Report
U.S. Education Delegation to Germany
May 3-8, 2015

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Introduction and Study Tour Overview

The National Public Education Support Fund (NPESF) organized a U.S. delegation of 39 education leaders on a study tour of Germany from May 3 – May 8, 2015 as part of its continuing series of international visits to top-performing and presently improving educational systems. Our purpose was to explore how education reform drivers in Germany could inform US policy and state strategies to accelerate educational progress and attainment in the American context. The U.S. delegation included national and state policy makers, educators, and thought leaders, and members of the Education Funder Strategy Group (ESFG), a peer learning community of leading foundations focused on education policy. Our special thanks to the Robert Bosch Foundation in Germany for serving as hosts for the learning journey.

The delegation focused on Germany’s education system because much like in the United States, education policy and governance in Germany is not controlled by the central government, but by the federated states (called Länder), where educational achievement varies significantly.

Germany, the largest country in the European Union, is also Europe’s strongest economy, and prides itself on a strong literary tradition and belief in social equality. Germany was shocked when the results of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) first Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exams in 2000 were not only lower than the OECD average for reading, but revealed a higher correlation between family socio-economic status and student achievement than any other OECD country. This "PISA shock" led to widespread national debate on how best to reform Germany's complex education system. Longer school days, a move toward a less segregated two-pillared system, and a push for standardized national curricula are among the various advances in policy adopted by the country since their initial low scores on PISA provoked change. Although the reforms are ongoing, Germany’s performance in mathematics, reading, and science on PISA now rank above the OECD average. Moreover, Germany is one of only three countries that have improved in both mathematics performance and equity on PISA since 2003.

Under the direction of the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), the delegation examined the policies and practices that continue to drive Germany’s improving federated education system.

The goals of the delegation were to:

- Understand and analyze the key levers at the federal and state levels that are driving educational improvement within Germany’s federated system in order to inform state strategies in implementing new and higher state standards in the U.S.
- Examine the role that standards, curriculum, and assessment have played in improving education attainment in Germany’s federated system to inform implementation strategies in the U.S.
- Understand the role that increasing educational equity has played in Germany’s improving performance.
Before arriving in Germany, the delegation reviewed background materials that included comprehensive reviews of the state of education in Germany. These resources included the OECD Germany Country Note. Delegates also read the 2014 indicator-based report, “Education in Germany,” which documents the state of the education system across a wide variety of areas. Researcher, professor, and German authority on international education reform, Dr. Eckhard Klieme of DIPF, served as the trip’s intellectual guide and cultural interpreter. Dr. Juliane Grünkorn, Officer for Educational Quality and Evaluation, DIPF served as a co-designer and moderator for the trip.

This report reviews and summarizes a number of the perceptions that developed from the dialogues that occurred during the meetings and site visits in addition to outlining a number of the lessons learned from Germany. After taking time to reflect on the rich insights gained from the learning journey, the expectation is that delegates will cultivate further discussions about the lessons learned from Germany in order to help inform and deepen their work in the U.S.

**The German Education System**
Similar to the governmental structure in the United States, the states exercise the foremost degree of authority over schooling in Germany. Compulsory education normally begins at age six for resident children with different enrollment policies regarding the specific birthdate of a child set by the individual states. Schools in Germany are systematized by the federal states. There are several different types of schools to select from and specifics vary from state to state. No federal money is used for education with the exception of investment in building and infrastructure and research. Policy coordination between the states is completed by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (KMK).

The school day in Germany is generally shorter than in the U.S. In recent years, more schools have started to offer extended days. The school day generally includes study hours for the completion of assignments, various extracurricular activities, and hot lunch in the cafeteria. Students earn grades on a scale of one to six, with one being the highest grade.

Preschool and kindergarten is not compulsory, but the majority of early learners attend either or both. Compulsory education generally begins in August or September of the year after a child has turned six. Elementary education lasts four to six years, and varies depending on the state in which the student resides. After elementary school, students attend secondary schooling. The variety of secondary schools can seem rather complex because of the German federal system. In most states, students have a choice between three types of schools with varying academic standards. Parents decide which type of secondary school to attend based on teacher recommendations.

