and students with

an immigrant background (14). Guidelines, programmes and/or regulations to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities with any of the other student groups were rarer. The United States was the only education system that indicated the existence of guidelines programmes and/or regulations to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities for all the student groups under consideration.

Figure 5.6. Guidelines, programmes and/or regulations to engage with parents and communities (2022)

Number of education systems with guidelines, programmes and/or regulations to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities (ISCED 2)
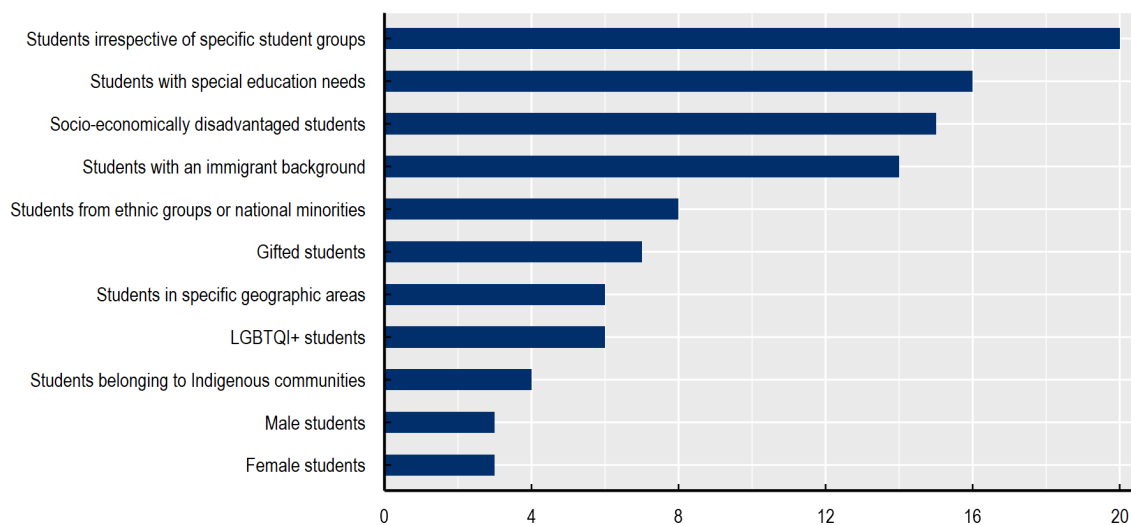
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Are there any national (or sub-national) guidelines, programmes and/or regulations in your education jurisdiction to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities explicitly with any of the following student groups at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

6 Monitoring and evaluating equity and inclusion in education

Monitoring and evaluating progress towards equity and inclusion in education is important to provide feedback and to inform improvements across the education system. At the system level, this includes, for instance, the evaluation of policies and programmes targeted at equity and inclusion, development of indicators and reporting on outcomes. However, programmes that support equity and inclusion in education are designed and implemented not only at the central level, but also at the local and school levels. Hence, the monitoring of progress towards more equitable and inclusive education systems is important at these levels, too. Individual actors need to assess their circumstances and thus receive feedback on their performance in the areas of equity and inclusion. In this context, external as well as internal school evaluation can be highly informative in improving equity and inclusion in education.

Monitoring progress in improving equity and inclusion in education at the system level

Student groups

The evaluation of the progress towards reaching equity and inclusion goals cannot happen without robust data collections that monitor the access, participation and achievement of all learners. This can include monitoring across specific groups (by gender, immigrant background, SEN, socio-economic or ethnic background, giftedness, and sexual orientation and gender identity) as well as various student outcomes.

A wide range of student characteristics were present in national (or sub-national) data collections in OECD education systems. Thirty education systems reported collecting data on students with SEN, 28 systems on students with an immigrant background, 22 on socio-economically disadvantaged students, 18 on students from certain ethnic groups or national minorities, 11 on gifted students and nine on students belonging to Indigenous communities (Figure 6.1). Only Canada and Chile reported having data on LGBTQI+ students.

Some dimensions of diversity (namely, giftedness, sexual orientation and gender identity) are underrepresented in data collections, as is acknowledged in international research (McBrien, Rutigliano and Sticca, 2022[19]; Rutigliano and Quarshie, 2021[7]). There are a range of reasons why data for particular dimensions of diversity may not be available at the national (or sub-national) level. For instance, some education systems, such as Portugal, do not categorise students based on their characteristics but instead focus on the support measures required (OECD, 2022[20]). Other education systems adopt colour-blind policies whereby data on certain characteristics, such as ethnic background, are prohibited to be collected by law (Balestra and Fleischer, 2018[21]). Moreover, nationally (or sub-nationally) managed databases are not the only source of information for policy makers.

Figure 6.1. Data collections on diversity (2022)

Number of education systems that collect data on the following groups (ISCED 2)
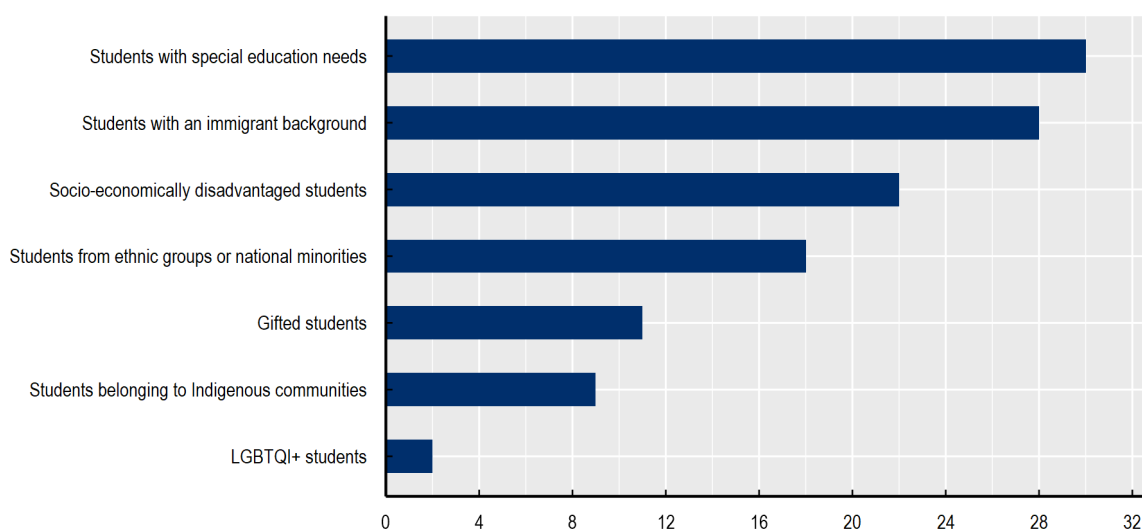
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does a national (or sub-national) authority collect data on these groups of students at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

The methods for collecting data also differ across education systems. Some national (or sub-national) authorities use data at the individual student level while others at an aggregated (e.g., school) level. Individual-level data means that information about each student is sent to a national (or sub-national) authority. Aggregated level data means that information is sent to a national (or sub-national) authority in aggregates. For instance, each school sends the total number of students with an immigrant background, rather than data on each student's immigration status (which would be obtained in an individual-level approach). On the one hand, individual data open more possibilities for intersectional analyses. On the other hand, collecting such data can be costly, for instance, in terms of the infrastructure and time invested by individual schools.

The results from the Survey show that aggregated collections were more common as a means for gathering data compared to individual-level information (Figure 6.2). Data was reported as being obtained solely at an aggregate level in 11 education systems and solely at the individual level in nine systems. In 11 systems the level of data collection differed depending on the student characteristic.

