

# Assessment in Poland

READ Global Conference:  
Developing a Vision for Assessment Systems  
Jerzy Wiśniewski, Ministry of Education  
POLAND

# The point of departure

- 8-year primary, compulsory education
- 4-year secondary general education
- 5-year secondary vocational education
- 3-year basic vocational schools

## Exams:

- Entrance exams at secondary schools
- Final secondary school exam – Matura
- Entrance exams at universities

Preschool Education

"Zero" class

Primary School

E

General  
secondary

M

E

Vocational  
secondary

M

Basic  
vocational

Entrance exams to  
secondary schools organised  
internally by schools.  
Used for Selection  
Not used for evaluation of  
primary schools

Matura  
secondary  
school leaving  
exam.  
Not used for  
selection for  
tertiary  
institutions

# Weak points

- First test – external assessment at the age of 15, less than 50% of the age group
- No feedback to the primary schools
- Matura: items for the written part decided by regional authorities (different), oral – internal school decision. Assessment by school teachers
- Entrance exams to universities in addition to matura

# Weak points

- Lack of research on evaluation and assessment
- Inspection focused on rules and procedures and not on learning outcomes

# The reform

- 6- year primary school
- 3-year lower secondary
- 3-year upper secondary
  - General
  - Technical
  - Vocational
- Test or exam at the end of each level of education
- Matura serving as an entrance exam to tertiary education

Preschool Education

"Zero" class

Primary School

**E**

General  
secondary

**M**

**E**

Vocational  
secondary

**M**

Basic  
vocational

	Preschool Education			3
				4
				5
0	"Zero" class (prep. year)			6
I	Primary School			7
II				8
III				9
IV				10
V				11
VI				12
I	Lower Secondary			13
II	<i>Gymnasium</i>			14
III				15
		E		
I	General secondary	Vocational secondary	Basic vocational	16
II				17
III				18
IV				19
	M	M Q	Q	



		Preschool Education			3
					4
0		"Zero" class (prep. year)			
		Primary School			10
					11
					12
VI		Lower Secondary			
	I	Gymnasium			
	II				
	III				
	I	General secondary	Vocational secondary	Basic vocational	15
	II				16
	III				17
	IV				18
					19

**Test**  
 IV grade of primary school  
 Common and compulsory

**Gymnasium exams**  
 Completion of gymnasium education  
 Common and compulsory

**Vocational qualification exam**

**Matura**  
 secondary school leaving exam.  
 Replacing entrance exams at tertiary institutions

**T**

**E**

**M**

**M**

**Q**

**Q**

# External examinations

## Common compulsory tests

- at the end of the primary school
- at the end of the lower-secondary school;.
- the maturity examination upon completion of education in the upper-secondary school.

