



Kazakhstan

TEACHERS

SABER Country Report

2013

Policy Goals

1. Setting Clear Expectations for Teachers

There are clear expectations for what students should learn and what teachers are supposed to do. There are also clear guidelines regarding the proportion of school time dedicated to instructional improvement.

2. Attracting the Best into Teaching

Entry requirements and teacher pay may not be appealing for talented candidates, signaling teaching as a low-status profession. Despite substantial increases in teacher pay since 2000, it remains one of the lowest-paid skilled professions in the country.

3. Preparing Teachers with Useful Training and Experience

Current initial teacher education programs may not be best suited to building a strong teaching corps. Teachers-in-training have the opportunity to develop practical teaching skills. There is more than one pathway to becoming a secondary school teacher, which provides opportunities for skilled candidates who may wish to join the profession

4. Matching Teachers' Skills with Students' Needs

There are official systems in place to address teacher shortages in hard-to-staff schools, but no official policies to attract teachers to teach critical-shortage subjects.

5. Leading Teachers with Strong Principals

Principals are expected to monitor teacher performance and provide support to teachers to improve instructional practice, but their performance is not rewarded. At present, there are no specific training requirements to ensure that principals have the necessary skills to act as either instructional leaders or school administrators.

6. Monitoring Teaching and Learning

There are systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform policy, but the results are not used to inform teaching. Teacher performance is evaluated annually using criteria that assess effective teaching.

7. Supporting Teachers to Improve Instruction

There are multiple opportunities for teacher professional development that are aligned with global best practices

8. Motivating Teachers to Perform

There are mechanisms in place to hold teachers accountable. Career opportunities and salaries are linked to teacher performance but high-performing teachers do not receive monetary bonuses or recognition for their efforts.

Status

Advanced



Emerging



Emerging



Established



Latent



Established



Established



Emerging



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Overview of SABER-Teachers

There is increasing interest across the globe in attracting, retaining, developing, and motivating great teachers. Student achievement has been found to correlate with economic and social progress (Hanushek & Woessmann 2007, 2009; Pritchett & Viarengo 2009; Campante & Glaeser 2009), and teachers are key: recent studies have shown that teacher quality is the main school-based predictor of student achievement and that several consecutive years of outstanding teaching can offset the learning deficits of disadvantaged students (Hanushek & Rivkin 2010; Rivkin, et al. 2005; Nye et al. 2004; Rockoff 2004; Park & Hannum 2001; Sanders & Rivers 1996). However, achieving the right teacher policies to ensure that every classroom has a motivated, supported, and competent teacher remains a challenge, because evidence on the impacts of many teacher policies remains insufficient and scattered, the impact of many reforms depends on specific design features, and teacher policies can have very different impacts depending on the context and other education policies in place.

A new tool, *SABER-Teachers*, aims to help fill this gap by collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, and disseminating comprehensive information on teacher policies in primary and secondary education systems around the world. SABER-Teachers is a core component of SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results), an initiative launched by the Human Development Network of the World Bank. SABER collects information about different education systems' policy domains, analyzes it to identify common challenges and promising solutions, and makes it widely available to inform countries' decisions on where and how to invest in order to improve education quality.

SABER-Teachers collects data on 10 core teacher policy areas to offer a comprehensive descriptive overview of the teacher policies that are in place in each participating education system (see Box 1). Data are collected in each participating education system by a specialized consultant using a questionnaire that ensures comparability of information across different education systems. Data collection focuses on the rules and regulations governing teacher management systems. This information is compiled in a comparative database where interested stakeholders can access detailed information organized along relevant categories that

describe how different education systems manage their teacher force, as well as copies of supporting documents. Data collection and scoring followed the methodology developed for SABER-Teachers to maximize comparability while also ensuring appropriateness for Kazakhstan.

The full database is available at the SABER-Teacher website.

Box 1. Teacher policy areas for data collection

1. Requirements to enter and remain in teaching
2. Initial teacher education
3. Recruitment and employment
4. Teachers' workload and autonomy
5. Professional development
6. Compensation (salary and non-salary benefits)
7. Retirement rules and benefits
8. Monitoring and evaluation of teacher quality
9. Teacher representation and voice
10. School leadership

To offer informed policy guidance, SABER-Teachers analyzes the information collected to assess the extent to which the teacher policies of an education system are aligned with those policies that research evidence to date has shown to have a positive effect on student achievement. SABER-Teachers analyzes the teacher policy data collected to assess each education system's progress in achieving eight teacher policy goals: 1. Setting clear expectations for teachers; 2. Attracting the best into teaching; 3. Preparing teachers with useful training and experience; 4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs; 5. Leading teachers with strong principals; 6. Monitoring teaching and learning; 7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction; and 8. Motivating teachers to perform (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Eight teacher policy goals



The eight teacher policy Goals are functions that all high-performing education systems fulfill to a certain extent in order to ensure that every classroom has a motivated, supported, and competent teacher. These goals were identified through a review of evidence of research studies on teacher policies, and the analysis of policies of top-performing and rapidly-improving education systems. Three criteria were used to identify them: teacher policy goals had to be (i) linked to student performance through empirical evidence, (ii) a priority for resource allocation, and (iii) actionable, that is, actions governments can take to improve education policy. The eight teacher policy goals exclude other objectives that countries might want to pursue to increase the effectiveness of their teachers, but on which there is, to date, insufficient empirical evidence to make specific policy recommendations.