Figure 6.2. Type of data collection (2022)

Number of education systems that collect data about students at the following levels (ISCED 2)
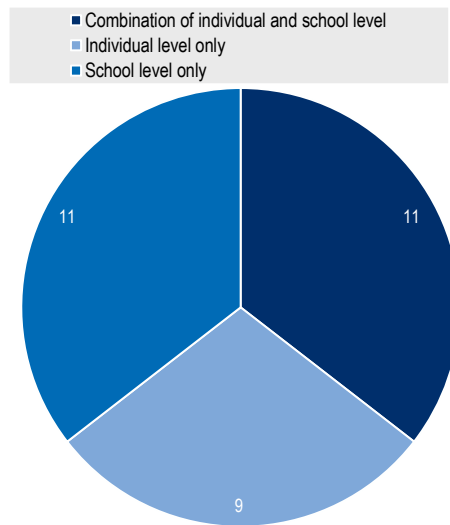
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does a national (or sub-national) authority collect data on these groups of students at ISCED 2 level? If so, are data points collected on an individual student level or aggregated on e.g. school level?". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question.

Student outcomes

The Survey focused on six types of student outcomes: academic, psychological well-being, social well-being, material well-being, physical well-being and well-being in general. The psychological dimension of students' well-being includes students' views about life, their engagement with school, the extent to which they have a sense of agency, identity and empowerment, and their opportunities to develop goals and ambitions for their future. Physical well-being relates to students' health status, safety and security, the ability to engage with others without physical barriers in access and mobility. Social well-being refers to the quality of students' social lives. This includes relationships with peers, family and school staff. Finally, material well-being considers the material resources available that enable families and schools to cater to students' needs (Cerna et al., 2021[1]).

Academic outcomes

Data collections on academic outcomes were highly prevalent (Figure 6.3). For all student groups considered in the Survey and also in education systems that gather data irrespective of student groups, academic outcomes were the most common type of outcome collected. Indeed, the vast majority (30) of education systems focused academic outcomes for at least one of the groups listed in the Survey question.

Most education systems highlighted obtaining academic outcomes irrespective of specific student groups (28). This is understandable given that many OECD countries have national standardised assessments in place that include all eligible students, but do not necessarily include a wide range of student characteristics for further disaggregation. However, there are exceptions. Twenty education systems indicated data collections specific to male and female students, 17 education systems specific to socio-economically disadvantaged students, 16 to students with SEN and 15 to students with an immigrant background (Figure 6.3). In contrast, only eight education systems indicated data collections specific to students from ethnic groups or national minorities, six to students belonging to Indigenous communities, and four to gifted students.

Well-being outcomes

In general, data collections by national (or sub-national) authorities about student well-being were rarer compared to academic outcomes: 16 education systems indicated the existence of data collections on psychological well-being, social well-being, material well-being, physical well-being or well-being in general for any of the student groups considered in the Survey. In the most cases, education systems gathered general well-being outcomes. In some education systems, these data can potentially be disaggregated by socio-economic background (in eight education systems), gender (seven systems), immigrant background (six education systems), SEN, geographic area (both five systems), ethnic or minority background (three education systems), Indigeneity (two systems) and giftedness (one education system). The more specific types of well-being outcomes considered in the Survey were considered less often. In general, disaggregation of these outcomes by specific student groups is possible in only a few education systems (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3. Data collections on student outcomes (2022)

Number of education systems that collect data at least once during ISCED 2 on the following groups
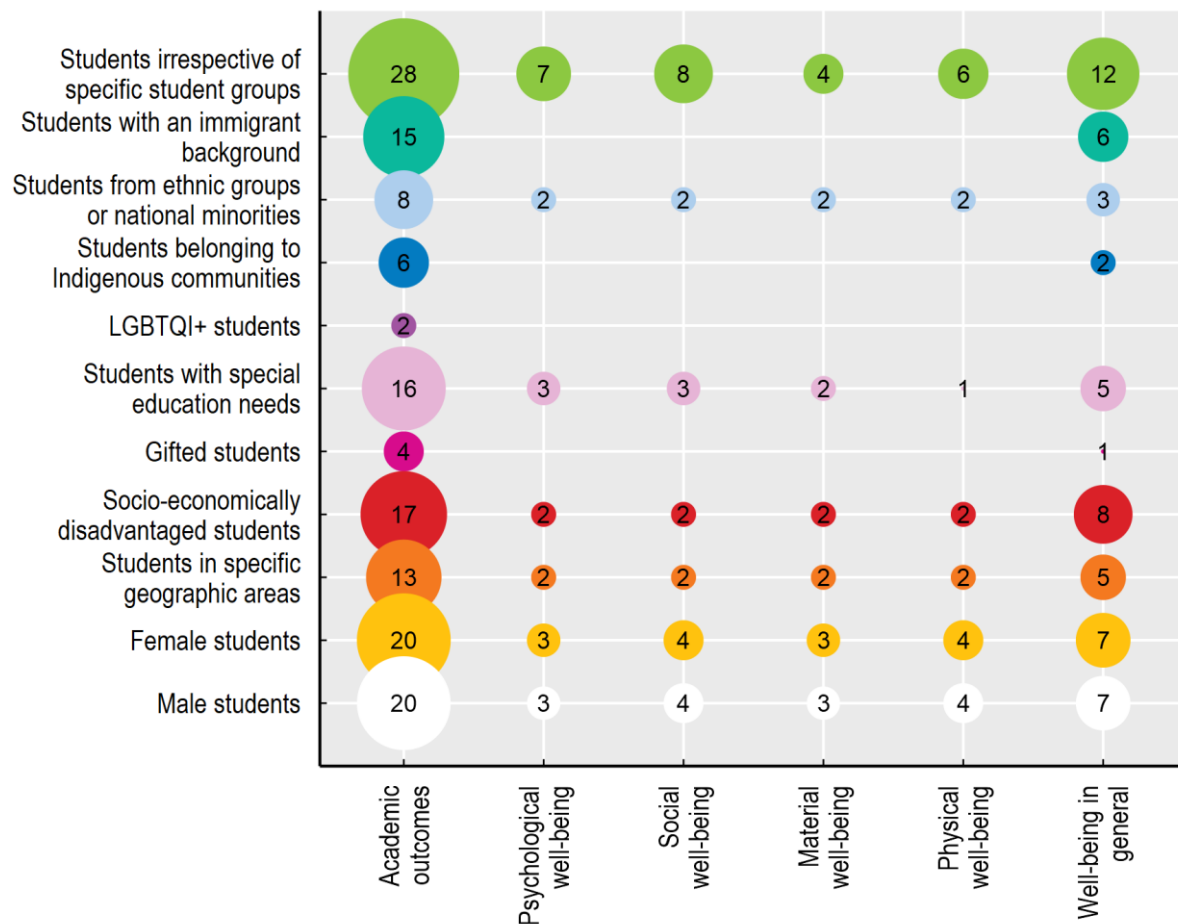
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Which dimensions of student outcomes are nationally (or sub-nationally) collected at least once during ISCED 2 level?". Thirty-one education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.

Indicators and targets

Establishing system-level frameworks to monitor the access, participation and achievement of all learners is fundamental to evaluate the progress of education systems towards reaching equity and inclusion goals, and subsequently informing policies in these areas (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Such frameworks can include indicators and targets specific to student groups and the concepts of equity or inclusion. The Survey therefore asked education systems whether indicators and targets are in place for specific student groups.

