

**PISA results: the absence of an
automatic efficiency-equity trade-off.
A comment**

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Efficiency

- Finland: High average student achievement and medium level of school expenditure
- Three broad explanatory factors of student achievement
 - Family background
 - Teacher quality
 - Institutional arrangements

Teacher quality

- Hard to find empirical evidence on observable characteristics important for teacher quality
 - US evidence indicate that educational length does not matter
- Concern that less talented individuals have chosen the teacher profession over the latest decades

High teacher quality in Finland?

- Teacher education clearly linked to research and lifelong learning
 - May promote continuous innovation
- High admission standards
 - Recruit teachers of high academic standard in contrast to the other Nordic countries

Institutional arrangements

- Local responsibility combined with accountability systems
 - Centrally determined objectives
 - Local freedom to choose teaching methods
 - Control of results: Making the local level accountable
- Student incentives
 - Student effort extremely important

Good institutions in Finland?

- Local discretion to some extent, based on general objectives
- Accountability systems? Seems to be present to a very small extent.
- The need for accountability systems may depend on teacher quality and the “mission” of the teachers
- For students strong macroeconomic incentives

Equity

- Why should there be a trade-off between efficiency and equity in schools?
- Sorting of students combined with peer effects
 - More to do with housing markets than education policy