By classifying countries according to their performance on each of the eight teacher policy goals, SABER-Teachers can help diagnose the key challenges that countries face in ensuring they have effective teachers. For each policy goal, the SABER-Teachers team identified policy levers (actions that governments can take to reach these goals) and indicators (which measure the extent to which governments are making effective use of these policy levers). Using these policy levers and indicators, SABER-Teachers classifies education systems' performance on each of the eight teacher policy goals using a four-category scale (latent, emerging, established, and advanced), which describes the extent to which a given education system has in place teacher

policies that are known to be related to improved student outcomes. The main objective of this assessment is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher policies of an education system and pinpoint possible areas for improvement. For a more detailed report on the eight teacher policy goals, policy levers and indicators, as well as the evidence base supporting them, see Vegas *et al.* (2012). **The main focus of SABER-Teachers is policy design, rather than policy implementation.** SABER-Teachers analyzes the teacher policies formally adopted by education systems. However, policies “on the ground”, that is, policies as they are actually implemented, may differ quite substantially from policies as originally designed. In fact, they often do differ due to the political economy of the reform process, lack of capacity of the organizations in charge of implementing them, or the interaction between these policies and specific contextual factors. Since SABER-Teachers collects limited data on policy implementation, the assessment of teacher policies presented in this report needs to be complemented with detailed information that describes the actual configuration of teacher policies on the ground. This report comprises one piece of the Kazakhstan Education-Joint Economic Research Program (JERP). Its objective is to enhance the Government of Kazakhstan's policy and institutional capacity towards evidence-based decision making in order to raise the quality of education. It describes Kazakhstan's performance in each of the eight teacher policy goals, alongside comparative information from education systems that have consistently scored high results in international student achievement tests and have participated in SABER-Teachers. Additional detailed descriptive information on Kazakhstan's and other education systems' teacher policies can be found on the SABER-Teachers website.

Although learning outcomes have improved according to the results of the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Kazakh students remain behind the equivalent of 1.5 and 2.5 years of schooling in math and reading respectively. Given the emerging evidence that several consecutive years of outstanding teaching have been found to offset the learning deficits of even disadvantaged students, it is critical to examine Kazakhstan's mix of policies on teachers.

Kazakhstan's Teacher Policy System Results

Goal 1: Setting clear expectations for teachers

Advanced ●●●●		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are there clear expectations for teachers?	Established ●●●○	There are standards for what students must know and be able to do, and the tasks that teachers are expected to carry out are stipulated.
2. Is there useful guidance on the use of teachers' working time?	Advanced ●●●●	Teachers' official tasks include tasks related to instructional improvement. The statutory definition of working time for primary school teachers recognizes non-teaching hours, and the share of working time allocated to teaching for primary school teachers is less than 50 percent.

Setting clear expectations for student and teacher performance is important to guide teachers' daily work and align necessary resources to make sure that teachers can constantly improve instructional practice. In addition, clear expectations can help ensure there is coherence among different key aspects of the teaching profession such as teacher initial education, professional development, and teacher appraisal.

SABER-Teachers considers two policy levers that school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) clear expectations for what students should know and be able to do, and how teachers can help students reach these goals; (2) useful guidance on how teachers' can use their time to improve instruction at the school level.

(1) In Kazakhstan, there are expectations for what students are expected to learn and for what teachers are supposed to do. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is responsible for setting education goals and controlling the national curriculum. State standards are set by MoES and approved by Government Resolution. There are official education requirements for the knowledge and skills that students must attain at each educational level.

The tasks that teachers are expected to carry out are officially stipulated (Law on Education, Article 51 and Model Professional Qualification Characteristics for Teachers, adopted by Government Resolution). Teacher tasks go beyond classroom teaching to include tasks related to instructional improvement such as: providing support to other teachers, collaborating on the school plan, designing the curriculum, and taking part in the internal evaluation activities of the school.

(2) Guidance on teachers' use of time could focus more on ensuring that they are given the time needed to improve instruction. Teachers' working time in Kazakhstan is officially defined as the overall number of working hours (as opposed to merely counting contact time with students or hours spent at the school). Global experience suggests this definition may be conducive to learning, because it recognizes that teachers normally need to devote some time to non-teaching tasks, such as lesson planning, analysis of student work, professional development, and administrative tasks. However, while there are clearly defined teacher tasks in Kazakhstan, there is no clear statement in the law as to what percentage of time teachers should allocate to any of these tasks.

In contrast, successful education systems such as those of Ontario, Finland, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore devote considerable time at the school level to activities that are related to instructional improvement, such as collaboration among teachers on the analysis of instructional practice as well as mentoring and professional development (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011, Darling-Hammond 2010, Levin 2008). In addition, when compared with other systems, these systems tend to devote a smaller share of teachers' time to actual contact time with students and a larger share of teachers' time to teacher collaboration, on-site professional development, and research on the effectiveness of various teaching strategies. Japan, for example, devotes about 40 percent of teachers' working time to these type of activities, while Ontario currently devotes 30 percent (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011).

Figure 2. Teachers' official tasks related to school improvement

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore
Mentor peers	✓	✓		✓
Collaborate on school plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design the curriculum	✓	✓		✓
Participate in school evaluation	✓	✓		✓

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 2: Attracting the best into teaching

Emerging ●●○○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are entry requirements set up to attract talented candidates?	Emerging ●●○○	Entry requirements for incoming teachers are not that stringent relative to many high performing education systems, and there is only one model of initial teacher education (a concurrent model).
2. Is teacher pay appealing for talented candidates?	Latent ●○○○	Teacher pay may not be appealing for talented candidates, and pay does not vary according to performance.
3. Are working conditions appealing for talented applicants?	Established ●●●○	There are standards, but only 50 percent to 85 percent of schools comply with them. Student teacher ratios are low (less than 30 students per class in primary school and less than 20 in secondary school).
4. Are there attractive career opportunities?	Advanced ●●●●	Teachers can apply to both administrative and academic posts, and promotion opportunities are linked to performance.