The three choices for secondary education in Germany are Gymnasium, Realschule, and Hauptschule. Gymnasium is the most demanding of the secondary school choices in Germany and serves as the groundwork for higher education. After a total of twelve or thirteen years of education (elementary and secondary school), students take a final exam called Abitur, which entitles a student to attend university. Realschule prepares students for attending one of the
numerous vocational schools in Germany, begin commercial training, or enter into an apprenticeship. The last option for students is to attend Hauptschule, which prepares students for vocational education or training in many crafts. Theoretically, students with excellent grades at Realschule or Hauptschule have the opportunity to go on to school types at upper secondary level, for instance, after finishing Realschule you can apply for a Gymnasium. Some states have a comprehensive option, Gesamtschule, which combines all three types of secondary school. These schools allow students to advance more easily to more demanding courses according to their academic performance. In recent years, several states, including Berlin, only offer two types of schools: Gymnasium and Sekundarschule. The latter one combines Hauptschule and Realschule and provides courses and degrees at the lower secondary level.

**Highlights of the Learning Journey**

**School Site Visits**

In Germany, the delegation had the chance to visit four distinct schools, three in Berlin and one in Hamburg. Delegates were given the opportunity to visit the **Heinz Brandt Schule**, a comprehensive school in a difficult social environment. The school is recognized for its remarkable concept of fostering students and preparing them for life and work. In 2011, the school was awarded the German School Award by the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Heidehof Foundation in Germany. The award is co-sponsored by partners in the media and is a highly regarded honor. Schools are selected based on their pioneering role in six key areas: power, handling diversity, teaching quality, responsibility, school life, and school as a learning institution.

Another school visit was to the **Albert Schweitzer Schule**, a Gymnasium with a well-regarded approach to integration as the school has a high percentage of students of non-German origin. The third school visit in Berlin was to the **Brillat-Savarin Schule**. Brillat-Savarin is a vocational school with over 5,000 students that has had success with students of non-German origin in addition to other challenges. Students enrolled in the hospitality track prepared and served a meal to study tour delegates.

On a day trip to Hamburg, delegates visited the **Erich-Kästner Schule**, a primary and secondary school (comprehensive school) with a heavy focus on inclusion. In 2014, the Erich-Kästner Schule was awarded the German School Award as well.
Government Officials
The delegation on the NPESF study tour had the chance to meet with several government officials while in Germany. Delegates had lunch with Ambassador John Emerson, United States Ambassador to Germany. During lunch, Ambassador Emerson highlighted the strong relationship between the United States and Germany. He stressed the strength of the career and technical education (CTE) track in Germany in comparison with the U.S. The ambassador called for leaders in the U.S. to take greater strides to eliminate the stigma that exists in American culture regarding vocational education as the U.S. continues to push the “college for all” model. He emphasized the importance of offering options to students from an early age and various pathways to careers that may be a better fit for the careers that they aspire to hold as adults. Overall, the retention rate for the VET track in Germany is admirable and speaks to the environment, mentality, and work-lifestyle that students-turned-workers have.

Delegates had dinner with Minister Sylvia Lӧhrmann, State Minister for School and Education, North Rhine-Westphalia and Vice-President of the KMK. The KMK is the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in Germany and serves to unite the ministers and senators of the Länder responsible for education, higher education and research, as well as cultural affairs. As a minister from North Rhine-Westphalia, Minister Lӧhrmann represents the most populated state in Germany. The key to successful implementation of many of the educational reforms in Germany, according to Löhrmann, has been to strike a careful balance when crafting policy so that it provides a strong framework while still requiring some customization at the state level. She also focused on the strides Germany has made in educating disabled students and increasing inclusion since the early 2000s.

While in Hamburg, the delegates met with Senator Ties Rabe, State Minister for Schools and Vocational Training, Hamburg. He discussed standards and accountability, the school inspectorate, and drivers of student success. He cautioned of the many limitations of data, especially in instances where the drivers of student success are not completely understood.

German Institute for International Educational Research
The German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) supports educational research, policy, practice, and administration on the basis of scientific infrastructure services in addition to research and educational system evaluations. DIPF aligns fundamental research with innovative developmental work and its implementation to the benefit of society. In addition to Dr. Eckhard Klieme and Dr. Juliane Grünkorn from DIPF serving as facilitators of the study tour, delegates met with representatives from DIPF, including Dr. Stefan Kühne, Project Coordinator for Educational Monitoring and Reporting at DIPF; Dr. Stefan Braukmann, Professor for Educational Quality Improvement at the Alpen-Adria University, and Dr. Hans-Peter Füssel, Professor for Governance Issues at the Humbolt University in Berlin. As experts in educational policy and governance, they worked with DIPF, a research and reporting authoring agency, to compose “Education in Germany”, an indicator-based report commissioned by the German

“Germany has a system in which 80 to 85% of students have a credible credential by age 25. How can the U.S. create this in its own system?”