The results of the Survey show that most OECD education systems did not define indicators specific to student groups. Of those systems that did, most defined indicators with a focus on socio-economically disadvantaged students (ten systems), with an immigrant background (nine systems), female or male students (eight and six systems respectively), and students with SEN (seven systems). Four education systems reported having indicators specific to gifted students, and two systems specific to ethnic groups or national minorities. The other dimensions of diversity were represented even less often (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4. Indicators (2022)

Number of education systems that define indicators specific to the following groups (ISCED 2)
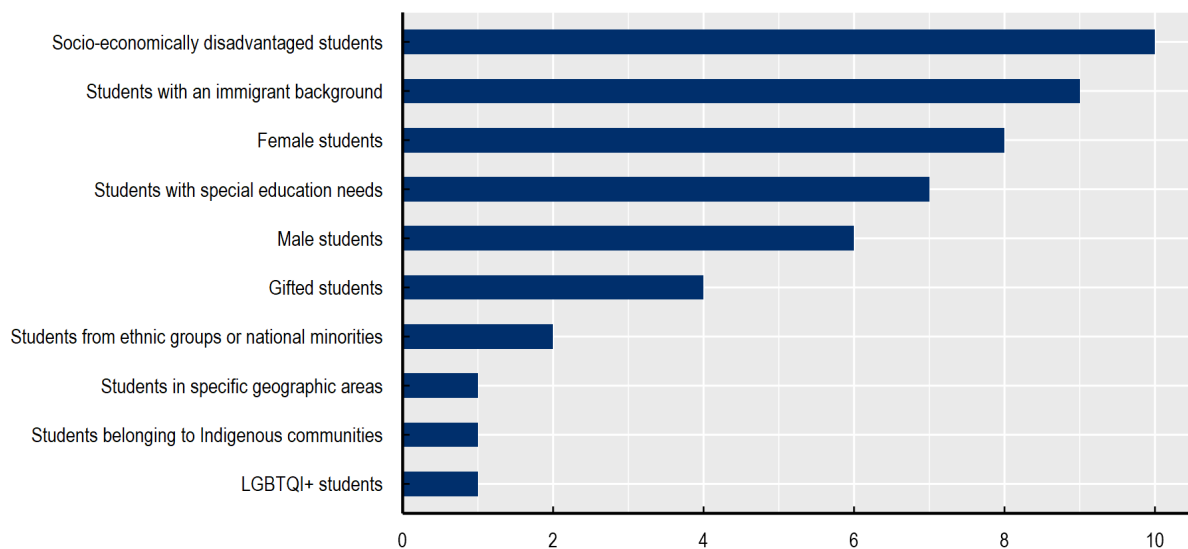
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does your education jurisdiction define nationally (or sub-nationally) indicator(s) specific to any of the groups of students at ISCED 2 level?". Twenty-five education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.
Options selected have been ranked in descending order of the number of education systems.

Where education systems had indicators related to students with an immigrant background, these mostly examined their school participation rates and results. Iceland and Spain reported monitoring immigrants' results based on international large-scale surveys, such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), with Iceland having set a target for students with an immigrant background to reach the PISA average in reading, mathematics and science. Targets in Latvia focused on full participation of minors who were granted asylum status and children of returning migrants, and in Lithuania on full participation of citizens of foreign countries.

Education systems reported monitoring students with SEN and gifted students largely in terms of whether they were labelled as such, which educational setting they were placed in (e.g., dedicated or mainstream schools) and whether they had received specific educational support. In Spain, for instance, the indicators focus on the number of students with SEN and gifted students in education disaggregated by the typology

of SEN, gender and the type of school. In Lithuania, targets are set for the proportion of students whose needs for additional support are met (85% in 2025 and 97% in 2030) as well as proportion of students with disabilities receiving inclusive education in general education settings (85% in 2025 and 90% in 2030).

Socio-economically disadvantaged students were also explicitly targeted with indicators in some instances. In England (United Kingdom), the disadvantage gap index is monitored. It summarises the relative attainment gap between disadvantaged students and all other students. In Scotland (United Kingdom), achievements in the expected level in literacy and numeracy are reported by socio-economic background of students. Moreover, broader well-being outcomes are monitored, particularly as a potential consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic: the gap in total difficulties score between students (aged 13 and 15) in the most deprived and least deprived areas[5]. Other systems, such as Ireland and Lithuania, had an overall goal around learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, their inclusion in the education system and their achievement. In Spain, results from international large-scale surveys, such as the PISA, were disaggregated and monitored by socio-economic background in strategic documents.

Other education systems reported monitoring disadvantaged students indirectly. One of the indicators in the Flemish Community of Belgium focuses on early leavers from education and training developed by Eurostat[6]. In Latvia, the provision of portable computer equipment for disadvantaged students is monitored as part the 2021-3 Action Plan of the Education Development Guidelines 2021-7.

The indicators targeting gender gaps often focused on academic outcomes. In Iceland, the percentage of female and male students reaching level 2 or higher in PISA in reading, mathematics and science were monitored, with targets being set for the year 2025 for each subject and gender. In Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), mid-upper secondary examination results were reported as being disaggregated by gender. In Estonia, drop-out rates from lower secondary education were monitored by gender, while the participation of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes was monitored in the Flemish Community of Belgium and Ireland.

Two education systems (Chile and the Slovak Republic) reported having indicators related to students from ethnic groups and national minorities and one education system had indicators related to students belonging to Indigenous communities. In the Slovak Republic, the "Roma Strategy of Equity, Inclusion and Participation" sets the target of decreasing the number of Roma early school leavers by half (to 36%) and decreasing the number of Roma students attending ethnically homogenous classes by half (to 30%) by 2030.

---

[5] Total difficulties score is a measure of five aspects of children's development: emotional symptoms; conduct problems; hyperactivity/inattention; peer relationship problems; and pro-social behaviour. The results are collected in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire in the Scottish Health Survey. The questions cover themes such as consideration, hyperactivity, malaise, mood, sociability, obedience, anxiety and unhappiness (The Scottish Government, 2016[30]).

The most deprived areas are defined as those in the bottom quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Index ranks several thousands areas in Scotland based on income, employment, health, education, access to services, crime and housing (The Scottish Government, 2016[30]; The Scottish Government, 2020[31]).

[6] "Early leaver from education and training, previously named early school leaver, refers to a person aged 18 to 24 who has completed at most lower secondary education and is not involved in further education or training; the indicator 'early leavers from education and training' is expressed as a percentage of the people aged 18 to 24 with such criteria out of the total population aged 18 to 24" (Eurostat, 2019[32]).

Supporting schools in improving equity and inclusion practices through evaluation processes

Effective monitoring of equity and inclusion as well as the evaluation of related processes at the local and school levels are central to the continuous improvement of equity and inclusion in education (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). In particular, school evaluation – both school self-evaluation and external school evaluation – plays a key role in ensuring the effectiveness of school-level interventions to support equity and inclusion in education (OECD, 2015[22]).

Figure 6.5 displays the number of education systems whose policy framework for school evaluation provided for an assessment of equity and inclusion outcomes of individual schools. Nine education systems provided only guidelines for school self-evaluation and Türkiye provided only criteria used for external school evaluation. Ten education systems provided both guidelines for school self-evaluation and criteria used for external school evaluation. Finally, six education systems' policy frameworks had no provision for an assessment of equity and inclusion outcomes of individual schools (Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Japan, the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic).

Figure 6.5. Policy framework for school evaluation (2022)

Number of education systems whose policy framework for school evaluation provides for an assessment of equity and inclusion outcomes of individual schools (ISCED 2)
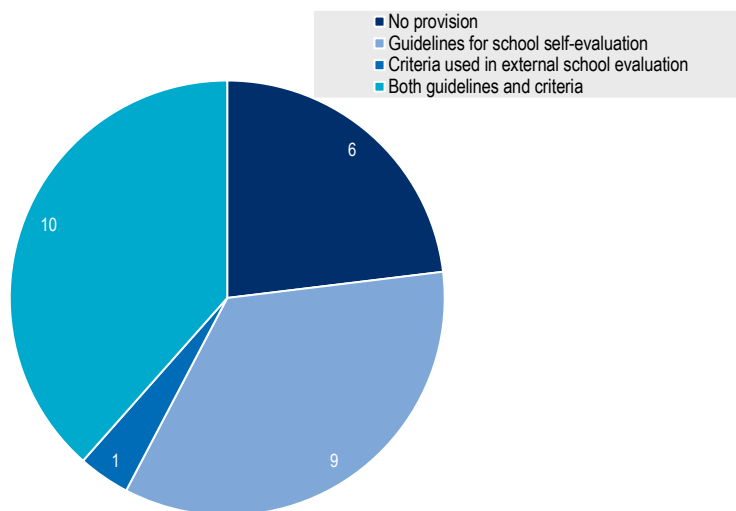
Note: This figure is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Does the policy framework for school evaluation provide for an assessment of equity and inclusion outcomes of individual schools at ISCED 2 level?". Twenty-six education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive.