The structure and characteristics of the teaching career can make it more or less attractive for talented individuals to decide to become teachers. Talented people may be more inclined to become teachers if they see that entry requirements are on par with those of well-regarded professions, compensation and working conditions are adequate, and there are attractive career opportunities for them to develop as professionals.

SABER-Teachers considers four policy levers that school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) requirements to enter the teaching profession (2) competitive pay (3) appealing working conditions and (4) attractive career opportunities.

(1) In Kazakhstan, primary school teachers are required to have completed secondary education and to have earned at least a two-year technical vocational education degree. Secondary school teachers must have completed a minimum of a four-year Bachelor's degree. In 2012-2013, there were a total of 292,064 teachers; of these, 87.9 percent possessed a higher education degree, 11.3 percent held a vocational education degree and 0.8 percent had only secondary education or incomplete higher education. In practice, due to a shortage of teachers, particularly in rural areas, some primary school teachers have completed only secondary education. Primary and secondary education teachers in Kazakhstan receive their initial teacher training in courses taken after 11 years of schooling. Formal requirements to become a primary or secondary school teacher are below those in top-performing international education systems. Primary school teachers in Kazakhstan need only a technical vocational education degree, while secondary school teachers must complete a four-year Bachelor's degree. College graduates seeking to become secondary school teachers must show that they have mastered sufficient subject knowledge as evaluated through exams before graduation. Teacher candidates are required to have a minimum amount of practical professional experience (part of their initial teacher training) and complete a formal interview. By contrast, top-performing systems usually require a minimum of a Bachelor's degree for both primary and secondary education teachers. Systems such as Singapore and Finland require teachers to have practical professional experience and to pass an assessment conducted by a supervisor based on their previous practical professional experience. In many

systems, written exams are also required. In Kazakhstan, written exams are not required to enter the profession, although MOES is taking steps to implement creative exams for entrants.

In Kazakhstan, there is only one type of pre-service teacher training available for primary education teachers. Concurrent programs—programs that teach subject knowledge and pedagogic skills relatively simultaneously—are the only pathway for entering the teaching profession. By contrast, at the secondary level there are two avenues for entering the teacher profession: concurrent and alternative programs.

Many top-performing systems allow for more than one pathway to enter the teaching profession. Specifically, many programs offer a consecutive model for initial teacher training in addition to the concurrent model. Consecutive programs allow individuals who have a Bachelor's degree in a discipline other than education to gain a teaching certificate after some period of study at university. For instance, Ontario, Canada, has a consecutive program. In Ontario, all teachers must be certified to teach by the Ontario College of Teachers. In addition to a Bachelor's degree in a specialized subject, teachers are required to have at least a one-year post-secondary degree in education. The one-year program must dedicate at least 40 percent of the academic year to teaching methods (defined as how to teach students in particular grades and subjects); 20 percent of the year to education foundations (the history, philosophy and psychology of education); 20 percent of the year to any other area of education; and 40 days of practical professional experience in the classroom (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013). Such programs may help attract a larger pool of teaching candidates, because there is more than one pathway to enter the teaching profession.

(2) Teacher pay may not be appealing for talented candidates. The minimum starting salary for a teacher is 35,747 Tenge (US\$1=154 Tenge in December 2013), and the average salary in the education sector is 68,971 Tenge. These salaries are considerably lower than those of other skilled professions. By comparison, the average salary in the banking sector is 210,000 Tenge (the sector with the highest average salary), and in the healthcare sector, the average salary is 81,340 Tenge. In addition,

other sectors have many more options for career advancement and salary increases.

In Kazakhstan, teacher salary can vary depending on seniority and other factors such as professional development activities. The basic teacher salary (BTS) is defined by the government and set at 17,697 Tenge. The salary is calculated with fixed rates depending on years of experience and professional category. The professional category is a grading system with three grade levels—second category (for starting teachers), first category and highest category. When teachers enter a higher professional category, they receive a higher salary. There are specific requirements for teachers to meet in order to obtain a category. The decision about awarding a category is based on three types of criteria. The first criterion is teacher's education. For instance, a beginning teacher with a Bachelor's degree with honors, a PhD, or a Master's degree may automatically be promoted to a higher category. The second criteria is teacher's performance, which is assessed using: students' achievements, Unified National Testing (UNT) results, general academic ratings of students, and the number of winners or the number of participants that teachers send to Students' Country (or International) Competitions on different subjects. The final criteria is a teacher's professional achievements (e.g. teacher participation in Teachers' Professional Competitions). In the pay scale (Government Resolution # 1400 dated December 29, 2007) there are salary indices based on teachers' category and experience. Salaries can also vary based on teachers' classroom supervision duties, teaching location, participation in different pilot projects, and grading responsibilities.