- Gene Bottoms, Southern Regional Education Board
Ministry of Education as part of the national reporting requirements developed after the “PISA shock” experienced in Germany. This national education report is one of the major tools used for monitoring education in Germany. The report is published every two-years and focuses on the same indicators to enable valid year-to-year comparison. Amongst other areas, the report highlighted improvements and continued challenges facing the Germany in early learning, immigration, special education, VET and higher education, and the extension of the school day.

Additional Areas of Exploration

- **Coordination of Federal Structures**  
  Dr. Hans-Peter Füssel, Professor at Humbolt University zu Berlin and Udo Michallik, Secretary-General of the KMK

- **Standards, Assessment, and Competency-Based Education in Germany**  
  Dr. Hans Anand Pant, Professor at Humbolt University zu Berlin, Director of the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (IQB) and Managing Director of the German School Academy

- **Quality Development and Quality Assurance**  
  Dr. Norbert Martizen, Director of the State Institute for Educational Monitoring (IfBQ Hamburg); Dr. Martina Diedrich, Head of the Department for School Supervision and System Monitoring, IfBQ Hamburg; and Dr. Jan Poerschke, Head of the Department for Quality Development and Evaluation, IfBQ Hamburg.

- **Teacher Education**  
  Dr. Kristina Reiss, Professor and Dean of Faculty at TUM School of Education; Dr. Ilka Parchmann, Professor and Vice-President at the Christian-Albrechts University of Kiel; and Ilka Hoffman, Executive Board Member, German Union for Education and Science (GEW).

- **Teacher Training and Professional Development**  
  Dr. Lars Holzäpfel, Professor, the Institute of Mathematics at the University of Education in Freiburg, Germany.

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**  
  Dr. Uwe Lehmpfuhl, Deputy of Division, Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) in Bonn; and Dr. Susan Seeber, Professor and Chair of Business Education and Human Resource Development, University of Göttingen.

**World Education Summit**

At the conclusion of the study tour, delegates were afforded the opportunity to attend the inaugural meeting of the World Education Summit. The summit was a full-day event sponsored by the Robert Bosch Foundation. The summit convened many highly distinguished experts in the field of education globally. Attendees included senior scholars, practitioners, government officials, members of the media, and leaders from the non-profit and philanthropic sector. The purpose was to set a blueprint for an annual gathering in Germany where leaders are empowered to share, discuss, and disseminate new knowledge in the field of education. In addition to study tour delegates, a sampling of leaders in attendance in the conference included Dr. Kai-ming Cheng, Chair Professor of Education, University of Hong Kong; Andreas
Schleicher, Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD; Xavier Prats Monné, Director-General for Education and Culture, the European Commission; and Kirsty Lang, journalist and broadcaster with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

**Key Lessons from Germany**

Germany’s improvements on PISA show the importance of uniform standards and adequate supports. From the many visits and discussions with German leaders, it was evident that no single reform can be attributed to Germany’s overall improvement. Simply put, there exists no single story for success. However, the delegation was impressed by a number of the recent policies and practices that have driven Germany’s continued progress.

**Public Consensus**

Germans have always maintained a strong cultural commitment to education. The release of the disappointing results of PISA in 2000 led to the widespread “PISA shock” throughout Germany, and prompted a broad debate about the strengths and weaknesses in the German school system and its structure. The “shock” led to a growing interest in new concepts for improving the institutional effectiveness of the education system by reshaping institutional patterns. There exists a strong shared sense of responsibility to further cultivate the education system in Germany.

At this point, little evidence exists that shows Germany’s improved performance on PISA was a direct result of the changes in governance. Rather, it was the change in prioritization of education created by immense public pressure that triggered system-wide improvement. After the release of the initial PISA results, the priority placed on education as a policy issue no longer varied in importance between the federal states. A national conversation took place regarding the specific reforms that must be implemented in order to enhance accountability. Placing education at the top of the national policy agenda paved the way for the adoption of national standards.

Additionally, tuition is free in German higher education, even for foreign students. Students don’t have the same concerns as their U.S. counterparts regarding student loan debt. Learners can focus their concern on exams or learning a trade. In general, students, parents, educators,
and business leaders of all political backgrounds feel the same way: higher education should be seen as a public good.

