

TEACHERS' WORKING TIME

Key Findings: England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Scotland, Russian Federation, United States

Primary and secondary school teachers in the United States taught more hours per year than teachers in the other G8 countries.

The amount of time teachers spend teaching in a country reflects the working environment of teachers in that country. Teaching hours and the extent of nonteaching duties are also elements of teachers' working conditions.

The average number of net teaching hours, the time directly associated with teaching, varies widely across countries. Teachers at both primary and secondary education levels in the United States reported spending more time teaching in 2001 than teachers in the other six countries with data present (figure 20). On average, net teaching hours for primary education ranged from 635 hours in Japan to 1139 hours in the United States.

Average teaching hours for lower secondary school teachers followed a similar pattern to that of primary school teachers, ranging from 557 hours in Japan to 1127 hours in the United States. Lower secondary as well as upper secondary school teachers in the United States had higher net teaching hours than in the other reporting countries.

In all seven countries with data, primary school teachers taught for more hours than lower and upper secondary teachers, but the degree varied widely between countries. The smallest differential

was in the United States, where primary school teachers reported teaching 12 more hours per year than lower secondary school teachers. France had the greatest differential, where primary school teachers had 296 more hours with students on average than upper secondary school teachers.

The regulations governing teachers' working time vary across the countries. (Data not shown. Please see *OECD (2003)*, Table D6.1 for more information.⁹) In England, Scotland, and the United States, the total working time for which teachers are required to be available at school is specified, although in the United States it is typically specified by state and local authorities. Total working time is defined as net teaching hours plus nonteaching time associated directly with teaching, although net teaching hours sometimes includes nonteaching time associated with other activities such as counseling students. Scotland and the United States specify the proportion between net teaching hours and those for nonteaching duties, while England specifies the total number of working hours required at school. Scotland also specifies the total statutory working hours for teachers. For Germany and Japan, only the total statutory working time (net teaching hours plus nonteaching hours devoted to activities like lesson preparation and grading) is specified with no restrictions on working time within school. In Japan, teachers' working time is specified only in the general regulations on civil servants' working time.

⁹Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2003). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2003*. Paris, France: Author.

Definitions and Methodology

Teaching staff refers to professional personnel directly involved in teaching students. This classification includes classroom teachers, special education teachers and department chairpersons whose duties include some teaching, but excludes teachers' aides and teaching/research assistants.

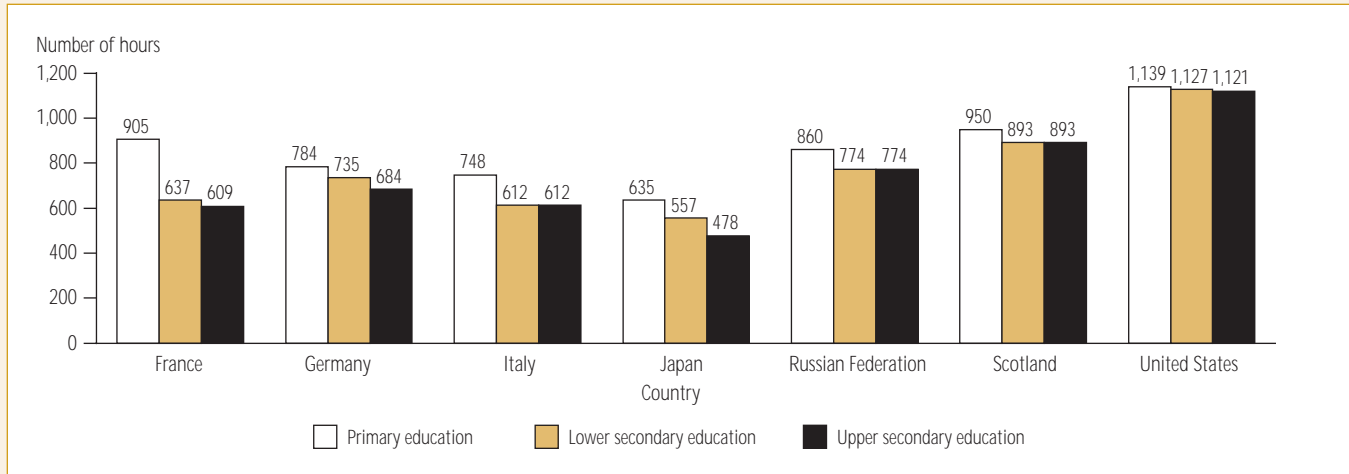
Net teaching hours refers to the number of teaching hours per year. This excludes break periods between lessons and days when schools are closed for public holidays and festivities. In primary education, however, short breaks that teachers spend with the class are typically included.

Working time in school refers to the working time teachers are supposed to be at school, including teaching time and non-

teaching time. It differs from net teaching hours in that it includes nonteaching hours.

Statutory working time refers to the normal working hours of a full-time teacher. According to the formal policy in a given country, working time can refer only to the time directly associated with teaching (and other curricular activities for students such as assignments and tests, but excluding annual examinations); or to time directly associated with teaching and to hours devoted to other activities related to teaching, such as lesson preparation, counseling students, correcting assignments and tests, professional development, meetings with parents, staff meetings and general school tasks. Working time does not include paid overtime.

Figure 20. Average number of net teaching hours over the school year in public institutions, by level of education and country: 2001



NOTE: Net teaching hours refers to the number of teaching hours per year. This excludes break periods between lessons and days when schools are closed for public holidays and festivities. In primary education, however, short breaks that teachers spend with the class are typically included. England does not specify net teaching hours over the school year, and hence this category is not applicable for the country. Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Primary education refers to ISCED level 1, lower secondary to ISCED level 2, and upper secondary to ISCED level 3. For more information on ISCED levels, see the appendix.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2003). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2003*, Table D6.1.