## Central examination board and regional examination boards

# Examination system

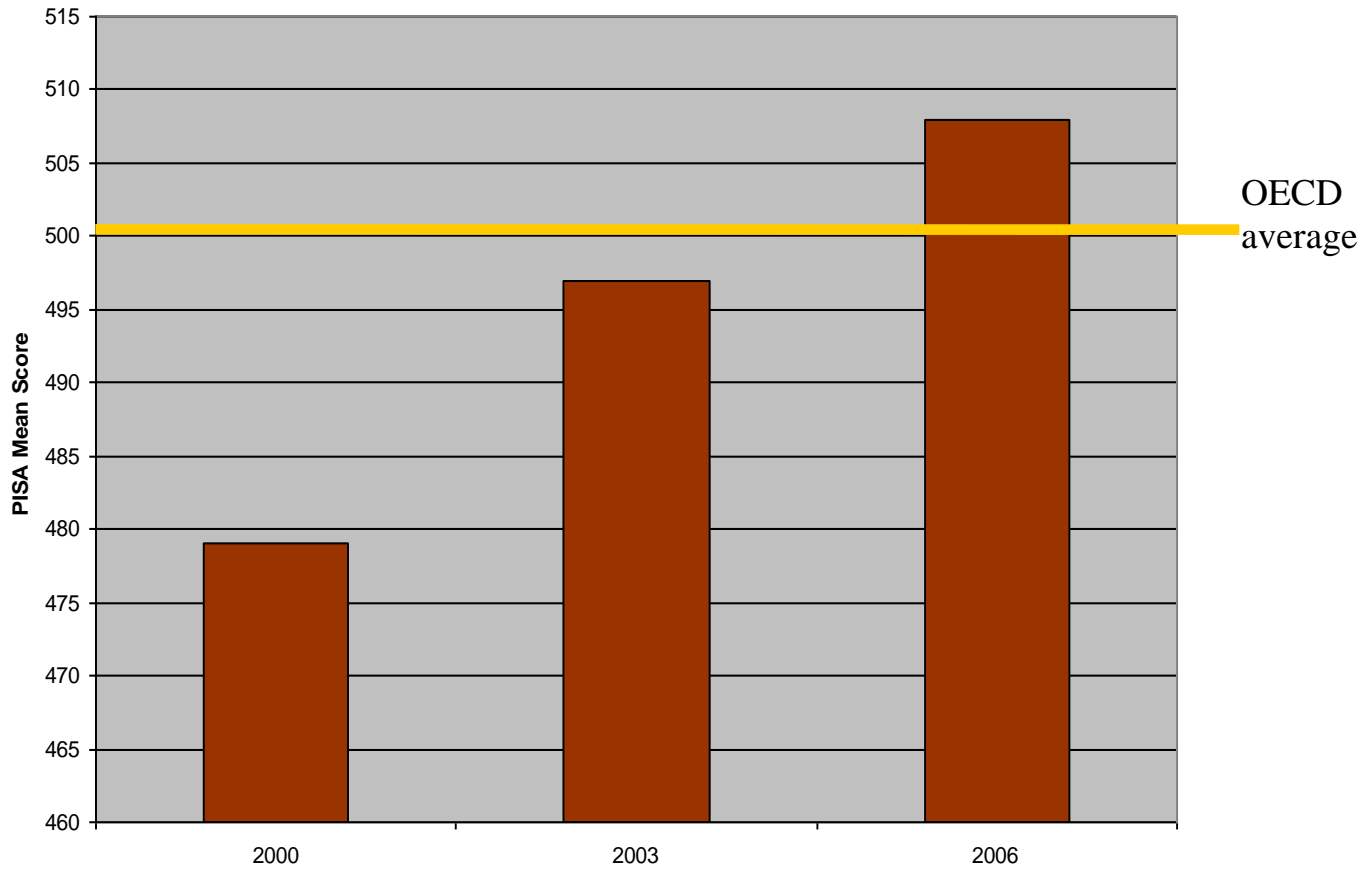
## Central and regional Examination Boards

- Design, organise and assess
  - Test after 6th grade
  - Exam at the end of lower-secondary education
  - Matura – final upper-secondary exam.