**National Standards and Educational Reporting: A Shared Responsibility between State and Federal Government**

At the national level, educational reporting is one of the shared responsibilities between the Federal Government and individual states. States have some leeway on reporting and many utilize entities such as the Institute for Educational Monitoring (IfBQ) in Hamburg to oversee reporting. The KMK also worked to develop a set of national standards that were implemented by each of the states. The ministers enacted national standards in core subject areas in 2003-2004. Furthermore, the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (IQB) was established by the KMK to define the precise educational standards and elaborate them as the basis for developing tasks which are used to determine whether or not the expected competences set out in the educational standards are being achieved.

The overall role of the KMK serves to incorporate new aspects of schooling and ensure that these facets have a place in improving education across the states: foundations, research, and methods while still providing localities with autonomy.

In addition to the development of uniformity in standards and reporting, the KMK worked with the federal states on their development of testing standards that made the Abitur more comparable between the states. The ministers regularly work together to provide a platform for teachers, school leaders, and policy makers to exchange ideas. Special education, immigration, and equity are also areas in which the KMK works to develop consistency in policy and practice. Ministers are currently developing national competency-based standards for school leadership.

The basic law in Germany states that education is a state matter (Article 30, Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany) and includes provisions on the cooperation between the Federal Government and the states (Article 91b). Given Germany’s limited federal role in education, especially in the area of funding, true consensus had to be reached between the states in order for reform to demonstrate success. The 2000 PISA test triggered a positive dialogue because it presented empirical data, on a national scale, which indicated several successes and failures in the classroom. Traditionally, the individual states held greatly varied views of success.

The PISA shock spawned a true public discourse that created a widespread desire to implement reforms and modifications. The Federal Government reacted to by offering funding that states could pursue. A comprehensive strategy for educational monitoring was developed by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK).
Accountability
One area in which the U.S. varies greatly from other industrialized nations is the methods by which educators, schools, and districts are held accountable. Without a doubt, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data is necessary to create rational comparisons and measure the degree of change over time. As is the case with students in the U.S., students throughout Germany participate in various forms of standardized testing. However, the method by which data is used in each country contrasts greatly. Data, like most measures of accountability in Germany, is designed to shine a light on areas where improvements can be made at the classroom, school, district, and state levels. German leaders see limitations to testing and the ability to assess basic competency questions through a single test. Accountability in German education doesn’t necessarily accompany punishment/incentives. Germans share a general belief that high accountability can be achieved with low stakes.

A large measure of accountability for schools in Germany is the independent school inspectorate. School Inspections are conducted by a team of experts that visit each school within a state. They closely observe how the school operates on a daily basis and examine the methods by which they bring about quality improvement and assurance. Inspectors also measure teamwork among teachers in addition to the approaches taken by school leaders. Inspectors are experts who have expertise in the area of school reform and seek areas of success as well as capacities that require improvement. The principal and teachers and other school personnel use this information for self-awareness and guidance. The inspectors not only produce aggregate reports, but also school specific reports that allow them to focus on areas for improvement.

School inspections are designed to shine a light and offer an additional support for schools. Test results and inspections provide a tool for quality management. School leaders and principals remain at the forefront of handling feedback from the inspection. No system exists to punish or dismiss school leaders. Rather, coaching and counseling is highlighted for school improvement. At the present time, there is a shift in focus away from increased testing towards increased leadership development in order to build best practices. Notably, a continued effort to align assessment, feedback, and school improvement prevails in the education system.

Teacher Training and Professional Development
Providing students with access to quality educators is one of the most substantial elements to achieving high rates of student success. The OECD notes that the type and quality of the training teachers receive, in addition to the requirements to enter and progress through the teaching profession, have significant consequences on the quality of the teaching force.

“I’m eager to explore how we can translate concepts of accountability with the ideas from the inspector council.”

- Donna Johnson, Delaware State Board of Education
Germany has the longest pre-service teacher training among all countries participating in PISA\(^1\). To become a teacher in Germany applicants must hold the higher education entrance qualification (Abitur) gained after 13 (or 12 years in some Länder) years of school (see yellow card at the picture). All teachers receive their pre-service training in two stages (see dark blue cards at the picture):

- An initial phase of teacher education at a university or a college of art/music ends with a bachelor and a master degree. The duration of studies range from 3-4 years (primary school teaching) to 4-5 or even 6 years (higher secondary school teaching).

