Guinea-Bissau

SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Policy Goals

Status

1. Autonomy in Planning and Management of the School Budget

Latent ●○○○

Legal authority over operational funds is centralized in Guinea-Bissau. Schools in Guinea-Bissau do not receive any operating budget, and there is no clear process for school budget planning. A dispatch on school fees does represent a budget-related process for the third cycle of primary and the secondary school levels, however, there is no such guidance at the first and second cycles of primary.

2. Autonomy in Personnel Management

Latent ●○○○

Teaching staff are contracted at the central level through a competition via the Civil Service Ministry. Authority for teacher deployment is shared between the central and regional levels. Authority over non-teaching staff appointment is mainly at the central level, and is not clearly defined in the law. The regional level, in conjunction with sectoral inspectors, are tasked with evaluating school directors, but evaluations seldom occur in practice.

3. Participation of the School Council on School Governance

Emerging ●●○○

Community participation is a key feature of the education system in Guinea-Bissau. Various forms of school management committees are present throughout the system but the country lacks a systematized definition, role or support for these bodies. Models are being piloted on a small scale that have participation and voice in school operations. None of the forms of school management committees have legal authority or voice over personnel decisions.

4. Assessment of School and Student Performance

Latent ●○○○

The education inspectorate conducts school inspections; however, these are not conducted regularly in practice. Guinea-Bissau lacks regular assessment of school performance, and assessments are not used to inform pedagogical or operational adjustments. National examinations and standardized tests are not regularly conducted, and there are no provisions for sharing and reporting of standardized test results.

5. Accountability to Stakeholders

Emerging ●●○○

There are some regulations in place for complying with rules for financial management and school operations, but no linkage of rewards or sanctions for compliance. There is no mandate for simplifying and explaining results of student assessments to the public to foster accountability of schools and the education system to the public.

Systems Approach for Better Education Results

WORLD BANK GROUP

Introduction

In 2011, the World Bank Group commenced a multiyear program designed to support countries in systematically examining and strengthening the performance of their education systems. Part of the World Bank's Education Sector Strategy,[1] the evidence-based initiative called SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) is building a toolkit of diagnostics for examining education systems and their component policy domains against global standards, best practices, and in comparison with the policies and practices of countries around the world. By leveraging this global knowledge, the SABER tools fill a gap in the availability of data and evidence on what matters most for improving the quality of education and achieving better results. This report discusses the results of applying the SABER School Autonomy and Accountability (SAA) tool in Guinea-Bissau.

Country Overview

A coastal country in Western Africa, Guinea-Bissau has a population of approximately 1.8 million, with annual population growth of around 2.4 percent (2015). Its population is very young: 41 percent of residents are between 0 and 14 years. Given its GDP per capita of US$573 (2015), Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world, with around 70 percent of the population falling under the poverty line of US$2 a day (World Bank 2015). About 40 percent of the population lives in the capital, Bissau, and much of the rest of the population is concentrated in the rural North (Ibid). Human development indicators are low with Guinea-Bissau ranking 178 out of 188 countries on the 2014 UNDP Human Development Index.[2] The economy is dominated by cashew production, which employs around 80 percent of the population and is the country's most important export (World Bank 2015). Portuguese is the country's official language; however, its use is limited as much of the population speaks Creole in addition to various indigenous languages, which presents a significant challenge for the education system.

After facing many years of political instability, a coup d'etat in 2012 left the country vulnerable as many foreign donors withdrew their support. After democratic rule was re-established in 2014, the situation improved, but political instability remains a key cause of state fragility. The country's strategic plan, "Terra Ranka," governs its vision and plans for reform and investment over the next decade. Its goal is achieving, "a positive Guinea-Bissau, politically stable through inclusive development, good governance, and preservation of its biodiversity."

I. Education in Guinea-Bissau

Education in Guinea-Bissau is governed primarily by the Basic Education Law of Guinea-Bissau passed in May 2010 (*A Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo da Guiné-Bissau*, MEN 2010a). The law affirms the right to basic education for all, as guaranteed by the Constitution. The first and second cycles of basic education (EB1 and EB2) are comprised of grades 1–6 and entry is mandated free by law (Table 1). School fees are charged in the third cycle of basic education (EB3, grades 7–9) and in secondary education (grades 10–12). Access to education in Guinea-Bissau has improved over the last decade; however, the country remains far from achieving the goal of universal education. Gross enrollment in grades 1–4 rose from 139 percent in 2004–05 to 143 percent in 2012–13, yet enrollment in grades 5–6 in 2012–13 was only 76 percent (MEN et al. 2015). The gross enrollment rate at the preschool level remains low, 13 percent (2013). Late entry is a significant issue, with 96 percent of students in grade 2 older than the target age of 7 years; in fact, their average age was 11 years in 2015 (MEN et al 2015).