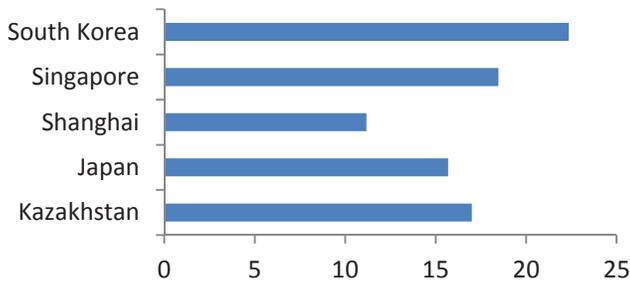
As of 2012, teachers who pass multi-level professional development courses receive 30 percent, 70 percent and 100 percent bonuses to their salaries. There are additional bonuses available for teaching Russian in Kazakh schools, and Kazakh in Russian schools. Also, additional compensation is available to teachers who choose to teach in schools for pupils with deviant behavior, and, at the other end of the spectrum, for teaching in schools for talented pupils.

(3) Working conditions may be appealing enough to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession. Working conditions may play an important role in the decision to become a teacher. Talented candidates who

have opportunities in other professions may be discouraged from choosing the teaching profession if working conditions are poor. In Kazakhstan, there are national standards for infrastructure, hygiene, and sanitation in schools (Sanitary rules, art. 332; Law on education, art. 6.5). As of 2011, 76 percent of schools complied with these national standards (5,591 out of 7,384 schools).

Student-teacher ratios, which are another indicator of teacher working conditions, are similar to those in top-performing international education systems. The primary school student-teacher ratio is 17:1, and the secondary school ratio is 7:1. It is important to note that these figures are national figures, and not necessarily representative of schools throughout Kazakhstan.

Figure 3. Student-teacher ratio, primary school



Source: SABER-Teachers data

(4) Opportunities for career advancement may be appealing enough to help attract talented individuals to the teaching profession. Teachers in most education systems are offered opportunities for promotion to principal positions at some point in their careers. In addition to these “vertical” promotions, most high-performing education systems offer teachers the possibility of “horizontal” promotions to academic positions that allow them to grow professionally as teachers and yet remain closely connected to instruction, instead of moving up to managerial positions (OECD 2012, Darling-Hammond 2010). Policies in Kazakhstan offer various opportunities for career advancement to teachers. Teachers have the option of applying to either school administration posts (such as school principals) or academic leadership positions. Additionally, promotion opportunities in Kazakhstan are officially linked to teacher performance. Improving

career opportunities in the teaching profession in these ways will help to attract the best candidates.

Goal 3: Preparing teachers with useful training and experience

Emerging ●●○○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are there minimum standards for pre-service teaching education programs?	Emerging ●●○○	The minimum level of education required to become a teacher for both primary and secondary school teachers is at the level of ISCED 5B.
2. To what extent are teacher-entrants required to be familiar with classroom practice?	Established ●●●○	Teachers are required to have classroom experience (465 hours for primary teachers and 900 hours for secondary teachers) in initial teacher education; there is an optional mentoring program.

Equipping teachers with the skills they need to succeed in the classroom is crucial. Teachers need subject matter and pedagogic knowledge, as well as classroom management skills and lots of teaching practice in order to be successful in the classroom. In addition, effective preparation can put all teachers on an equal footing, giving them a common framework to improve their practice.

SABER-Teachers considers two policy levers that school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) minimum standards for pre-service training programs; (2) required classroom experience for all teachers.

(1) Teacher initial education may not be providing prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in the classroom. Virtually all high-performing countries require that teachers have an educational level equivalent to ISCED 5A (a Bachelor’s degree), and some systems, such as Finland’s, require, in addition, a research-based master’s degree (OECD 2011). As mentioned earlier, primary school teachers in Kazakhstan are required only to complete a practically

oriented two-year technical vocational degree course, which means that teacher initial education is equivalent only to the ISCED 5B level.

(2) Practical classroom experience requirements for novice teachers could be strengthened. Practical experience is an important factor in teaching quality. The more teachers try out their pedagogical theories, subject-matter knowledge, and classroom management skills, the better prepared they will be for their job. Most high-performing systems require teacher entrants to have a considerable amount of classroom experience before becoming independent teachers, and some of these systems provide mentoring and support during the first and even second year on the job (Darling-Hammond 2010, Ingersoll 2007). In Kazakhstan, student teachers for primary and secondary education positions can develop classroom experience during their teacher initial education program. The classroom experience required of teacher trainees during initial education is less than 12 months (465 hours for primary teachers and 900 hours for secondary teachers), and teachers are not required to participate in mentoring programs. During the first year, each new teacher is supposed to receive support from a "senior" teacher. However, the new teacher is not obliged to use that support. In high-performing systems, programs aimed at facilitating new teachers' transition into teaching for both primary and secondary school teachers are usually at least seven months. These programs have the potential to make teachers more effective in the classroom and to reduce teacher turnover.

Figure 4. Required classroom experience, primary school teachers

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
3 months or less					✓
12 months or less	✓		✓		
12-24 months				✓	
More than 24 months		✓			

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 4: Matching teachers' skills with students' needs

Established ●●●○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are there incentives for teachers to work at hard-to-staff schools?	Advanced ●●●●	Teachers are provided multiple incentives to work at hard-to-staff schools, and teaching experience is not the only factor used in deciding transfer priorities.
2. Are there incentives for teachers to teach critical shortage subjects?	Established ●●●○	There is a policy to address critical shortage subject areas, and teachers are provided incentive opportunities to teach critical shortage subjects.