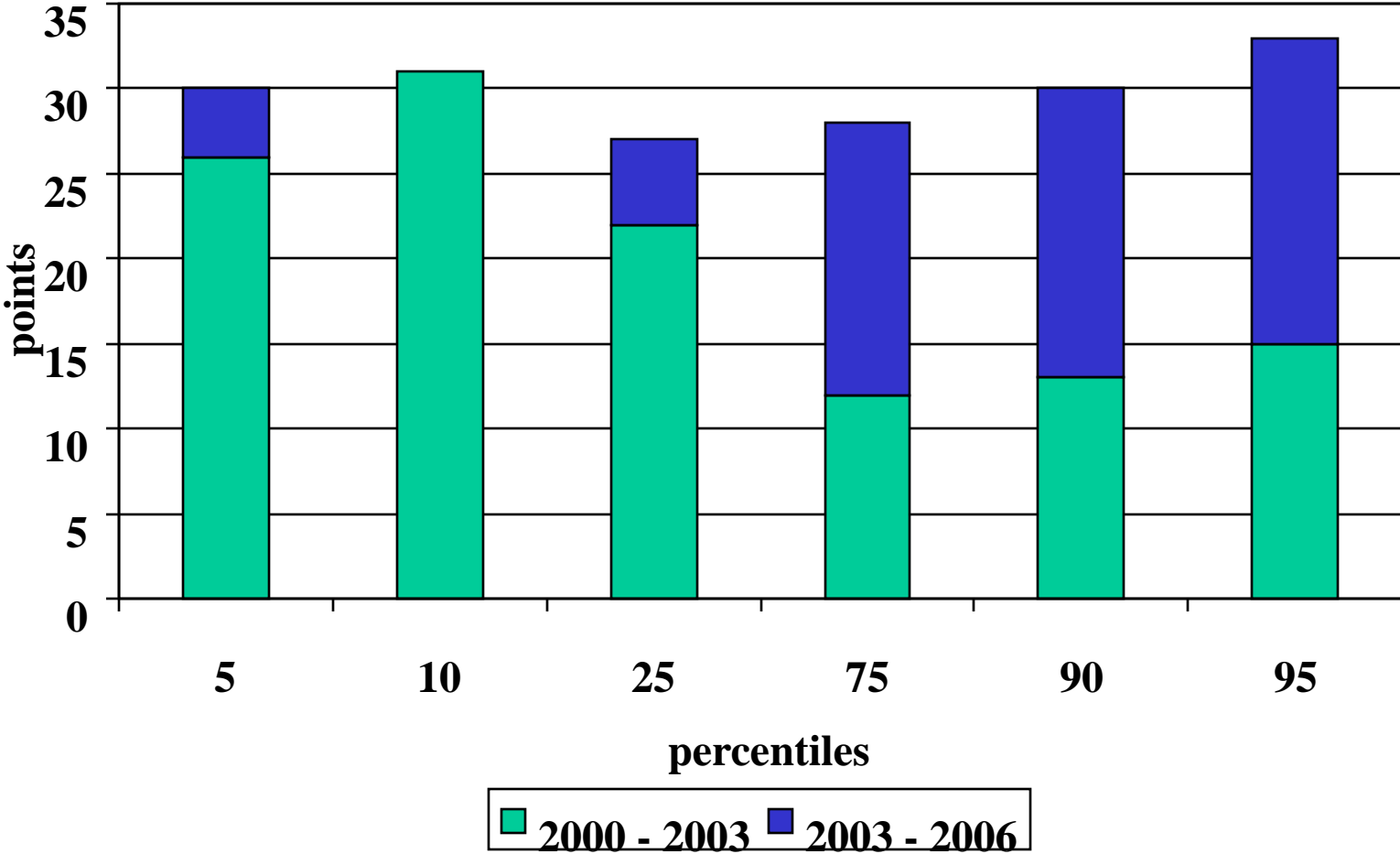
# PISA Reading

- 2000 – **480** (below OECD average)
- 2003 – **497** (OECD average)
- 2006 – **508** (above OECD average)

# Impressive improvement in Poland



# Progress in reading



# How have we done that?

- Who were „PISA-students“?

