

## **MONITORING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES OF THE GERMAN APPROACH**

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The results from the PISA 2000 study came as a shock to Germany. The findings showed that student performance in German schools ranked below the OECD average and that the distance between the lowest performing and the highest performing students was larger than in most of the other OECD-countries participating in PISA. This was mainly due to the particularly low scores of the weakest students in the population. In addition, the performance disadvantages of students with low socio-economic status and immigration histories were quite large in international comparison. To improve this situation, policy makers in Germany decided to focus the attention of stakeholders in the school system more on the output side of educational processes than was previously the case. The ministries of education of the 16 German *Laender* introduced common educational standards describing the competencies and skills students are expected to have acquired by the time they reach important transition points in their school careers. The Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (IQB) at the Humboldt University of Berlin was founded by the *Laender* and entrusted with developing a national assessment system that determines on a regular basis, every 3-4 years, to what extent the standards are reached. As a central part of the *Laender* strategies for implementing the competence-oriented standards, moreover, classroom-level tests in grades 3 and 8 are carried out every year in all German schools. The IQB develops competence models to provide criterion-based feedback on student achievement at the system and the classroom level. The presentation will describe and discuss both the potential and the challenges of this approach to monitoring student achievement.