7 **Intersectionality**

In addition to examining approaches to target the needs of student groups separately, there are many possible intersections between the dimensions of diversity, and with the overarching factors of socio-economic status and geographical location (Cerna et al., 2021[1]). Indeed, intersectionality highlights that different aspects of individuals' identities are not independent of each other. Instead, they interact to create unique identities and experiences, which cannot be understood by analysing each dimension separately or in isolation from their social and historical contexts (Bowleg, 2012[23]). Such approach contrasts with more traditional siloed equality work that has tended to focus on one vulnerable group at a time (Christoffersen, 2021[24]).

In education, there are many examples where an intersectional approach revealed hidden differences (Varsik and Gorochovskij, forthcoming[25]). For instance, while it has been observed that socio-economically disadvantaged students or students from certain ethnic backgrounds achieve lower academic results, an intersection between ethnicity and socio-economic status revealed various heterogenous effects. On the one hand, 16-year-old advantaged White British were among the top performing ethnic groups, on the other, disadvantaged White British were among the bottom performing ethnic groups (Strand, 2014[26]). The author hypothesises that parents' educational aspirations for their child and students' own educational aspirations, academic self-concept, frequency of completing homework, truancy, and exclusions could account for the minority ethnic advantage among students with low socio-economic status, even though including these factors in the models did not provide a consistent answer (Ibid). In any case, the research highlights a need for more nuanced considerations of who is considered to fail or succeed in education. In other domains, intersecting special education needs with ethnicity, gender or socio-economic background can reveal important differences regarding unequal representation of particular ethnic groups among students with special education needs. Similar findings can also be observed when looking at the intersections of giftedness with other student characteristics.

Despite the added value of an intersectional approach, significant gaps remain (Varsik and Gorochovskij, forthcoming[25]). Research is often unbalanced, limited and fragmented. Some dimensions of diversity are covered much better than others. Much of the work is centred around North American and Western European contexts (Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery, 2019[27]), possibly due to the fact that there might be issues with translation of the term.

The Survey examined to what extent education systems considered intersectionality in their policy frameworks. Of 31 education systems that responded to this question, only four used the term intersectionality in their jurisdictions formally (in legislative and non-legislative policy frameworks) (Colombia, the French Community of Belgium, Mexico and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom)).

Even though intersectionality as a term was not used in many jurisdictions, several systems had policies in place that target the intersection of specific student groups (Table 7.1). Nine education systems had policies targeting students with both an immigrant background and SEN, and eleven systems reported policies targeting students with an immigrant background who were also socio-economically disadvantaged. Four education systems also targeted students with an immigrant background in rural areas/disadvantaged geographical areas. Three systems targeted specifically female and male students with an immigrant background.

In respect to special education needs (in addition to the intersection with an immigrant background) four education systems targeted students from ethnic groups or national minorities with SEN. Six systems also had policies in place that target the intersection of gifted students with SEN (this can be a result of the fact that in some systems, gifted students are a sub-category of SEN). Ireland and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) also had policies in place that targeted Indigenous students (Travellers) with SEN, and Indigenous students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Korea and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) targeted students in rural areas/disadvantaged geographical areas with SEN. Finally, Ireland had in place policies targeting LGBTQI+ students with SEN, and Portugal policies targeting female students from ethnic groups or national minorities.

Education systems that did not indicate targeting students based on the characteristics used in the Survey might be targeting students based on individual needs and thus address the intersections without a specific reference in policies. Moreover, some education systems might target these (and others) students at local levels without specific references in national policies.

Table 7.1. Intersections of student groups targeted by policies

Number of education systems with specific policies that target the intersection of the following groups

Intersection	Education systems
Students with an immigrant background and special education needs	Colombia, Flemish Comm. (Belgium), French Comm. (Belgium), Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Türkiye
Female students with an immigrant background	Flemish Comm. (Belgium), Korea, Türkiye
Male students with an immigrant background	Flemish Comm. (Belgium), Korea, Türkiye
Students from ethnic groups or national minorities with special education needs	Colombia, Ireland, Slovak Republic, Sweden
Male students from ethnic groups or national minorities	
Female students from ethnic groups or national minorities	Portugal
Students with special education needs and gifted students	Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Slovak Republic, Türkiye
Male LGBTQI+ students	
Female LGBTQI+ students	
LGBTQI+ students with special education needs	Ireland
LGBTQI+ students with an immigrant background	
Students with an immigrant background from a disadvantaged socio-economic background	Denmark, Flemish Comm. (Belgium), French Comm. (Belgium), Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Northern Ireland (UK), Sweden, Türkiye
Students with an immigrant background in rural areas/disadvantaged geographical areas	Denmark, Northern Ireland (UK), Sweden, Türkiye
Indigenous students with special education needs	Ireland, Northern Ireland (UK)
Indigenous students from a disadvantaged socio-economic background	Ireland, Northern Ireland (UK)
Students with special education needs in rural areas/disadvantaged geographical areas	Korea, Northern Ireland (UK)

Note: This table is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "Are there specific policies that target the intersection of any of the following groups of students at ISCED 2 level?". Thirty education systems responded to this question. Response options were not mutually exclusive. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the responses relate to research projects commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Training, not formal education policies or legislation.

8 Conclusions

The Strength through Diversity Policy Survey obtained comparative information from 34 education systems on their policies and practices for equity and inclusion, data collections, and definitions. Most education systems defined equity and/or inclusion, and, indeed, all education systems that filled out the Survey identified these topics as policy priorities in 2021/22. However, education systems' definitions of equity and inclusion varied considerably. Despite this fact, some common themes were identified. One of the key elements in the definitions of equity was the focus on diversity and different student characteristics. In these systems, the definitions highlighted that education should be provided without prejudice. The most common element in the definitions of inclusion was the provision of education for *all* students.

The Survey also revealed that education systems used a variety of practices to encourage the principles and values of equity and/or inclusion. Most education systems, for instance, incorporated equity/inclusion as a cross-curricular theme or competency in student learning, integrated equity/inclusion into one or several subjects, or used several other curriculum strategies. However, the Survey showed that education systems differed in these approaches when targeting specific student groups. A great variation was observed in the allocation of (more) teaching and learning support staff during or after instruction. Similarly, education systems' policies differed in terms of non-instructional support to specific student groups, such as changing physical school infrastructure and facilities, transportation to/from school, free (or reduced-price) school meals, and others.

Education provision to account for diversity in education can have a variety of forms. Thus, the Survey also looked at several learning settings that can accommodate student needs; from dedicated schools to mainstream classes. Education systems' responses revealed that for most student groups, learning settings were skewed towards mainstreaming students. In contrast, dedicated settings were most commonly provided for students with SEN.

Similarly, students with SEN were most often targeted in the education systems' funding systems. Most education systems accounted for students with SEN in their funding formulas and in most systems, schools also received additional resources based on the enrolment of students with SEN. Other groups that were often targeted this way were socio-economically disadvantaged students, students in specific geographic areas and students with an immigrant background.

Engaging local communities, parents and families is important for schools who seek to create equitable and inclusive school environments. Most education systems had guidelines, programmes and/or regulations to promote teachers' and schools' collaboration with families and communities. Furthermore, most education systems used various guidelines to help stakeholders respond to the diversity of student populations. These covered the topics of accessibility, extra-curricular activities, flexibility in the use of student learning time and flexibility in the use of learning approaches.

