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## **Chancenspiegel 2014**

Regionale Disparitäten in der Chancengerechtigkeit  
und Leistungsfähigkeit der deutschen Schulsysteme

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## 6. Abstract

Opportunities in education create opportunities in life. However, as both national and international studies have shown, social background continues to heavily influence students' access to educational opportunities and their success in school systems across Germany. Together with the Institute for School Development Research at the Technical University Dortmund and the Institute for Pedagogy at Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena, the Bertelsmann Stiftung presents the "Chancenspiegel" (Mirror of Change) 2014. In its third edition, this education monitoring tool draws on a set of indicators that address problems in education which, unlike other similar tools, allows us to track systemic developments in educational justice. The Chancenspiegel thus draws attention, both public and academic, toward the goal of reducing institutional barriers to equal opportunity in education.

The Chancenspiegel also provides an ongoing, systematic comparison of educational systems in each of the 16 German federal states and the trends in each with respect to equality of opportunity. The Chancenspiegel, which is based on a set of indicators derived from secondary statistical analyses of public data and empirical studies on German schools, has been tracking developments in the German educational system on an annual basis since 2012.

The concept of justice employed here derives from selected educational theories and theories of justice. Equality of opportunity is understood in systemic terms as everyone having a fair chance at participating freely in society. This must be ensured by educational institutions that are free of barriers and in which students suffer no disadvantages as a consequence of their social background or other individual features. In addition, school systems must foster the development of individual potential and improved mutual recognition of students and teachers alike.

These theoretical considerations inform the standard by which the Chancenspiegel monitors developments in four areas: the extent to which educational systems prove capable of integrating all students (integrative power), allowing students to switch or transition between and within different kinds of schools (lateral mobility), supporting every student's aptitude (competence development), and issuing certificates that provide young people the best possible basis from which to develop their prospects (certification). Germany's 16 education systems are thus examined in terms of these four aspects of social justice and the educational indicators underlying them. Each federal state is then listed according to the findings for each indicator and dimension, which allows us to identify the systems offering greater or lesser equality of opportunity.

Our analyses since the first Chancenspiegel in 2012 show none of the 16 federal states featuring strong equality of opportunity in all four dimensions. Each state features instead specific strengths and areas in need of improvement.

This year's edition of the Chancenspiegel is supplemented with an analysis of local education systems. Drawing on the data collected by regional statistical

authorities, the Chancenspiegel takes a close look at the state of educational opportunity in municipalities and local administrative units within each German federal state. In doing so, the Chancenspiegel has been able to identify substantial regional differences within specific states in terms of the dimensions “lateral mobility” and “certification.”

The Chancenspiegel’s state reports also show the extent to which regional disparities are emerging at the municipality level within the 13 territorial federal states. Germany’s city-states (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg) are compared with other larger German cities and feature to some extent greater equality of opportunity than the rest.

Finally, the root causes of these regional disparities in equality of opportunity are examined with the support of exemplary analyses. The reasons, however, are not to be found at the municipality level alone. Instead, cooperation issues associated with varying regional and state-specific education policies are identified as playing a key role here. Sociocultural contexts must also be taken into consideration when identifying the root causes of disparities.

Given this state of affairs, the Chancenspiegel calls upon educational policy-makers and academics alike to examine and identify the conditions and effects of regional disparities in equality of educational opportunity within the framework of education institution research that is informed by socio-ecological concerns. The four-fold goal here should be to improve equality of opportunity in our schools, enable improved participation in a good education, support achievements and prevent discrimination. These four objectives are essential if educational systems are to provide students the best possible means of self-empowerment.