- The second phase of teacher education is normally a two year practical training in school. The prospective teachers attend teacher seminars and hold lessons in their training school that are partly supervised by a teacher trainer. During this phase the prospective teacher is paid a trainee’s salary. At the end of this phase the student needs to pass an exam.

After completion of the practical phase the Länder offer in-service teachers different options for professional development (see light blue cards at the picture). This teacher training underlies different philosophies in the Länder. Some leave teacher in-service training to non-state institutions or to individual initiatives, some offer in-service seminars only to so-called multiplicators, and others offer regional school based in-service courses. An important tool utilized in teacher education in Germany is the use of problem orientation modules, which offer information on pedagogy for various ages. As schools and educators must constantly contend with complex societal problems, these modules present these complications in a school context with the goal of preparing teachers once in the classroom. Additionally, competitive practical examinations are required to enter pre-service teacher training and participate in teaching practicums to obtain full licensure after being recruited.

As teachers are provided with much greater autonomy in their in their classrooms than in the U.S., professional development is seen as a necessary area of systemic change in the German education system. Each state in Germany maintains a state center of teaching pedagogy, which sends teachers out to schools as multipliers. Teachers are empowered to mentor one another

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in addition to discussing potential explanations of school performance as they know their individual school culture best.

**Equity**

Germany was one of the first countries globally to provide compulsory education to all children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the 2000 PISA results showed that the level of social equity in education in Germany was among the lowest of all OECD countries. In 2000, Germany was among the lowest of all OECD countries in terms of the level of social equity in education. Yet, by 2012, Germany was around the OECD average in equity in education. Although Germany, like most countries, still struggles with disparities in performance based on socio-economic status, there have been notable improvements in the performance among low-achieving students, which has been attributed directly to a rise in equity levels. In fact, Germany is one of only a few countries that have improved in both mathematics performance and equity since 2003. The KMK designed language programs and supplementary content programs in elementary schools to address equity issues related to both socio-economic status and immigration.

Traditionally, immigrant students are at a greater socio-economic disadvantage than their peers. Reforms adopted since 2001 to promote quality and equity in education appear to have had an encouraging effect on the general performance of immigrant students in Germany. In 2000 and 2003, immigrant students scored over 80 points below non-immigrant students in mathematics on PISA. By 2012, this difference in performance had plunged to 54 points. Although Germany still has a long way to go in terms of achieving truly equitable outcomes for all students, the country has made significant progress in little over a decade.

Equity served as a key driver for the KMK recommendation to restructure “tracks” within the German education system. Due to inequality in student preparation for secondary education, the bar was essentially lowered by “eliminating” the lowest “track” (see “Sekundarschule”, part “The German Education System”). A substantially larger number of students now earn entrance into the gymnasium academic track. A correlation exists between more students attending secondary schools with an academic focus and a rise in test scores. Additionally, the growth in the percentage of students attending gymnasium has resulted in an increase in higher education enrollment throughout Germany. For the first time in German history, more students are enrolling in higher education than in the VET system.

**Career and Technical Education**

“There are more than two components to education “reform”. Federal and state leaders and “business” and “industry” need to work closer together to find real answers!

- NPESF Study Tour Delegate

Despite the rise in university attendance, career and technical education (VET) is seen as a key factor to the success of the national economy in Germany. It functions as the bridge between general education and the labor market. A large emphasis on VET in Germany is supported through public-private partnerships between government and industry. Germany’s sustained
high retention rate in the VET track speaks to the environment, mentality, and work lifestyle that students-turned-workers have. The VET system has also contributed to low youth unemployment.

The German VET system serves as an important path to greater equity. Recent reforms have increased the number of dual study programs in higher education in Germany. Most of these programs are offered by universities of applied sciences. However, improvements must be made to the VET system in Germany to eliminate social disparities. Students of migrant backgrounds are often limited in their opportunities if perceived as being unprepared to enter the system.

**Conclusion and Challenges for Germany**

Germany’s successes in improving PISA results help to demonstrate the significant role that a common, collective interest in school improvement potentially has on overall systems change. With a finance and policy structure in education that is very similar to that in the U.S., America can learn from the recent reforms in Germany.