Finally, a wide range of student characteristics were present in national (or sub-national) data collections. However, the focus of most data collections was on academic outcomes rather than broader well-being. Most education systems also did not define indicators and targets specific to student groups. Intersectional approaches were also rare: only four education systems used the term intersectionality in their jurisdictions formally. However, some systems did have policies in place that target the intersection of specific student groups.

The Survey revealed several gaps and limitations. Most systems examined system-level rather than local- or school-level approaches. For instance, several education systems highlighted that funding formulas were not the only source of income, and schools, municipalities and school founders could apply for additional grants, calls and programmes. The Survey thus does not provide a comprehensive picture in terms of resourcing to foster equity and inclusion in education. Similar issues arise with recruitment and retention of school staff. While few education systems implemented specific policies to promote diversity among teaching staff and/or learning support staff with specific characteristics, local authorities and schools can have their own policies in place.

Furthermore, the Survey did not focus on processes. For instance, considerable gaps exist in terms of how and what share of students was allocated to specific learning settings (e.g., dedicated schools). In resourcing, the mechanisms for redistribution of resources have not been explored. In the few education systems that did indicate the existence of specific policies to promote diversity among school staff, it is unclear how these are implemented and merged with employment non-discrimination legislation.

Several education systems also indicated that their policies related to equity and inclusion are not based on specific student labels, but on specific student needs. As such, these systems proxied their answers to correspond to the categories considered by the Strength through Diversity Project, but their definitions and approaches might not overlap exactly.

Despite these challenges and gaps, the Survey collected unique results and comparative information on education systems' policies for equity and inclusion in governance, resourcing, capacity-building, school-level interventions, and monitoring and evaluation. It presents comparisons of education jurisdictions' definitions, data collection policies and practices that were not explored before, particularly in the areas of equity and inclusion. The Survey can thus enhance the understanding of which policies are adopted in OECD countries, and help policy makers place their national (or sub-national) policies within an international context. The Survey results are also used in comparative analyses of the Strength through Diversity Synthesis Report (OECD, forthcoming[28]), which explores how education systems can respond to increasing diversity and promote equity and inclusion in education.

References

Balestra, C. and L. Fleischer (2018), "Diversity statistics in the OECD: How do OECD countries collect data on ethnic, racial and indigenous identity?"*, OECD Statistics Working Papers*, No. 2018/09, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/89bae654-en. [21]

Bell, M. (2017), *Data collection in relation to LGBTI People*, Publications Office of the European Union, https://doi.org/10.2838/522787 (accessed on 29 June 2022). [14]

Bireda, S. and R. Chait (2011), *Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce*, Center for American Progress, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535654.pdf (accessed on 10 October 2022). [15]

Blazar, D. and M. Kraft (2017), "Teacher and teaching effects on students'attitudes and behaviors", *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 39/1, pp. 146-170, http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0162373716670260. [5]

Bowleg, L. (2012), "The problem with the phrase women and minorities: intersectionality-an important theoretical framework for public health", *American journal of public health*, Vol. 102/7, pp. 1267-1273, https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300750. [23]

Brussino, O. (2021), *Building capacity for inclusive teaching*, OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019. [10]

Brussino, O. (2020), "Mapping policy approaches and practices for the inclusion of students with special education needs"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 227, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/600fbad5-en. [8]

Cerna, L. et al. (2019), "Strength through diversity's Spotlight Report for Sweden"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 194, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/059ce467-en. [18]

Cerna, L. et al. (2021), "Promoting inclusive education for diverse societies: A conceptual framework"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 260, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/94ab68c6-en. [1]

Christoffersen, A. (2021), "The politics of intersectional practice: competing concepts of intersectionality", *Policy & Politics*, Vol. 49/4, pp. 573-593, https://doi.org/10.1332/030557321x16194316141034. [24]

Eurostat (2019), *Glossary:Early leaver from education and training*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Early_leaver_from_education_and_training (accessed on 16 June 2022). [32]

Forghani-Arani, N., L. Cerna and M. Bannon (2019), "The lives of teachers in diverse classrooms"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 198, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/8c26fee5-en. [11]

Hankivsky, O. and J. Jordan-Zachery (2019), "Introduction: Bringing Intersectionality to Public Policy", in *The Palgrave Handbook of Intersectionality in Public Policy*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98473-5_1. [27]

Jackson, C. (2018), "What Do Test Scores Miss? The Importance of Teacher Effects on Non–Test Score Outcomes", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 126/5, pp. 2072-2107, https://doi.org/10.1086/699018. [6]

McBrien, J., A. Rutigliano and A. Sticca (2022), "The Inclusion of LGBTQI+ students across education systems: An overview"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 273, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/91775206-en. [19]

Mezzanotte, C. (2020), "Policy approaches and practices for the inclusion of students with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 238, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/49af95e0-en. [17]

Ministry of Education and Sport (2011), *Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji [White book on education in the Republic of Slovenia]*, http://pefprints.pef.uni-lj.si/1195/1/bela_knjiga_2011.pdf (accessed on 17 November 2022). [3]

OECD (2022), *Mending the Education Divide: Getting Strong Teachers to the Schools That Need Them Most*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/92b75874-en. [4]

OECD (2022), *Review of Inclusive Education in Portugal*, Reviews of National Policies for Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/a9c95902-en. [20]

OECD (2022), *Strength through Diversity Policy Survey*, OECD. [29]

OECD (2020), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en. [16]

OECD (2019), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/23129638. [12]

OECD (2018), *Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264073234-en. [9]

OECD (2015), *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-en. [22]

OECD (forthcoming), *Equity and inclusion in education: Finding strength through diversity*. [28]

Rutigliano, A. and N. Quarshie (2021), "Policy approaches and initiatives for the inclusion of gifted students in OECD countries"*, OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 262, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c3f9ed87-en. [7]

Strand, S. (2014), "Ethnicity, gender, social class and achievement gaps at age 16: intersectionality and 'getting it' for the white working class", *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 29/2, pp. 131-171, https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2013.767370.   [26]

The Scottish Government (2020), *Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020*, https://www.gov.scot/news/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/ (accessed on 4 July 2022).   [31]

The Scottish Government (2016), *National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education*, The Scottish Government, https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-improvement-framework-scottish-education-2016-evidence-report/documents/ (accessed on 4 July 2022).   [30]

UNESCO-UIS (2018), *Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/handbook-measuring-equity-education-2018-en.pdf (accessed on 10 July 2022).   [2]

United Nations (n.d.), *Indigenous Peoples - Data and Indicators*, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/data-and-indicators.html (accessed on 10 June 2022).   [13]

Varsik, S. and J. Gorochovskij (forthcoming), *Intersectionality in Education*, OECD.   [25]

Annex A: Definitions of equity and inclusion in education

Table A.1. Definitions of equity

Education jurisdictions were asked to provide an English translation of their definition of equity in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by the national (or sub-national) authority.

