



**High-Performing Systems for Tomorrow
International Comparative Study of Learning Systems in Top-Performing
Jurisdictions Now and in the Future**

The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) will fund a two-year international comparative study of learning systems in a set of high-performing education systems. The goal of this work is to understand how and why these jurisdictions are reshaping their education systems to prepare students for an uncertain future, while at the same time highlighting policy lessons drawn from the experience of these systems to date. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) will lead the study, but will do its work in close partnership with NCEE which will offer advice on the research plan and analysis.

More specifically, this study will focus on:

- how and why these jurisdictions are high-performing now, grounded in a rich, contextualized picture of how and why each jurisdiction developed its own approach;
- how these same systems are adapting and redesigning for the future, grounded in a broad understanding of how the jurisdictions are analyzing and envisioning that future; and
- whether the strategies and features that make these jurisdictions high-performing today will serve them well in the future.

Key Questions

Key questions to be addressed in this study include:

- To what extent do these high-performing jurisdictions currently embrace common strategies and system features?
 - What are the possible combinations of strategies and features that lead to strong performance across the system?
 - What is the interaction between jurisdiction-specific cultures and the strategies and features identified?
- How are the jurisdiction's leaders thinking about how technological developments and other global issues will affect their economy, the availability of jobs, incomes, political stability and skills needed for the future?
- What do each jurisdiction's education leaders think their vision for the future means for what, how and where students need to learn?

- What are these jurisdictions doing now to change their learning system in real time?
- Do some jurisdictions just see the need for “evolutionary” changes in education coming while others see the need for “revolutionary” changes and how does that affect the nature of their responses?
- To what extent do the factors that have made these jurisdictions high-performing against currently accepted measures of success seem likely to make the same jurisdictions equally successful against the very different measures of success likely to be used in a very different future?

Products

The study will produce:

- A set of profiles of the learning system in each study jurisdiction that provide a nuanced understanding of how and why that jurisdiction developed the system that it has, how that system is working now, and how and why it is being modified in real time
- A cross-case analysis that:
 - Identifies common features and underlying principles that appear to make these systems successful, focusing on the extent to which these features are present, and if so, how they are constructed and implemented differently in each system, and how they interact with each other to produce the observed results; and
 - Analyzes how these jurisdictions are thinking about and preparing for the future, including how they envision the future unfolding, what that means for what, how and where they need to teach their students, and whether the features that made them successful to date will serve them well in the future.
- A set of short policy briefs highlighting key findings of the study and other tools such as video or curated sets of key representative artifacts that would be helpful in communicating the findings of the research to different audiences

Leadership and Advisory Group

The Principal Investigator for the study will be Geoff Masters, Chief Executive of ACER. He will lead a team of leading researchers who will focus on each study jurisdiction. The study will be guided by an international advisory group, including: Peter Hill, Advisor, Assessment and Research Center, University of Melbourne; Lin Goodwin, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Hong Kong; James Pellegrino, Distinguished Professor and Co-Director of Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois-Chicago; Kai-Ming Cheng, Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Hong Kong; Barry McGaw, Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne; Andreas Schleicher, Special Advisor on Education Policy, OECD; and Vivien Stewart, Senior Advisor for Education, Asia Society.