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[1] The World Bank Education Sector Strategy 2020: Learning for All (2011), which outlines an agenda for achieving "Learning for All" in the developing world over the next decade. [2] UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), "Guinea-Bissau," webpage, Human Development Reports, UNDP, New York, NY, http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GNB.

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Table 1: Structure of the Education System

Level	Ages*	Grades
Preprimary (Pré-escolar)	4–5	Preschool
First cycle of basic education (Primeiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico, EB1)	6–9	1–4
Second cycle of basic education (Segundo Ciclo do Ensino Básico, EB2)	10–11	5–6
Third cycle of basic education (Terceiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico, EB3)	12–14	7–9
Secondary education (Ensino Secundário)	15-17	10 – 12

Source: A Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo da Guiné-Bissau (Basic Education Law of Guinea-Bissau), Ministério de Educação Nacional, Cultura, Ciência, Juventude e dos Deportes (MEN) May, 2010.

Note: *The Basic Education Law states school entry at 6 years old; ages are calculated from that starting point. In practice, students within grades are often much older than the ranges shown above.

Completion rates and learning outcomes are both low. Completion rates in the first two cycles of basic education decreased from 64 percent in 2010 to 59 percent in 2013 due to a variety of factors, including political instability and the resulting disruptions in the education sector (MEN et. al 2015). A recent assessment of learning outcomes found that both students and teachers had low levels of achievement in both math and Portuguese (MEN et. al 2015). For example, near the end of primary school (grade 5), the study found that more than one-half of the school curriculum in mathematics and Portuguese had not been mastered by students (MEN et. al 2015). Teacher outcomes can be seen as a contributing factor, demonstrated by their poor mastery of subject content. Based on the same assessment, more than one-half of second-grade teachers did not have sufficient mastery of mathematics basics, and almost all fifth-grade teachers did not demonstrate adequate content knowledge of Portuguese and math – 95 percent and 98 percent, respectively (MEN et. al 2015). Frequent and ongoing strikes in the sector have further hampered education outcomes. An estimated 40 percent of school days in the 2012–13 school year were lost due to teachers' strikes and other paralysis (MEN et. al 2015) and multiple months were lost in the 2015–16 and 2016–17 school years.

Education in Guinea-Bissau is under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, Culture, Science, Youth, and Sports (MEN), with administrative responsibilities also held by 11 Regional Education Directorates. Each region is divided into sectors or zones, such as Sector Autónomo de Bissau (SAB) for the capital region; the section (secção) is the local level. The Education Directorate of Inspection is tasked with supporting the sector by providing services for administrative and financial inspection, pedagogical inspection, and technical assistance (Article 28, CDM 2006). The Inspectorate has both a central-level structure and a regional structure through the regional coordinating inspectors and sector inspectors.

Education in Guinea-Bissau is constrained by limited resources, with less than two percent of GDP allocated to the sector (Table 2). Furthermore, the education budget is almost entirely absorbed by salaries (97 percent of current educational expenditures in 2013); the remainder of the budget has very low levels of execution. The sector is accordingly heavily reliant on donor support.

Guinea-Bissau has recently finalized a new national strategy for education. The National Education Plan (*Plano Sectorial da Educação da Guiné-Bissau 2016-2025*) aims to guide the country's education sector strategy for the next decade. The plan prioritizes expanding education coverage, improving education quality, and supporting TVET and higher education. In addition, strengthening the management of schools is a key priority outlined, as part of the need to strengthen governance of the sector by improving coordination, decentralization, and financial management.

Table 2: Selected Education Indicators	
Public Expenditure on Education (2013)	
As % of GDP	1.7
As % of Total Government Expenditure	13
Distribution of Public Expenditure per Level (%) (2013)	
Pre-Primary and other	3.7
Primary (Ensino Básico, 1 and 2)	45.9
Secondary (Ensino Básico 3, Secondary, and Technical-Vocational together)	41.3
Tertiary	9.1
Teacher/Pupil Ratio in Primary	48
Percentage of Repeaters in Primary (Ensino Básico 1)	21
Percentage of Repeaters in Primary (Ensino Básico 2)	18
Primary to Secondary Transition Rate*	56

Source: MEN et. al. 2015.

* Note: Rate of access to Ensino Básico 3 (grade 7) is 56 percent according to the 2015 RESEN.

II.

The Case for School Autonomy and School Accountability

School autonomy and accountability are key components of an education system that ensures educational quality. The transfer of core managerial responsibilities to schools promotes local accountability; helps reflect local priorities, values, and needs; and gives teachers the opportunity to establish a personal commitment to students and their parents (Box 1). Benchmarking and monitoring indicators of school autonomy and accountability allows any country to rapidly assess its education system, setting the stage for improving policy planning and implementation.

Box 1: What are School Autonomy and Accountability?