Education system	Is there a definition of equity in education?	Definitions of equity in education
Australia	Yes	There is no national definition of equity in education in Australia. However, it has been described and defined in a number of ways depending on the purpose. For example, The Equity and Excellence in Australian Schools review defined it as "ensuring that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions". This definition recognised that not all students are the same or can achieve the same outcomes; rather it meant equity of access for all students to a high-quality education. To facilitate the analysis of equity, in national reporting student outcomes are usually disaggregated (where data is available) by priority equity cohorts, which can include reporting by gender, Indigenous status, language background other than English, geographic location, socio-economic status, parental occupation, parental education and disability.
Canada	Yes	In Canada, equity and inclusion in education is described and defined at the provincial and territorial levels to serve regional and local needs and contexts.
Chile	Yes	The Ministry of Education refers to cultural diversity when dealing with equity and inclusion. Cultural diversity refers to the wealth that for centuries the different tribes, ethnic groups, peoples and countries have built, and to the evolution of thoughts, technologies, religions, ideologies and all the elements described in the exposed definition of culture that in general reflect the complexity of individual and collective identities in a particular historical context. With regard to this richness, in 2001, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted, which identifies cultural pluralism and establishes that a common heritage of humanity should be recognised. Valuing cultural diversity ultimately refers to the respect for the dignity of each individual, and to the respect for human rights in their highest expression of an ethical principle.
Colombia	Yes	Permanent process that enables, recognises, values and responds appropriately to the diversity of characteristics, interests, possibilities and expectations of children, adolescents, young people and adults. It focuses on promoting the comprehensive development and participation of all people in a learning environment without any discrimination or exclusion, guaranteeing, within the framework of human rights, the support and reasonable adjustments required, reducing the gaps, through practices, policies and cultures that eliminate existing barriers in the educational context.
Czech Republic	Yes	The topic of equality of access to quality education is one of the main goals of the Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic 2030+. It defines measures to be implemented to improve the situation regarding access to quality education for all, regardless of their socio-economic status. It also focuses on strengthening the competences of school leaders and teachers, which will contribute to the development of the potential of all students, including with regard to equal opportunities (independent of gender, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or beliefs, political opinions or any other opinions, belonging to a national minority, disability, age, and sexual orientation).
England (UK)	Yes	Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate against a pupil in a number of respects, because of a characteristic protected by the Act – including race. State-funded schools are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies, in exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. We have published guidance for schools on how to comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 - Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Education system	Is there a definition of equity in education?	Definitions of equity in education
Estonia	Yes	There is no specific definition for equity in education but the principles are embedded in the various laws and legislative acts, e.g., pursuant to the §37 and §12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, everyone has the right to education and is equal before the law and may not be discriminated against on the basis of nationality, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other views, property or social status, or on other grounds. These principles are further described by the Equal Treatment Act §2 and the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act §6. See also: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/508012015002/consolide/current.
Finland	N/A	
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	Yes	Achieve optimal learning and development opportunities for all pupils.
France	Yes	The principle of equity in education is defined in Article L 111.1 of the Education Code in its paragraph 5: to guarantee the right to education to everyone, "in respect of equal opportunities, aid is allocated to pupils and students according to their resources and merits. The distribution of the means of the public education service takes into account the differences of situation, notably in economic, territorial and social matters". This is the basis of the priority education policy, which consist of giving more to those who need it most and concentrating resources in the territories where the greatest social difficulties are concentrated. The priority education policy is a targeted policy, which is applied in 1 091 priority education networks (a middle school and its attached schools) identified on the basis of four criteria): rate of scholarship holders, rate of disadvantaged population, rate of late entry into 6th grade and percentage of students residing in priority neighbourhoods of the city policy (QPV) (zoning which itself is built from the poverty rate since 2014).
Greece	Yes	According to the Hellenic Constitution (2019, Art. 16, Par. 4) "All Greek citizens have the right to free education, at all levels in public schools. The State supports both students who excel, and those who need help or special protection, depending on their abilities". This means that there are no distinctions based on sex and sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity, and also include students with special educational need and/or disabilities. In addition, Greece constantly strives for the successful inclusion of students from migrant backgrounds into its education system aiming for their full registration and attendance.
Iceland	Yes	Equal study opportunities: At compulsory school all pupils are entitled to appropriate education. Pupils should have equal opportunities, regardless of their abilities or circumstances. Therefore, special effort should be made to prevent discrimination on the basis of whether the pupil is of Icelandic or foreign origin. Opportunities are not to depend on whether pupils are boys or girls, where they live, what class they belong to, their sexual orientation, their health, whether they have disabilities, or their circumstances in other respects.
Ireland	Yes	In Ireland, a specific definition on equity in education is not set out in legislation. However, Equity is referred to as a key goal for educational provision, for example in the Department of Education's most recent Statement of Strategy (2021-2023). The Equal Status Acts (2000-2015) and other equality legislation set out nine grounds for equal treatment and antidiscrimination. The nine grounds are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. These Acts apply to the provision of educational services and set out four areas in which an education institution must not discriminate: 1) the admission of a student, including the terms or conditions of the admission of a student, 2) the access of a student to a course, facility or benefit provided by the school, 3) any other term or condition of participation in the school, and 4) the expulsion of a student or any other sanction.
Italy	Yes	The Constitution of the Italian Republic guarantees school education for all in Article 34, thus fulfilling the mandatory duty of solidarity provided by Article 2 and responding to the fundamental principle of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in Article 3 of the Italian Constitution: "All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, personal and social conditions. It is a task of the Republic to remove the obstacles to economic and social freedom and equality of citizens, hinder the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the Country." Among the rules applying the principle of equality in education provided for in the Constitution are: the Law n. 40 of 6 March 1998; the Legislative Decree n. 286 of 25 July 1998 "Consolidated act of provisions concerning regulations on immigration and rules about the conditions of aliens"; the Law n. 107 of 13 July 2015 – "Good School Reform Act" Comprehensive reform of the school and training system; the Law n. 47 dated 7 April 2017 "Protection measures for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors". Other references and definitions can be found in the Guidelines for the reception and integration of students with a non-Italian citizenship (February 2014) and the Guidelines for educational rights of pupils outside their family (December 2017). Italy has chosen the full integration of everyone in the public education system and intercultural education as its cultural horizon. In order to ensure education rights, migrant pupils (even the undocumented ones) can be enrolled in every period of the year and have the same rights to social and health assistance as Italian pupils.

Education system	Is there a definition of equity in education?	Definitions of equity in education
Japan	Yes	Although it is not the definition of equity in education per se, Article 26 of the Constitution of Japan states that "[a]ll people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law," and Article 4 (1) of the Basic Act on Education states that "[t]he people must be given equal opportunities to receive an education suited to their abilities, and must not be subjected to discrimination in education on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin".
Latvia	Yes	In line with the Education law, everyone has the right to qualitative and inclusive education, and the persons have the right to acquire education regardless of the material and social status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, religious and political affiliation, health condition, occupation, and place of residence.
Mexico	Yes	Equity in education: implies that the State guarantees the full exercise of the right to education for all people, based on combating socio-economic, regional, capacity and gender inequalities, supporting students in conditions of social vulnerability and offering everyone a relevant education that ensures their access, progress, permanence and, where appropriate, timely graduation from education services. (Definition in the glossary of the Education Sector Programme (PROSEDU)).
Netherlands	Yes	Children with the same talents are entitled to equal opportunities. Every child must be able to fully develop his or her background, parents' level of education, their financial situation or students' special educational needs should not affect a child's school performance. In Article 1 of the Constitution it is stated: All those who are in the Netherlands are treated equally in equal cases. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political affiliation, race, sex or on any ground whatsoever is not permitted.
New Zealand	N/A	
Northern Ireland (UK)	Yes	Ensuring equality of opportunity in education for all children irrespective of Section 75 Group.
Norway	Yes	All pupils shall be treated equally and no pupil is to be subjected to discrimination. The pupils must also be given equal opportunities, so that they can make independent choices. School must consider the diversity of pupils and facilitate for each pupil to experience belonging in school and society.
Portugal	Yes	Equity is one of the guiding principles of the law on Inclusive Education (DL 54/2018). Equity is the guarantee that all children and pupils have access to the necessary support to realise their learning and development potential.
Scotland (UK)	Yes	Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances are not obstacles to achievement, and that all children and young people are well supported and have the same opportunities to succeed.
Slovak Republic	Yes	The Schools Act n. 245/2008 stipulates: in §3, c): "equal access to education, taking into account the special educational needs of the individual and her/his co-responsibility for her/his education", in §3, e): "prohibition of all forms of discrimination and especially segregation", in §145: "rights provided under this Act shall be guaranteed on equal terms to each applicant, child, pupil and student in accordance with the principle of equal treatment in education defined by a separate law" (which is the Act on Equal Treatment - Antidiscrimination Act, No 365/2004 Coll.).
Slovenia	Yes	"Equity in education, which is an essential element of social justice, is closely associated with equality. Therefore, equity in education is understood often as equality of educational opportunities, which is essential for all citizens in contemporary societies and based on liberal and democratic principles to have an equal opportunity to succeed in life. The notion of equal opportunity presupposes that each individual is treated in accordance with the classic law of justice (equals must be treated the same and non-equals must be treated in accordance with their differences) in situations in which many people compete for limited resources (for example, acceptance into a quality school or university). The conception of social justice as equal opportunity therefore allows inequality in the achievements of individuals, but only if everyone has the same opportunity to attain such achievements, and if the inequality in the achievements of individuals is a consequence of their free choice, ability, invested effort and accepted risk. Due to the fact that an individual possessing equal opportunity in society is strongly dependent on equal opportunities in education, a state that strives for a just society must, with various measures (the implementation of positive discrimination policies for children from socially and culturally underprivileged environments; ensuring everyone the same extent of free education; enabling the individualisation of the school system and instruction that offers every pupil optimal opportunities to acquire a quality education and to take shape as an autonomous individual; the inclusion of children with special needs in cases where such inclusion would be of more benefit to them than schooling in special schools, etc.), first ensure everyone equal educational opportunity. Furthermore, unless there are sound reasons for establishing differences, justice in education always demands the equal, impartial and proportional treatment of pupils in assessment of knowledge, reward, punishment, etc. This means that pupils who demonstrate the same knowledge must gain the same grade, those who infringe the same rules must receive the same punishment, etc." (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2011[3]).