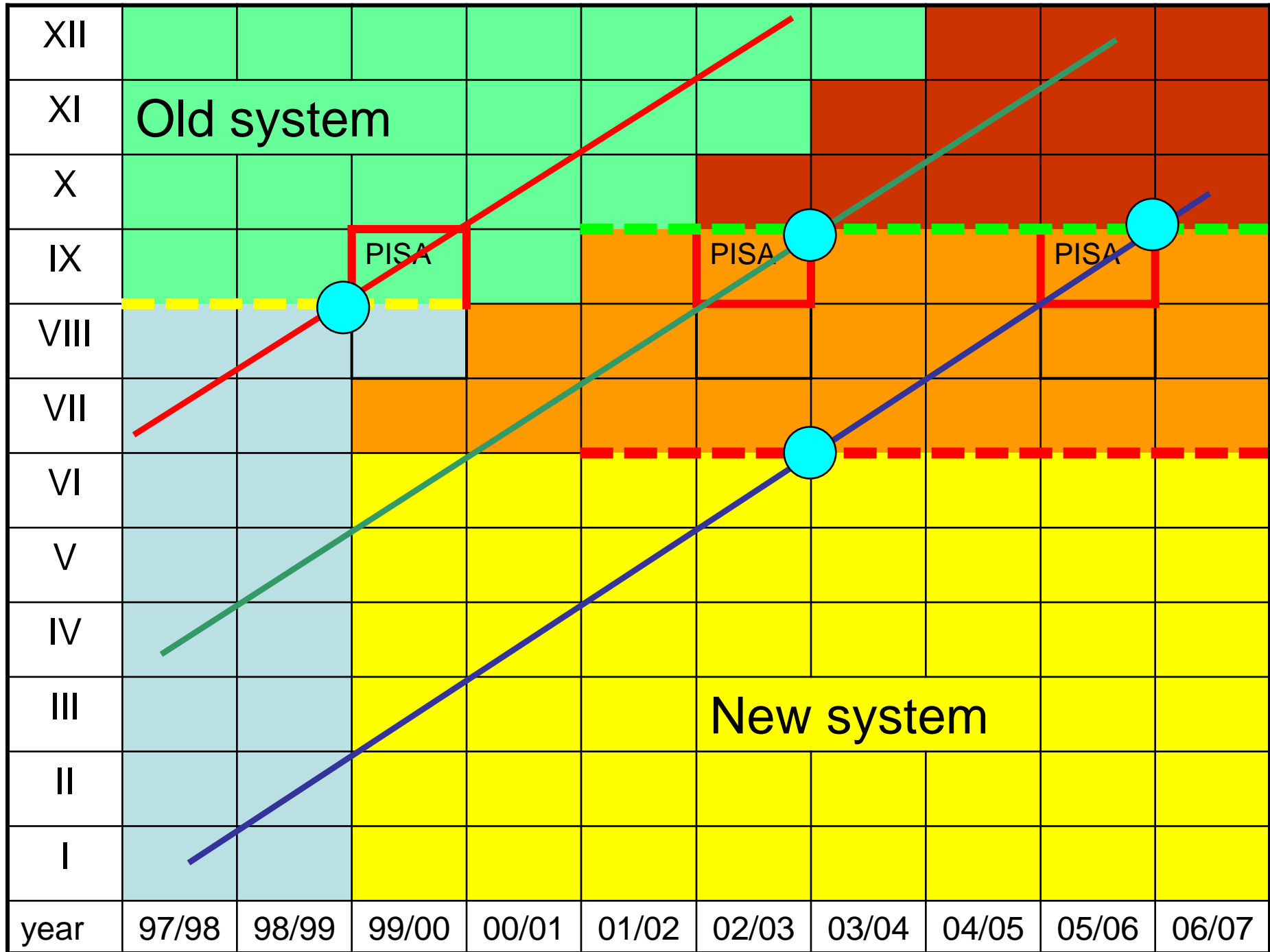
# Reform timeline





# How have we done that?

- What experience (training) do they have in solving tests?