Ensuring that teachers work in schools where their skills are most needed is important for both equity and efficiency. First, it is a way of ensuring that teachers are distributed as efficiently as possible, making sure that there are no shortages of qualified teachers at any given grade, education level, or subject. Second, it is a means of ensuring that all students in a school system have an equal opportunity to learn. Without purposeful allocation systems, it is likely that teachers will gravitate towards schools serving better-off students or located in more desirable areas, deepening inequalities in the system.

SABER-Teachers considers two policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools and (2) incentives for teachers to teach in critical shortage areas.

(1) There are mechanisms to ensure that there are no teacher shortages in hard-to-staff schools. Attracting effective teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools (schools that are in disadvantaged locations or serve underprivileged populations) is a challenge for many countries and often requires a specific set of incentives. In Kazakhstan, there is a policy for teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools (Law in Education, art. 53). There is a scholarship program which provides state grants to entrants from rural areas. After graduation, recipients of

the scholarship are required to teach in rural areas for a minimum of three years.

According to the Law on Education, teachers in rural areas receive a 25 percent bonus to their basic salary. They are also eligible for additional incentives, including better chances of promotion, compensation for utilities, heating, and cattle food by decision of local authorities. All incentives are determined by local authorities and budget availability.

(2) Kazakhstan has identified critical-shortage subjects, but policy does not systematically identify or address critical shortage subjects. Some measures have been taken to account for critical-shortage subjects. For example, data on personnel demand is collected and accumulated at MoES at the end of each academic year. In some cases, monetary bonuses may also be available for teachers in these subjects; this is determined by local authorities and paid for out of local budgets.

Figure 5. Incentives for teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Promotion	✓		✓		✓
Higher basic salary		✓			
Monetary bonus	✓	✓	✓		
Subsidized education			✓		
Housing support	✓	✓			✓

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Note: Singapore has no specific incentives to attract qualified teachers to hard-to-staff schools, but it does have a centrally-managed teacher deployment system that ensures an equitable and efficient distribution of teachers.

Goal 5: Leading teachers with strong principals

Latent ●○○○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Does the education system invest in developing qualified school leaders?	Latent ●○○○	There are no specific training programs to support the development of leadership skills, and principal performance is not rewarded.
2. Are principals expected to support and improve instructional practice?	Established ●●●○	Principals are explicitly required to provide guidance for curriculum and teaching-related tasks, and they are required to evaluate teacher performance.

The quality of school heads is an important predictor of student learning. Capable principals can act as instructional leaders, providing direction and support to the improvement of instructional practice at the school level. In addition, capable principals can help attract and retain competent teachers.

SABER-Teachers considers two policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) education system’s investment in developing qualified school leaders; (2) decision-making authority for school principals to support and improve instructional practice.

(1) In Kazakhstan, there are no specific established programs to support the development of principals’ leadership skills, but a mentor program is proposed in the Regulation on Mentoring recently drafted by MoES. Research from top-performing education systems suggests principals can develop leadership skills through supported work experience or through specific training courses. High-performing systems such as those of Finland, Japan, South Korea, Shanghai, and Singapore require the participation of applicants to principal positions in specific coursework and/or a specialized internship or mentoring program aimed at developing essential leadership skills (OECD, 2012; Darling-Hammond 2010). For instance, the Ontario government launched the Ontario Leadership Strategy in 2008 to

respond to pressures facing principals in Ontario, Canada. One aspect of this strategy includes increased mentorship for new principals. Mentors can play an important role in the Ontario education system since nearly half of the school principals have five years of experience or less (People for Education 2011).

To become a school principal in Kazakhstan, an applicant must have a teaching certificate and a minimum of five years teaching experience and three years administrative experience. There are currently no specific training mechanisms, such as specific coursework or participation in a mentoring or internship program, to ensure that applicants to principal positions develop the necessary skills to act as instructional leaders.

Legislation states that MoES is to assess principal performance every year, but no official criteria for evaluating principals’ performance exist, and principals’ compensation is not linked to performance. In practice, evaluation is done by assessing students’ achievements, average rates on UNT results, annual reports on teachers’ professional development, and the number of students in the principal’s school who win Olympiad competitions.

(2) Principals in Kazakhstan are explicitly expected to monitor teacher performance and to provide support and guidance to teachers for the improvement of instructional practice. Once education systems get talented candidates to become principals, they need to structure their time to focus on improving instruction (OECD 2012, Barber & Mourshed 2007). High-performing education systems such as those of Finland, Ontario, and Singapore think of their principals as instructional leaders. Principals are expected to be knowledgeable in teaching and curriculum matters, as well as to provide guidance and support to teachers. They evaluate teachers, provide feedback, assess the school’s needs for professional development, and direct instructional resources where they are most needed (Darling-Hammond & Rothman 2011).

In Kazakhstan, principals are expected to hire and dismiss teachers, assess teachers’ performance, evaluate the overall school’s performance, manage the school budget, represent the school, respond to subnational and local authorities, and maintain student discipline. Many of the tasks that are expected from principals in

Kazakhstan are aligned with instructional leadership tasks that research suggests are associated with high student performance, although their administrative load may be especially burdensome and may detract from their ability to manage teachers effectively.