Education system	Is there a definition of equity in education?	Definitions of equity in education
Spain	Yes	The new Education Law (LOMLOE) states that equity is one of the principles on which the Spanish education system is based. The Law provides a precise definition of the extent of equity in education (Article 1. Principles): Equity, which guarantees equal opportunities for the full development of the personality through education, educational inclusion, equal rights and opportunities, also between women and men, which help to overcome any discrimination and universal accessibility to education, and which acts as a compensatory element of personal, cultural, economic and social inequalities, with special attention to those arising from any type of disability, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Spain in 2008. The Law also states that in order to give effect to the principle of equity in the exercise of the right to education, the public administrations will develop actions aimed at persons, groups, social environments and territorial areas that are in a situation of socio-educational and cultural vulnerability, with the aim of eliminating the barriers that limit their access, presence, participation or learning, thereby ensuring reasonable adjustments according to their individual need and promoting the necessary support to promote their maximum educational and social development, so that they can access an inclusive education, on equal terms with others. Likewise, the Law states that compensation policies shall reinforce the action of the education system in such a way that inequalities arising from social, economic, cultural, geographic, ethnic or other factors shall be avoided. It is the responsibility of the State and the Regions (Autonomous Communities) to set their priority objectives with a view to achieving more equitable education (Article 8. Principles, from Chapter II Equity and compensation of inequalities in education).
Sweden	Yes	The Swedish Education Act highlights three aspects of equity: equal access to education, equal quality of education and that education should be compensatory (meaning that the education should take into account students' different needs and strive to offset differences in students' conditions).
Türkiye	Yes	Constitution of Türkiye of 1982, as amended in 2017 Article 10: "Everyone is equal before the law without distinction to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. Men and women have equal rights". Article 42: No one shall be deprived of the right of education. Basic Law on National Education, No. 1739 dated 1973 Article 4: Educational institutions are open to everyone regardless of language, race, gender, disability or religion. In education, no person, family, group or class shall be granted privilege.
United States	Yes	While there is no explicit definition of the phrase "equity in education," the concept of equality of opportunity, access, and outcomes is embedded throughout various policy documents including the U.S. Department of Education's mission, which is to "…promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access." To fulfil this mission, the Department embeds equity and inclusion throughout its operations and programmes to meet the needs of every learner. The current Administration has established strategic priorities based on feedback from children, educators, parents and families, and their communities toward this end. On 20 January 2021, the President of the United States issued Executive Order 13985, "On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government". The Executive Order stresses the concept of equal opportunity as the bedrock of American democracy and defines equity for the purposes of the Executive Order as, "the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of colour; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality (Section 2: Definitions"). The U.S. Department of Education issued its attendant 2022 Agency Equity Plan on 14 April 2022.

Note: This table is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "If available, please provide an English translation of the definition of equity in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by a national (or sub-national) authority". Thirty-four education systems responded to this question.

Table A.2. Definitions of inclusion

Education jurisdictions have been asked to provide an English translation of their definition of inclusion in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in the legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by the national (or sub-national) authority.

Education system	Is there a definition of inclusion in education?	Definition of inclusion in education
Australia	N/A	
Canada	Yes	In Canada, equity and inclusion in education is described and defined at the provincial and territorial levels to serve regional and local needs and contexts.
Chile	Yes	Taking into consideration that cultural diversity overarches any educational approach, and that school culture is part of the identity framework of each subject, inclusion as an approach becomes an essential element to guide the construction and development of an education where everyone feels included. In this way, the Ministry of Education in implementing inclusive education, has made a conceptual transition from integration to inclusion, opening the concept beyond the importance of considering students with particular conditions of disability or special educational needs. Inclusion is understood to attend to each and every one of the differences that identify the members of an educational community, contemplating the diversity of educability conditions, as stated in the document Inclusive Educational Communities, Keys to Action. This approach is materialised in three guiding principles of inclusive educational actions: Presence (access, welcome and integration); Recognition (visibility, identity and diversities); Relevance (pedagogical practices, learning styles and contexts).
Colombia	Yes	Permanent process that enables, recognises, values and responds appropriately to the diversity of characteristics, interests, possibilities and expectations of children, adolescents, young people and adults. It focuses on promoting the comprehensive development and participation of all people in a learning environment without any discrimination or exclusion, guaranteeing, within the framework of human rights, the support and reasonable adjustments required, reducing the gaps, through practices, policies and cultures that eliminate existing barriers in the educational context.
Czech Republic	Yes	The method of education, which tends to the maximum development of each pupil with regard to their individual needs and specificities.
England (UK)	Yes	The approach over inclusion is summarised in the statutory guidance on the relevant legislation, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: "As part of its commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education. The Children and Families Act 2014 secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEN should be educated and the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for disabled people".
Estonia	Yes	The Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act provides for the implementation of inclusive education as the guiding principle for the organisation of education. According to the law, general education of good quality adheres to the principles of inclusive education and is equally available to all persons regardless of their social and economic background, nationality, gender, place of residence or special educational needs. Inclusive education primarily means the basic right of a person to education of good quality. The basic values, principles for organising studies and general objectives of studies of a general education school are the same for all learners, regardless of their special educational needs or whether the studies are conducted in a regular school or in a school created for students who need support. See also: National Education Systems, Estonia/Eurydice, Ch. 12. Educational Support and Guidance: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/educational-support-and-guidance-20_en.
Finland	N/A	
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	Yes	Achieve optimal learning and development opportunities for all pupils (this definition underlies many acts/decrees in education in Flanders and can be considered as the overarching, equitable and inclusive aim of Flemish education). Nevertheless, it is important to note that the concept of inclusion in the context of Flemish education has a more specific usage in that it refers to the leading principle for schools' approach to pupils with SEN. In particular, each school is to provide broad basic care (for all) and increased care for pupils who need it. This broad basic care is the phase in the care continuum in which the school, based on a vision of pupil guidance, stimulates the development of all pupils within the four guidance domains by: Offering a powerful learning environment, Monitoring pupils systematically, Actively working to reduce risk factors, and strengthening protective factors.