While Germany has implemented impressive reforms over the past decade, the country still has many challenges. In addition, only limited quantitative data exists with respect to many of the pertinent issues facing education in Germany. Data related to school completion is also considerably more limited than in the U.S. Many of the challenges that Germany continues to experience are common place across the globe. Each of these issues continues to pose a challenge to policymakers here in the United States. A few of Germany’s largest obstacles are highlighted below.

**Equity**

Although education levels in Germany have risen over the last decade, only partial success has been shown overall performance after controlling for a learner’s socio-economic status. In terms of PISA results, Germany has seen improvement in eliminating disparities with math skills in the primary grades and reading skills with 15-year-old students. However, there has been no reduction over the last decade in the disparities in reading skills between primary school students or math skills with 15-year-old students. PISA scores indicate that in general, the correlation between academic performance and social factors is still average or higher than the international average.

While full-day schooling is growing in popularity, there is a long road ahead before it becomes the norm in Germany. Consequently, students from advantaged backgrounds are given more homework on average than those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds also spend more time in regular mathematics lessons than do their peers, who are often provided with greater options in enrolling in elective courses.
Since 2000, enrollment in pre-primary education is up across the nation. However, the likelihood that a child will attend early childhood education is largely dependent on socio-economic status. 90% of advantaged students attend at least one year of pre-primary education, but fewer than 80% of disadvantaged students report attendance in one year or more of pre-primary education. Between 2003 and 2012, the disparity between pre-primary school attendance based on socio-economic status has narrowed.

Gender equity remains an issue facing Germany, but reforms have led to decreases in the overall performance gap between girls and boys from 2003 to 2012.

**Special Education**

More than two thirds of students with special educational needs attend early learning centers with children without disabilities. However, at each successive educational stage, the percentage of students who are taught in an inclusive environment decreases. In primary school, 44% of students are educated in inclusive environments, and by secondary school, this figure drops to 23%. Nationally, almost three quarters of students with special needs that are not educated in an inclusive setting leave the education system without general school qualifications. In higher education, students with disabilities must meet the same requirements as students without disabilities, but many supports are not provided at certain universities.

The good news is that a greater percentage of students with and without disabilities attend the same facilities now than they did in 2000. Although the KMK has made inclusion a priority, there is a lack of a completely unified strategy across all stages of the education system in order to appropriately compensate for regional differences.

**Immigration**

Although reforms made since 2000 have increased the quality of education for all students and made strides in leveling the playing field, immigrant students continue to perform far below average. The good news is that while in 2003, immigrant students scored 81 points below non-immigrant students in mathematics on PISA, the difference contracted to 54 points by 2012.

Immigrant students, especially those entering Germany at a later age, often face challenges when entering the dual-track education system in that they are seldom prepared to enter a trade or apprenticeship.

**Inability to Remove Ineffective School Leadership**

A substantial amount of authority is granted to principals of individual schools in Germany. Almost all principals in Germany are former teachers. Many prove to be great leaders, but some are not cut out for the challenge. A particular area of limitation is in student and staff management. At this point in time, it is nearly impossible to eliminate an ineffective principal in Germany.
**Inability to Remove Ineffective School Leadership**

The multiple drivers of reform to German public education provide a promising example of systems change developed through a national prioritization of public education improvement. Such a shift in the mindset and culture of education reform in the U.S. could serve to accelerate progress here.

Nevertheless, Germany’s vision for reform is still very much a work in progress. As many reforms have yet to be fully-implemented and lack sufficient quantitative data, limited conclusions can be generated regarding the overall effectiveness of this particular case study as it exists in its current stages.

Germany’s improvement on PISA helps to demonstrate the significance of specific variables such as the quality of teacher education programs as part of the complete picture of its overall success in the educational arena. Unlike the majority of the previous NPESF international learning journeys, it is challenging in Germany to pinpoint a concise long-term vision of reform representing the interests of all students.

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# U.S. Education Delegation to Germany

May 2015

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<td>Peter Oppenheim</td>
<td>U.S. Senate HELP Committee</td>
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<td>Nathalie Rajevic</td>
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<td>Teresa Rivero</td>
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<td>Roberto Rodriguez</td>
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<td>Chris Shearer</td>
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<td>Emma Vadehra</td>
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Agenda: Germany Education Study Tour  
May 3-8, 2015

Learning Objectives

1) Understand the key levers that have driven educational improvement within Germany’s federated system in order to inform state strategies for implementing higher learning standards (e.g. Common Core) and other capacity-building measures in the U.S.
2) Examine the role that standards, curriculum, and assessment have played in improving education attainment in Germany to inform U.S. implementation processes.
3) Understand the role that increasing educational equity has played in Germany’s improving student outcomes to inform strategies to close the opportunity gap in the American context.