Figure 6. Mechanisms to support the development of principals’ leadership skills

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Courses or other training requirements			✓	✓	✓
Mentoring or internship program		✓		✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 6: Monitoring teaching and learning

Established ●●●○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are there systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform teaching and policy?	Emerging ●●○○	Teachers are not trained to assess student achievement. There are large national exams used to assess student learning, but these exams are not used to inform the quality of teaching or lesson plans.
2. Are there systems in place to monitor teacher performance?	Emerging ●●○○	Teachers are required to participate in both internal and external evaluations. Local authorities monitor teacher performance, but it is not possible to track teachers over time.
3. Are there multiple mechanisms to evaluate teacher performance?	Advanced ●●●●	Classroom observations are part of the teacher assessment system. Both principal and colleagues participate in teacher assessments, and a variety of criteria are used to evaluate teacher performance.

Assessing how well teachers are teaching and whether students are learning or not is essential to devise strategies for improving teaching and learning. First, identifying low-performing teachers and students is critical for education systems to be able to provide struggling classrooms with adequate support to improve. Second, teacher and student evaluation also helps identify good practices which can be shared across the system to improve school performance.

SABER-Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) availability of data on student achievement in order to inform teaching and policy (2) adequate systems to monitor teacher performance (3) multiple mechanisms to evaluate teacher performance.

(1) In Kazakhstan, there are systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform teaching and policy, but data collected from national exams are not used to

inform teaching. All high-performing education systems ensure that there is enough student data to inform teaching and policy, but they do so in very different ways. Regardless of the mechanism they decide to follow, high-performing systems ensure that three main functions are fulfilled: (1) there is a system to collect relevant and complete data on student achievement regularly (2) there is a mechanism for public authorities to have access to these data so that they can use it to inform policy and (3) there is a mechanism to feed these data and relevant analyses back to the school level, so that teachers can use it to inform the improvement of instructional practice.

In Kazakhstan, there are obligatory national student examinations administered to students of 11th grade in order to assess a certain volume of knowledge at the secondary education level. As of now, the UNT is the only tool of external assessment for the overall republic and ensures comparability of results achieved by each school in time dynamics. The results are used to reveal systematic gaps in teaching school subjects.

Student learning is monitored through regular standardized national assessments. Assessments include end-of-year subject-specific tests (known as interim assessments) and final examinations for general requirements after the 9th and 11th grades). The National Testing Center under MoES administers an External Assessment of Student Achievement, but this assessment only covers a sample of 9th grade students with the purpose of monitoring and informing potential students and parents on the state of the quality of education in every school. Results of these examinations are somewhat limited and, at present, not used to inform teachers of their performance.

(2) There are systems in place—both internal and external evaluations—to monitor teacher performance.

In Kazakhstan, a formal internal assessment is conducted once a year. In practice, the process of internal assessment is highly subjective and based on the school authority's judgment, supported by the observations of colleagues, parents, and, occasionally, students. The external evaluation system is used to assess teachers' compliance with qualification requirements and to upgrade teachers' qualification category, which also results in an increase in their salary. Kazakhstan has attestation procedures that are obligatory for every

teacher every five years. Attestation is an official procedure to determine whether a teacher’s skills match qualification requirements.

(3) According to policy, the criteria used to evaluate teacher performance focus heavily on criteria that research has found to influence student achievement.

Research suggests that no single method of evaluating teacher performance is fail-safe. Most high-performing systems conduct teacher evaluations using a multiplicity of mechanisms of data collection and varied criteria for assessment.

In Kazakhstan, the criteria taken into account during this teacher appraisal include teachers’ knowledge of subject matter, teaching methods, student assessment methods, and students’ academic achievement (Figure 7). If evaluations are carried out in a systematic and objective manner, such criteria could provide a balanced approach for evaluating teacher performance.

Figure 7. Criteria to evaluate teacher performance

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Subject matter knowledge	✓	✓		✓	✓
Teaching methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student assessment methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students’ academic achievement	✓		✓		

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 7: Supporting teachers to improve instruction

Established ●●●○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are there opportunities for professional development?	Advanced ●●●●	Teachers are required to participate in professional development, and professional development activities are provided free of charge to teachers.
2. Is teacher professional development collaborative and focused on instructional improvement?	Established ●●●○	Professional development includes activities that may promote best-practice sharing.
3. Is teacher professional development assigned based on perceived needs?	Latent ●○○○	If teachers obtain an unsatisfactory result in an evaluation, they are not assigned to a supervisor, or to specific professional development activities.

Support systems are necessary to help improve instruction at the school level. In order to constantly improve instructional practice, teachers and schools need to be able to analyze specific challenges that they face in classroom teaching, have access to information on best practices to address these challenges, and receive specific external support tailored to their needs.

SABER-Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) availability of opportunities for teacher professional development (2) teacher professional development activities that are collaborative and focused on instructional improvement (3) making sure teacher professional development is assigned based on perceived needs.

(1) Teachers are required to participate in teacher professional development. In Kazakhstan, participating in professional development is required both to stay in the profession and to be eligible for promotion. Teachers have to pass professional development requirements

every five years. Professional development through multi-level programs at the National Skills Upgrading Center, Orleu, has been required since 2011. Teachers are required to have participated in a number of professional development seminars or workshops according to their rank (Law on Education 51, Professional Qualification Requirement). Outside of required professional development courses, it is up to individual teachers to choose the type of qualification and kinds of development courses in which they want to participate. Required professional development activities are financed by MoES, and principals are responsible for administering these activities to teachers in their schools. Teachers typically do not fund professional development, due to their low wages.