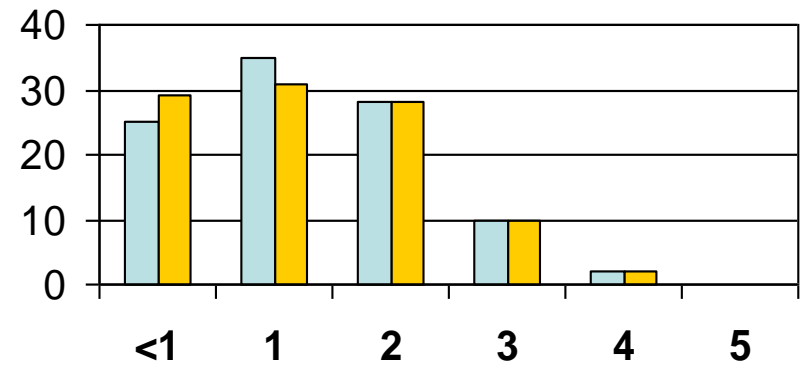
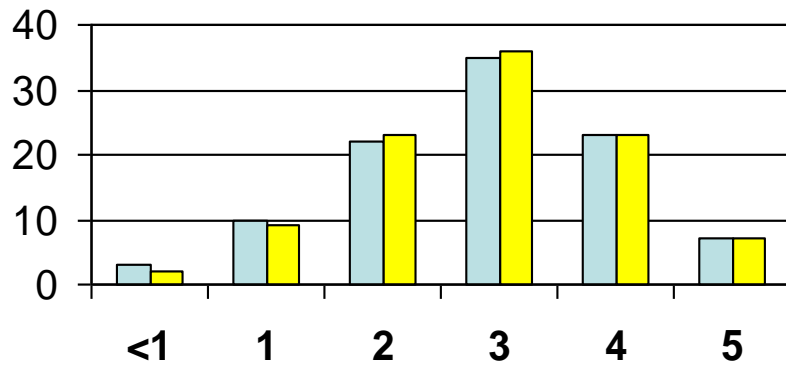
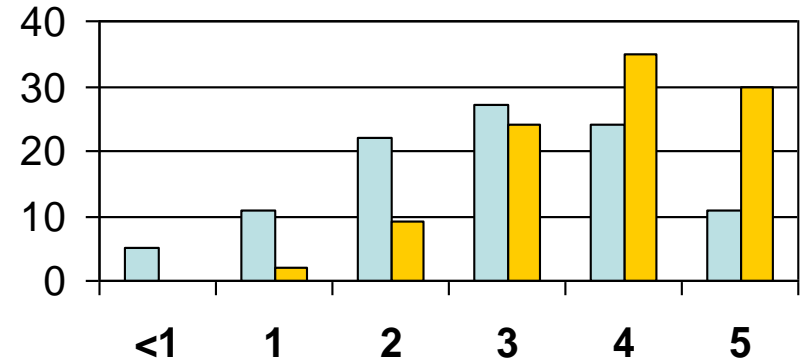
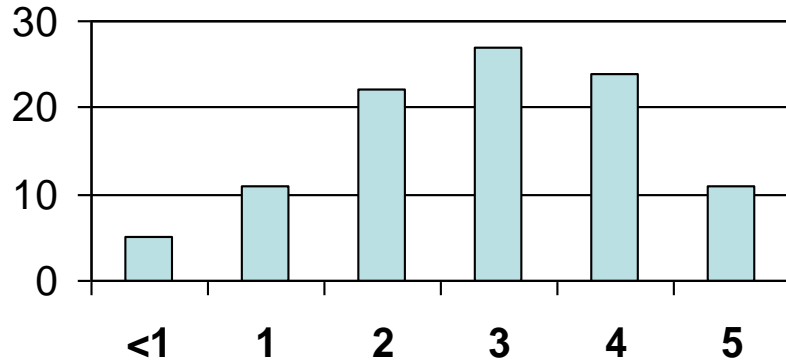
# Other effects

- Selection, aspirations, progression
- Evidence-informed school policy
- Educational value added