Sunday, May 3

Morning  Arrive in Berlin from the U.S. and take taxis to the Arcotel John F. Berlin, Germany
3:00 PM  Meet in the hotel lobby at the Arcotel John F. for a walking tour of Berlin
5:45 PM  Meet in the hotel lobby to walk together to the Robert Bosch Foundation at Französische Straße 32 10117 Berlin.
6:00 PM  Opening dinner and orientation at the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH (RBSG)
  ▪ Introductions among U.S. delegates, sponsors, and facilitators
  ▪ Outline of German system and overview for the week
  ▪ Dinner presentation: Towards Equity, Accountability, and High Performance, Recent Transformation of Education in Germany by Eckhard Klieme, Professor at the Goethe-University Frankfurt and Director, Department for Educational Quality and Evaluation, German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF).

Monday, May 4

8:45 AM  Meet in Arcotel John F. lobby; depart via bus to school visits
9:30 AM  Parallel school visits to the Heinz Brandt Schule and Albert Schweitzer Schule. Delegates will be broken into two groups based on their preference of site visit location. The Heinz Brandt Schule is a comprehensive school in a difficult social environment with a remarkable concept of fostering students and preparing them for life and work. The Albert Schweitzer Schule is a Gymnasium with a highly regarded approach to integration as the school has a high percentage of the student population of non-German origin.
11:30 AM  Depart via bus to Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBSG)
12:00 PM  Lunch with Ambassador John Emerson, U.S. Ambassador to Germany at RBSG
1:00 PM Presentation on governance in education policy with **Hans-Peter Füssel**, Professor for governance issues in modern education systems at the Humboldt-Universitaet zu Berlin. **Stefan Brauckmann**, Professor for educational quality improvement and assurance at the Alpen-Adria University, and **Stefan Kühne**, Project Coordinator for educational monitoring and reporting at DIPF, will discuss education governance at the school level in Germany.

2:00 PM Discussion on the coordination in federal structures with **Hans-Peter Füssel**, Professor at Humboldt-Universitaet zu Berlin and **Udo Michallik**, Secretary-General of the Standing Conference of the State Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK).

3:00 PM Coffee break and reflection/discussion among delegates

**Reflection Questions (Table Talk):**
- What strikes you about the governance structures in Germany’s education system that is different than or similar to the U.S. system?
- What impressed you about the role of policy and the governing structure in Germany’s educational progress over the past decade?
- What lessons can we learn from the layers of responsibility between the federal, state, district, and school levels in the implementation of educational improvement strategies?

4:00 PM Discussion on standards, assessment, and competency-based education with an overview of the monitoring process in Germany with **Hans Anand Pant**, Director of the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (IQB) and Managing Director of the German School Academy.

5:00 PM Overview to the agenda for Tuesday, May 5 and discussion time (pair share)

**Reflection Question (Pair Share):**
- What areas of alignment in the system did you observe today, reflecting on your view into the classroom/school level this morning and governing structures and policies in the afternoon?

*Please use the index cards on the tables to write down any questions that arose for you today about Germany’s improvement and implementation strategy that we should explore more during the week?*

5:45 PM Walk to dinner at Brasserie Gendarmenmarkt *(see Map C)*

6:00 PM Dinner at Brasserie Gendarmenmarkt with presentation by **Minister Sylvia Löhrmann**, State Minister for School and Education, North Rine Westphalia, and Vice-President of the Standing Conference of the State Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK).

8:30 PM Walk back to Arcotel John F. Hotel
Tuesday, May 5

6:30 AM  Meet in the lobby of Arcotel John F; depart via bus to Hamburg

10:00 AM  Visit the Erich-Kästner Schule in Hamburg. The Erich-Kästner Schule is primary secondary school with a heavy focus on inclusion. Joachim Herrmann of the State Institute for Teacher Education and School Development in Hamburg will serve as our accompanying expert for the site visit.