(2) Teacher professional development includes activities that have been found by research to be associated with instructional improvement. Research suggests that effective teacher professional development is collaborative and provides opportunities for the in-school analysis of instructional practice, as opposed to being limited to one-time workshops or conferences. As mentioned earlier, high-performing education systems such as those of Japan and Ontario devote as much as 30 per cent of school time to professional development and instructional improvement activities. Such activities include observation visits to other schools, participation in teacher or school networks, and opportunities to engage in research, mentoring, or coaching. Most of these opportunities exist in Kazakhstan (Figure 8).

(3) Some teacher professional development activities are formally assigned based on perceived needs. If teachers obtain an unsatisfactory performance evaluation, they may be advised, though not required, to attend some professional development activity. Assigning professional development to teachers when they score low on performance evaluations is one way of potentially improving instructional practice. Teacher professional development can be targeted to meet the needs of specific teachers.

Figure 8. Types of professional development

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Observation visits	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Teacher networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	
School networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Research	✓	✓		✓	
Mentoring/coaching		✓	✓	✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 8: Motivating teachers to perform

Emerging ●●○○		
Indicator	Score	Justification
1. Are career opportunities linked to performance?	Latent ●○○○	Promotion opportunities are linked to high teacher performance. There is a mandatory probation period, but open-ended appointments are not granted based on teacher performance.
2. Are there mechanisms to hold teachers accountable?	Advanced ●●●●	Teacher performance evaluations and professional development activities are required for teachers to remain in teaching, and teachers can be dismissed with reasonable cause (e.g. misconduct or absenteeism).
3. Is teacher compensation linked to performance?	Latent ●○○○	Performance reviews carry salary implications, but high performing teachers do not receive monetary bonuses.

Adequate mechanisms to motivate teachers are a way for school systems to signal their seriousness in achieving education goals, make the teaching career attractive to competent individuals, and reward good performance while ensuring accountability.

SABER-Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) linking career opportunities to teachers' performance (2) having mechanisms to hold teachers accountable (3) linking teacher compensation to performance.

(1) In Kazakhstan, promotion opportunities are linked to performance on the job. There is no official policy mandating probation periods for teachers before they are granted open-ended appointments, but official policy does stipulate that performance on the job factors into whether teachers receive this type of appointment. In addition, there is a common practice at the school level of having probation periods, and principals have discretion over whether to renew a teacher's contract or not.

(2) There are mechanisms in place to hold teachers accountable. Requiring teachers to meet some standards to remain in the teaching profession can facilitate the removal of ineffective teachers. In Kazakhstan, teacher performance is evaluated annually, and there are official mechanisms to address cases of misconduct, child abuse, absenteeism and poor performance. In practice, however, there are no effective mechanisms for dismissing teachers.

(3) Teacher compensation is linked to performance. Performance reviews in Kazakhstan do carry salary implications, but high-performing teachers do not receive monetary bonuses for good individual or school performance. Such pecuniary rewards can be effective tools for improving teacher performance, assuming that there is a valid and well-accepted system of performance evaluation in place.

Figure 9. Incentives for high performance

	Kazakhstan	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Individual monetary bonus			✓	✓	✓
School-level bonus			✓		✓

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Policy Options

This SABER country report has offered a snapshot of Kazakhstan's key policies on teachers and how they compare with those of top global performers in education. Building on that diagnosis, this section offers some options for further strengthening the teacher policy framework.

Goal 1: Setting clear expectations for teachers

There are clear expectations for what students should learn and what teachers are supposed to do. There are also clear guidelines regarding the proportion of school time dedicated to instructional improvement.

Option:

- Set expectations for what percentage of teachers' working time should be dedicated to teaching and what percentage should be used for other necessary activities that may contribute to instructional improvement (including working on lesson plans, having office hours for students, grading assessments and the tasks mentioned above).

Goal 2: Attracting the best into teaching

Entry requirements, teacher pay, and working conditions may not be appealing for talented candidates, signaling teaching as a low-status profession. Despite substantial increases in teacher pay since 2000, it remains one of the lowest-paid skilled professions in the country.

Options:

- Strengthen selectivity and attractiveness of entry requirements for teacher training programs at universities.
- Ensure that teachers are paid competitive salaries, especially at entry level.
- Ensure that teacher incentives and additional bonuses to teachers' salaries are attractive enough to motivate and appeal to potential candidates.
- Ensure that teacher performance and effectiveness are criteria used for teacher promotion and career advancement.
- Introduce alternative models to teacher training. For instance, consecutive programs allow individuals who have a Bachelor's degree in a discipline other than education to gain a

teaching certificate after some period of study at a university.

Since Kazakhstan scored as Emerging for this Goal, it is recommended that policy identify ways to attract the best graduates to the teaching profession.

Goal 3: Preparing teachers with useful training and experience

Current initial teacher education programs may not be best suited to ensuring good-quality teachers. Teachers-in-training have the opportunity to develop practical teaching skills.

Option:

- Require more extensive teaching practice before teachers obtain certification. For instance, many top-performing systems such as Singapore and Japan require at least 12 months of teaching practice, and this practice is tied up with supervised mentoring programs.

This goal is also scored as Emerging, calling for better articulated and targeted policy actions to ensure comprehensive teacher preparation.

Goal 4: Matching teachers' skills with students' needs

There are official systems in place to address teacher shortages in hard-to-staff schools, but no official policies to attract teachers to teach critical-shortage subjects.