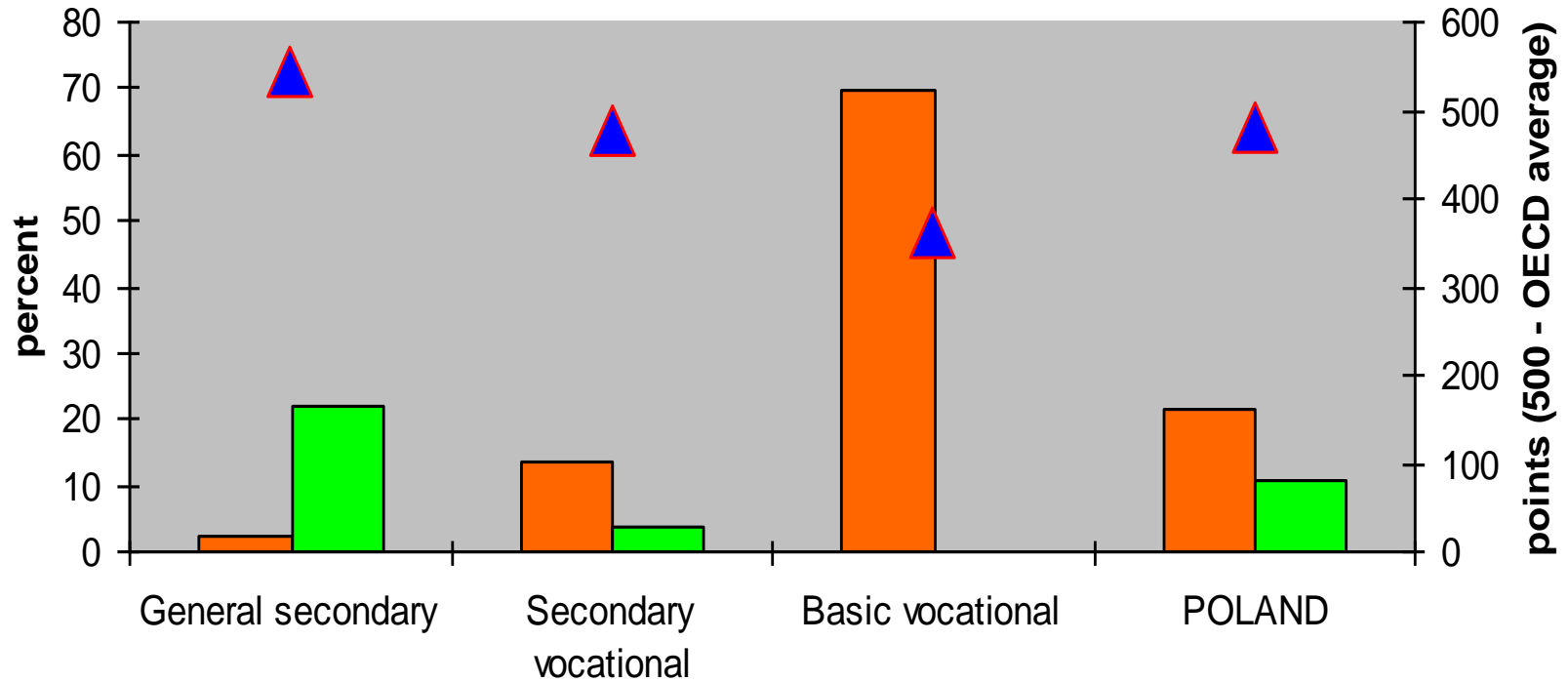
# Upper secondary - reading

	<b>type of school</b>	<b>mean score</b>	<b>1. grade</b>	<b>2. grade</b>
	<b>lower secondary</b>	<b>508</b>		
<b>Upper secondary</b>	<b>general</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>592</b>
	<b>technical</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>508</b>
	<b>specialised</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>495</b>
	<b>basic vocational</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>384</b>

# Distribution among the levels



# PISA 2000



- Percentage of the students with the score below 400
- Percentage of the students the score beyond 600
- Average student score (points)

# Difficulties

- Change of the government = policy change
- Postponing the introduction of the new Matura 2002 → 2005
- „Amnesty” 2007
- No compulsory mathematics in Matura until 2010



# Conclusions

- Three interlinked systems:
  - Internal school assessment
  - External examinations
  - International surveys
  - (national evaluation and monitoring)
- Sources of information and (potential) evidence
- Evidence-informed policy

# Conclusions

- Students might be accustomed to test taking, but there is not enough evidence to prove that that is a reason for improvement
- Delayed specialisation led to change
- Increase number of hours of instruction – why not better achievements in maths?
- Future
  - Vocational examinations, qualifications
  - Recognition, validation of informal and non-formal learning