

Professional Development for Teachers more important than extra pay

In a massive new study published by the [McKinsey Global Institute](#), Susan Lund, James Manyika, Scott Nyquist, Lenny Mendonca, and Sreenivas Ramaswamy discuss the five opportunities for U.S. growth and renewal.

Among other things, they have a lengthy discussion about America's education system and how it has yielded some of the most underperforming students in the developed world.

They believe that an impending wave of teacher retirements presents an opportunity to get some top-notch educators into the system. From [McKinsey](#):

The US teaching profession is poised to experience a wave of turnover, and now is the time to step up efforts to retain the best teachers and attract a new generation of top talent. There are currently 3.3 million public school teachers, but some 40 percent are expected to retire over the next decade, and another 400,000 are expected to leave for other reasons. By 2020, more than 50 percent of the current teachers in US schools will have begun their careers after 2012. **With a new generation of teachers entering the classroom, this is a unique opportunity to raise the quality of classroom instruction by changing recruitment approaches and providing a new level of coaching, mentoring, and training to build teaching skills in the critical first five years on the job.**

Of course, the issue is providing the right incentives to motivate people to pursue the career track:

Raising the quality of instruction starts with recruiting exceptional students into the teaching profession. Realizing meaningful gains will hinge on addressing the factors that have discouraged many candidates from entering the profession in the past: lack of a career ladder, low respect for the profession, low pay, and variable principal quality. A recent McKinsey survey of 1,600 high-performing college students found that just 9 percent wanted to go into teaching.

While pay isn't everything, it is something. And the authors provide some interesting global comparisons that show where the U.S. lags considerably:

US high school teachers are paid 72 percent as much as all college graduates in the workforce, while in other OECD countries, that figure is 90 percent (Exhibit 35). **But making teaching more attractive is not simply a matter of money: professional development is also essential (especially for new teachers and those who work in troubled schools). A meta-analysis of 1,300 studies found that students scored 21 percentage points higher than average on standardized tests when their instructors received more professional support and training.** Studies show that when training is ongoing, collaborative, and driven by relationships with individual coaches, it is most effective at helping teachers raise student achievement. The survey is from OECD, Education at a glance, 2012, McKinsey Global Institute Analysis.

McKinsey: "Countries with exceptional student achievement treat teaching as a highly selective profession that is accorded tremendous prestige and competitive compensation," wrote the authors. "Only the very best students are admitted into teaching programs in Singapore, Finland, and South Korea, for example, and standards are especially high for elementary school teachers"

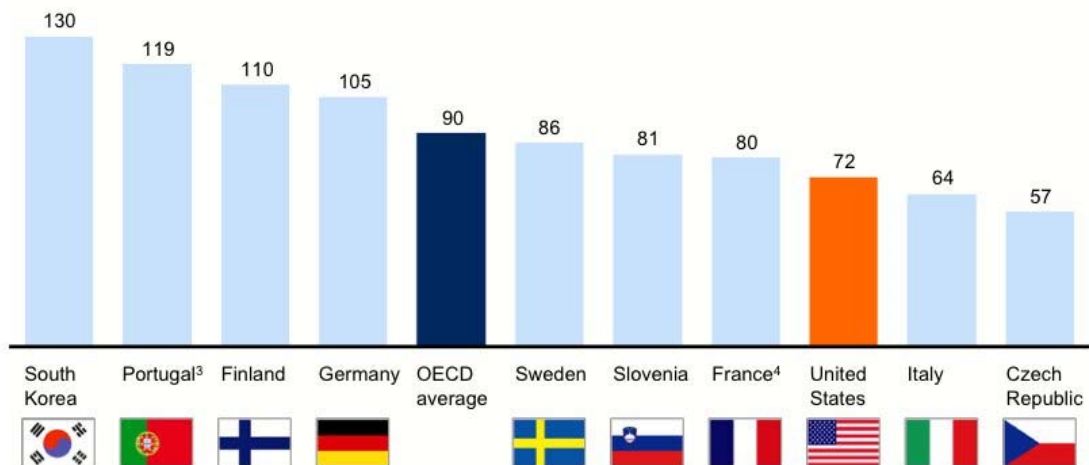
"The United States could consider options such as college grants for high-performing students who choose teaching, to remove the obstacle of future student loan debt," they add. "But regardless of the mechanisms chosen, teachers should be celebrated and respected as skilled professionals who provide a vital public service."

Exhibit 35

Many countries have higher teaching salaries relative to the average college graduate than the United States

Ratio of upper secondary teachers' salaries¹ to earnings² of tertiary-educated workers, 2010

%



1 Figures for Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Sweden, and the United States are actual salaries. Figures for the other countries are statutory salaries after 15 years of experience.

2 Earnings for full-time, full-year workers (ages 25–64) with a tertiary education.

3 Portugal, 2009.

4 France, 2008.

SOURCE: OECD, *Education at a glance*, 2012; McKinsey Global Institute analysis

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