12:00 PM  Transfer by bus to Bucerius Kunst Forum for lunch with Sascha Suhrke, Program Director for Politics and Society at the ZEIT Foundation and free time in Hamburg

2:00 PM  Discussion at Bucerius Kunst Forum on standards and assessment with a welcome and brief discussion on monitoring by Senator Ties Rabe, State Minister for Schools and Vocational Training, Hamburg. Following the senator will be a panel on quality development and quality assurance featuring Norbert Maritzen, Director of the State Institute for Educational Monitoring (IfBQ Hamburg); Martina Diedrich, Head of the Department for School Supervision and System Monitoring, IfBQ Hamburg; and Jan Poerschke, Head of the Department for Quality Development and Evaluation, IfBQ Hamburg.

4:00 PM  Depart for Berlin via bus and reflection/discussion between delegates

Reflection Questions (informal discussion with your seat mate on the bus):
- What were your main takeaways from Hamburg’s use and implementation of standards and assessments to drive educational improvement?
- What other drivers appear to be important to lifting student outcomes?
- How do you see the relevance of these takeaways to your work in the U.S. context?

7:00 PM  Arrive at Arcotel John F. hotel - Free evening in Berlin

Wednesday, May 6

8:30 AM  Meet in the lobby of the Arcotel John F. and walk to Robert Bosch Stiftung

8:45 AM  Introduction to the agenda for the day by Juliane Grünkorn, Officer, Department for Educational Quality and Evaluation, German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF)

9:00 AM  Discussion on teacher education in Germany with Kristina Reiss, Professor and Dean of Faculty at TUM School of Education; Ilka Parchmann, Professor and Vice-President at
Christian-Albrechts University of Kiel; and Ilka Hoffman, Executive Board Member, German Union for Education and Science (GEW)

11:00 AM     Break

11:15 AM     Reflection/discussion among delegates

Reflection Questions:
• What role has teacher education in Germany played in its improvement strategy over the past decade?

How has Germany aligned teacher education with the development of new standards, curriculum and assessments?

12:30 AM     Lunch at RBSG and reflection/discussion among delegates

1:30 PM     Presentation and discussion on teacher training and professional development by Lars Holzäpfel, Professor at the Institute of Mathematics at the University of Education in Freiburg, Germany

3:30 PM     Reflection/discussion among delegates and short introduction to Thursday's agenda

Reflection Question (pair share, followed by comments in the full group)
• Are there aspects of the German teacher development and evaluation process that could be applied to strengthening the U.S. teaching profession?

4:30 PM     Walk to Arcotel John F.

4:45 PM     Free-time

6:15 PM     Meet in lobby of Arcotel John F. and walk to dinner at Restaurant Lutter und Wegner (see Map D)

8:00 PM     Walk back to Arcotel John F.

Thursday, May 7

8:15 AM     Meet in lobby of Arcotel John F. and depart via bus to school site visit

9:00 AM     Meet at Brillat-Savarin Schule. Brillat-Savarin is a vocational school with over 5,000 students that has had success with students of non-German origin in addition to other challenges

11:00 AM     Break

11:15 AM     Panel discussion on career and technical education (CTE) at Brillat-Savarin Schule with Uwe Lehmpfuhl, Deputy of Division, Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) in Bonn; and Susan Seeber, Professor and Chair of Business Education and Human Resource Development, University of Göttingen
12:45 PM  Onsite lunch by culinary students at **Brillat-Savarin Schule**

1:30 PM  Reflection/discussion among delegates on role of CTE in German education system

2:15 PM  Break

2:30 PM  Closing remarks/reflection and insights and implications with **Dagmar Wolf**, Head of Education Section, Robert Bosch Stiftung and **Eckhard Klieme**, Professor at the Goethe-University Frankfurt and Director, Department for Educational Quality and Evaluation, German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF).

3:00 PM  Delegation Discussion – Final Reflections
- Road Trip Recap – What did we do and see together?
- Positive Impressions and Lingering Questions
- What are the implications for our work back home?
- Next Steps individually and/or collectively?

4:30 PM  Adjourn and Depart for Arcotel John F. Berlin by bus

5:15 PM  Free-time

6:30 PM  Opening reception and dinner for the inaugural meeting of the World Education Summit at **Robert Bosch Stiftung**

**Friday, May 8**

8:45 AM  Meet in the lobby of the **Arcotel John F.** and walk to **Robert Bosch Stiftung**

9:00 AM  Inaugural meeting of the World Education Summit hosted by Robert Bosch Stiftung (see separate agenda)

5:30 PM  World Education Summit Adjourns: Farewell, Thank You and Safe Travel!