Education system	Is there a definition of inclusion in education?	Definitions of inclusion in education
France	Yes	The French concept of inclusion does not have the same elements as in other OECD countries. According to Article L111-1 of the Education Code: "Education is the first national priority. The public education service is designed and organised with pupils and students in mind. It contributes to equality of opportunity and to the fight against social and territorial inequalities in school and educational success. It recognises that all children share the capacity to learn and progress. It ensures inclusive schooling for all children, without distinction. It also ensures the social mix of the school population within educational institutions. To guarantee the success of all, the school is built with the participation of parents, regardless of their social origin. It is enriched and strengthened by dialogue and co-operation between all the actors of the educational community.
Greece	Yes	The introduction of a new law on education (4823/2021) in Greece reforms the supportive educational structures with an explicit orientation for inclusion. The 4823/2021 Act is founded on an "educational approach, which takes into account the needs of the heterogeneity of the student population and aims to remove barriers to learning and ensure equal access to the educational system of all students, including students with disabilities and special educational needs" (Law 4823/2021 Article 4).
Iceland	Yes	Inclusive education refers to a compulsory school in pupils' locality or immediate area which meets the educational and social needs of pupils in a mainstream school environment guided by principles of human dignity, democratic values and social justice. The inclusive school assumes that everyone has equal or equivalent study opportunities, and the education is appropriate for each individual. The attitude of the inclusive school is characterised by respect for the rights of all pupils to participate in the learning community of the local school regardless of their attainment or status. This basic principle in school operations in Iceland involves universal involvement, access and participation of every pupil in school activities.
Ireland	Yes	In Ireland, a general overall definition on inclusion in education is not set out. A definition for the inclusion of students with special educational needs is set out in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN Act) – 2004: A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with — (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated. Educational provision around inclusion is governed by the Equal Status Acts (2000-2015), which places certain requirements on schools and educational institutions in relation to how they deliver their services. The Equal Status Acts specify four areas in which an education institution must not discriminate: 1) the admission of a student, including the terms or conditions of the admission of a student; 2) the access of a student to a course, facility or benefit provided by the school; 3) any other term or condition of participation in the school; and 4) the expulsion of a student or any other sanction. The Acts require that schools and educational institutions do not discriminate across the nine grounds in our equality legislation (the nine ground are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). They must reasonably accommodate students with disabilities. Harassment and sexual harassment is prohibited in education institutions.
Italy	Yes	As highlighted in the Legislative Decree n. 66 of 2017, inclusion at school: a) concerns girls and boys, pupils and students, responds to different educational needs and is realised through targeted educational and didactic strategies for the development of the potential of everyone in accordance with the right for self-determination and reasonable accommodation and in the perspective of the best quality of life; b) is realised through cultural and educational projects, the organisation and curriculum of educational institutions, as well as through the definition and sharing projects among schools, families and other public - private subjects, operating in the educational community; c) constitutes fundamental commitment of all the components of the educational community which, within the framework of the specific roles and responsibilities help to ensure the educational success of girls and boys, pupils and students.

Education system	Is there a definition of inclusion in education?	Definitions of inclusion in education
Japan	Yes	Although it is not the definition of inclusion in education per se, Article 4 (1) of the Basic Act on Education states that "[t]he people must be given equal opportunities to receive an education suited to their abilities, and must not be subjected to discrimination in education on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin." For example, in terms of disabled people, Article 16(1) of the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities states that "[t]he national government and local public entities must give accommodation to children and students with disabilities being able to receive their education together with children and students without disabilities insofar as possible, so that persons with disabilities are able to receive a full education based on their age and capabilities and in accordance with their particular characteristics, and must take necessary measures to improve and enhance the contents and methods of the education".
Latvia	Yes	In line with the Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027 "Future Skills for Future Society", inclusive education is a process that ensures that the diverse needs of all learners are met, maximising opportunities for each learner to participate in learning, culture and diverse communities and minimising exclusion from education and learning.
Mexico	Yes	Inclusion: is a transformative process that ensures full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, youth and adults, respects and values diversity, and eliminates all forms of discrimination in and through education. It represents a commitment to make educational institutions and other learning environments such places, where all are valued and feel part of, and where diversity is seen as a richness (Cali Commitment, UNESCO).
Netherlands	N/A	
New Zealand	N/A	
Northern Ireland (UK)	Yes	Inclusion in education would generally be taken to mean the inclusion of all children wherever possible irrespective of the Section 75 Group they represent.
Norway	Yes	Inclusion means that all children and pupils should feel that they belong. They should feel safe and discover that they are valuable and that they are able to help shape their own learning. An inclusive environment welcomes all children and pupils. School shall develop an inclusive environment that promotes health, well-being and learning for all. Schools shall [...] help each pupil to preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment. When developing an inclusive and inspiring learning environment, diversity must be acknowledged as a resource.
Portugal	Yes	Inclusion is one of the guiding principles of the law on Inclusive Education (DL 54/2018). Inclusion is the right of all children and pupils to access and participate, fully and effectively, in the same educational contexts. It was adopted the UNESCO definition: a process aimed at responding to the diversity of pupils' needs through increased participation of all in learning and in life of the school community.
Scotland (UK)	Yes	Inclusive education is an approach that recognises and values the diversity of learners and is able to respond flexibly to that diversity in such a way that barriers to participation, learning and achievement are removed, and a high-quality education for all is developed and sustained.
Slovak Republic	Yes	According §2 lett. ai) of national school law n. 245/2008 inclusive education is common education of children, pupils, students or participants in education, carried out on the basis of equal opportunities and respect for their educational needs and individual peculiarities, and supporting their active involvement in educational activities of the school or school facility.
Slovenia	Yes	The principle of inclusion is embedded in the legislative framework and in national guidelines and strategic documents. "Education that follows the often-mentioned generally accepted values and norms of civilisation - human rights and duties, tolerance and respect, which promote mutual assistance and solidarity, care for the environment, which support knowledge and respect for intergenerational differences, etc., and also support the goals of inclusion and integration. (White Paper on Education, 2011). One of the education goals of the Republic of Slovenia (defined by the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, Article 2) is: "provide the optimal development of the individual, irrespective of gender, social background or cultural identity, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or invalidity". Also, other goals support the principle of inclusion. The 2a Article defines that kindergartens, schools and other institutions for education of SEN children shall, in line with the education goals, guarantee a safe and supportive learning environment wherein physical punishment of children and of any kind of violence against and among children are prohibited, as well as discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, social and cultural background, religion, race, ethnic and national origin, physical and mental development is prohibited.

Education system	Is there a definition of inclusion in education?	Definitions of inclusion in education
Spain	Yes	Inclusive education is an aspiration for "all, without exception", with the most vulnerable being at the forefront of action plans as they face the greatest barriers. It is understood as the process of helping to overcome barriers that limit the presence, participation and achievement of learners, as well as the process of strengthening the capacity of the education system.
Sweden	Yes	The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools defines inclusion as meaning that the education should be organised so that everyone can participate based on their circumstances and succeed in learning.
Türkiye	Yes	Basic Law on National Education, No. 1739 dated 1973 Article 4: Educational institutions are open to everyone regardless of language, race, gender, disability or religion. In education, no one person, family, group or class shall be granted privilege.
United States	Yes	Similar to the previous question, while there is no explicit definition of "inclusion in education," the concept is implicit within the Department's mission and throughout guiding policy documents to meet the needs of all students. Inclusion also has particular meaning within the special education context to ensure that special education students can receive support while staying in a general education classroom. The governing legislation for children with disabilities is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which requires states to have in effect policies and procedures to demonstrate that the State has established a goal of providing full educational opportunity to all children with disabilities, aged birth through 21, and a detailed timetable for accomplishing that goal.

Note: This table is based on answers to the question from the Strength through Diversity Policy Survey "If available, please provide an English translation of the definition of inclusion in education. Such definition(s) can be embedded in your legislative framework or can be part of document(s) published by a national (or sub-national) authority". Thirty-four education systems responded to this question.