Options:

- Develop a system that systematically identifies shortages both in critical subject shortages and in hard-to-staff schools.
- Ensure that local authorities provide visible incentives to teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools (e.g. promotion, higher salary, scholarships for education, or housing).
- Provide incentives for teachers to teach critical shortage subjects. "Special incentives could be provided for scarce skills, such as effective math and science teachers. First identifying and then benchmarking and disseminating good practices from the better performing 'Russian-speaking' schools in the country could also improve the overall teacher effectiveness in Kazakhstan. Based on PISA 2009 results, Russian schools outperform their Kazakh counterparts by up to

two and half additional years of schooling” (World Bank, 2012).

Goal 5: Leading teachers with strong principals

Principals are expected to monitor teacher performance and provide support to teachers to improve instructional practice, but their performance is not rewarded. At present, there are no specific training requirements to ensure that principals have the necessary skills to act as either instructional leaders or school administrators.

Options:

- Provide additional support to new principals
- Principal performance could be enhanced by providing principals with an obligatory mentorship program and/or specific coursework to promote leadership skills.
- Ensure that student and teacher outcomes are factored into principal performance reviews and that they carry as much weight as compliance with specified regulations.
- Provide training for principals and ensure that it focuses on school leadership.

Since Kazakhstan has scored the lowest in this category out of all eight goals, it is recommended that policymakers focus on improving the quality and performance of school principals.

Goal 6: Monitoring teaching and learning

There are systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform policy but not teaching. Teacher performance is evaluated annually using criteria that assess effective teaching.

Options:

- Ensure that student achievement data collected through national exams are used to monitor and inform teachers about their classroom instruction.
- Ensure that student achievement data collected are comparable year-on-year, so that it becomes possible to evaluate teacher and school performance over time.

- Ensure that evaluation systems use objective criteria to systematically evaluate teacher performance.

Goal 7: Supporting teachers to improve instruction

There are multiple opportunities for teacher professional development that are aligned with global best practices.

Option:

- Provide collaborative professional development opportunities that include in-school analysis of instructional practice, as opposed to being limited to one-time workshops or conferences. For instance, professional development activities that require teachers to meet multiple times throughout the school-year and that require teachers to incorporate activities into their day-to-day activities, have been found to be more successful than one-day workshops and activities that do not follow up with teachers on how they utilize the professional development activity.

Goal 8: Motivating teachers to perform

There are mechanisms in place to hold teachers accountable. Career opportunities and salaries are linked to teacher performance but high-performing teachers do not receive monetary bonuses or recognition for their efforts. Kazakhstan is Emerging in this category, supporting the need to strengthen the linkage between teacher performance and pay

Options:

- Reward high-performing teachers with desirable incentives—both monetary and non-monetary awards.
- Ensure that the results of teacher evaluations and feedback reach teachers and that evaluations are not simply *pro forma*.
- Develop a system to reward high-performing teachers (e.g., national awards and other types of recognition for high-performers).

Acronyms

MoES Ministry of Education and Science

UNT Unified National Testing

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также гражданами, обучавшимися на основе государственного образовательного заказа по педагогическим и медицинским специальностям (бакалавриата) и обучавшимися в докторантуре по программе докторов философии (PhD). Постановление Правительства Республики Казахстан от 30 марта 2012 года № 390

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Annex 1. SABER-Teachers Ratings

The SABER-Teachers team has identified policy levers (actions that governments can take) and indicators (which measure the extent to which governments are making effective use of these policy levers) for each of the eight policy goals referenced in this country report. For example, for Teacher Policy Goal 1, Setting Clear Expectations for Teachers, the SABER-Teachers team has identified the following policy levers and indicators:

Table 2. Setting Clear Expectations for Teachers

Policy Levers	Indicators
A. Are there clear expectations for teachers?	1. Are there standards for what students must know and be able to do?
	2. Are the tasks that teachers are expected to carry out officially stipulated?
B. Is there useful guidance on the use of teachers' working time?	1. Do teachers' official tasks include tasks related to instructional improvement?
	2. Does the statutory definition of working time for primary school teachers recognize non-teaching hours?
	3. What is the share of working time allocated to teaching for primary school teachers?

For each goal in the country report, we define the goal in the first paragraph of the country report, identify the levers in the second paragraph, and use the remaining paragraphs to provide details about the indicators that measure each of the levers.

Using the policy levers and indicators, SABER-Teachers classifies education systems' performance on each of the eight teacher policy goals using a four-category scale (latent, emerging, established, and advanced), which describes the extent to which a given education system has in place teacher policies that are known to be related to improved student outcomes.

This four-tiered rating system represents a continuum from systems with more comprehensive, developed policies oriented toward learning to systems with no policies at all (or, in some cases, policies that are detrimental from the perspective of encouraging learning). SABER-Teacher ratings can be defined in the following manner:

- **Advanced**—Systems that are rated “advanced” toward a particular policy goal are those that have multiple policies conducive to learning in

place under each of the policy levers used to define a policy goal.

- **Established**—“Established” systems are those that have at least one policy/law in place that uses those policy levers.
- **Emerging**—“Emerging” systems may have only some appropriate policies in place under the policy goal.
- **Latent**—“Latent” systems are those that have none or few policies in place. Please refer to Vegas et al. 2012 for a detailed review of policy levers and indicators assessed for each goal.

For more details about these definitions and a detailed review of policy levers and indicators used by SABER-Teachers, please refer to the Vegas et al. (2012) background paper, *‘What matters most for teacher policies? A framework for building a more effective teaching profession’*.

The **Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)** initiative produces comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems. SABER evaluates the quality of education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data. The SABER country reports give all parties with a stake in educational results—from administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, objective snapshot showing how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

This report focuses specifically on policies in the area of teacher policies.

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