School autonomy is a form of school management in which schools are given decision-making authority over their operations, including the hiring and firing of personnel, and the assessment of teachers and pedagogical practices. School management under autonomy may give an important role to the School Council, representing the interests of parents, in budget planning and approval, as well as a voice/vote in personnel decisions.   By including the School Council in school management, school autonomy fosters accountability (Di Gropello 2004, 2006; Barrera, Fasih and Patrinos 2009).

In its basic form **accountability** is defined as the acceptance of responsibility and being answerable for one's actions. In school management, accountability may take other additional meanings: (i) the act of compliance with the rules and regulations of school governance; (ii) reporting to those with oversight authority over the school; and (iii) linking rewards and sanctions to expected results (Heim 1996; Rechebei 2010).

School autonomy is a form of a decentralized education system in which school personnel are in charge of making most managerial decisions, frequently in partnership with parents and the community. More local control helps create better conditions for improving student learning in a sustainable way, since it gives teachers and parents more opportunities to develop common goals, increase their mutual commitment to student learning, and promote more efficient use of scarce school resources.

To be effective, school autonomy must function on the basis of compatible incentives, taking into account national education policies, including incentives for the implementation of those policies. Having more managerial responsibilities at the school level automatically implies that a school must also be accountable to local stakeholders as well as to national and local authorities. The empirical evidence from education systems in which schools enjoy managerial autonomy is that autonomy is beneficial for restoring the social contract between parents and schools and instrumental in setting in motion policies to improve student learning.

The progression in school autonomy in the last two decades has led to the conceptualization of **School-Based Management** (SBM) as a form of decentralization in which the school is in charge of most managerial decisions, but with the participation of parents and the community through school councils (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, and Patrinos 2009). *SBM is not a set of predetermined policies and procedures, but a continuum of activities and policies put into place to improve the functioning of schools, allowing parents and teachers to focus on improvements in learning.* As such, SBM should foster a new social contract between teachers and their community in which local cooperation and local accountability drive improvements in teachers' professional and personal performance (Patrinos 2010).

The empirical evidence on SBM shows that it can take many forms or combine many activities (Barrera et al. 2009) with differing degrees of success (see Box 2). Unless SBM activities contribute to system closure, they remain just a collection of isolated managerial decisions. Therefore, the indicators of SBM that relate to school quality must conform to the concept of a system, in which the presence or absence of some critical components within the system allow or preclude system closure.

Box 2: Different paths to School-Based Management are fine as long as they allow for system closure

In many countries the implementation of SBM has increased student enrollment, student and teacher attendance, and parent involvement. However, the empirical evidence from Latin America shows very few cases in which SBM has made a significant difference in learning outcomes (Patrinos 2010), while in Europe there is substantial evidence showing a positive impact of school autonomy on learning (Eurydice 2007). Both the grassroots-based approach taken in Latin America, where the institutional structure was weak or service delivery was hampered due to internal conflict, and the operational efficiency approach taken in Europe where institutions were stronger, coincide in applying managerial principles to promote better education quality, but driven by two different modes of accountability to parents and the community. One in Latin America where schools render accounts through participatory school-based management (Di Gropello 2004) and another in Europe where accountability is based on trust in schools and their teachers, (Arcia, Patrinos, Porta and Macdonald 2011). In either case, school autonomy has begun to transform traditional education from a system based on processes and inputs into one driven by results (Hood 2001).


As components of a managerial system, SBM activities may behave as mediating variables: they produce an enabling environment for teachers and students, allowing for pedagogical variables, school inputs, and personal effort to work as intended.

When do SBM components become critical for learning? The improper functioning of a school or a school system can be a substantial barrier to success. The managerial component of a school system is a necessary but insufficient condition for learning. One can fix some managerial components and obtain no results or alter some other components and obtain good results. What combination of components is crucial for success are still under study, but the emerging body of practice point to a set of variables that foster managerial *autonomy*, the *assessment* of results, and the use of the assessment to promote *accountability* among all stakeholders (Bruns, Filmer, and Patrinos 2011). When these three components are in balance with each other, they form a "closed loop system."

Defining a managerial system that can achieve closure is conceptually important for school-based management, since it transforms its components from a list of managerial activities to a set of interconnected variables that when working together can improve system performance. If an SBM system is unable to close, are partial solutions effective? Yes, in a broad sense, in which schools can still function but their degree of effectiveness and efficiency would be lower than if the system closes. In this regard, ***SBM can achieve closure when it enforces enough autonomy to evaluate its results and use those results to hold someone accountable.***

This last conclusion is very important because it means that *SBM can achieve system closure when autonomy, student assessment, and accountability, are operationally interrelated through the functions of the school councils, the policies for improving teacher quality, and education management information systems* (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

School Autonomy & Accountability
The 3 A'S
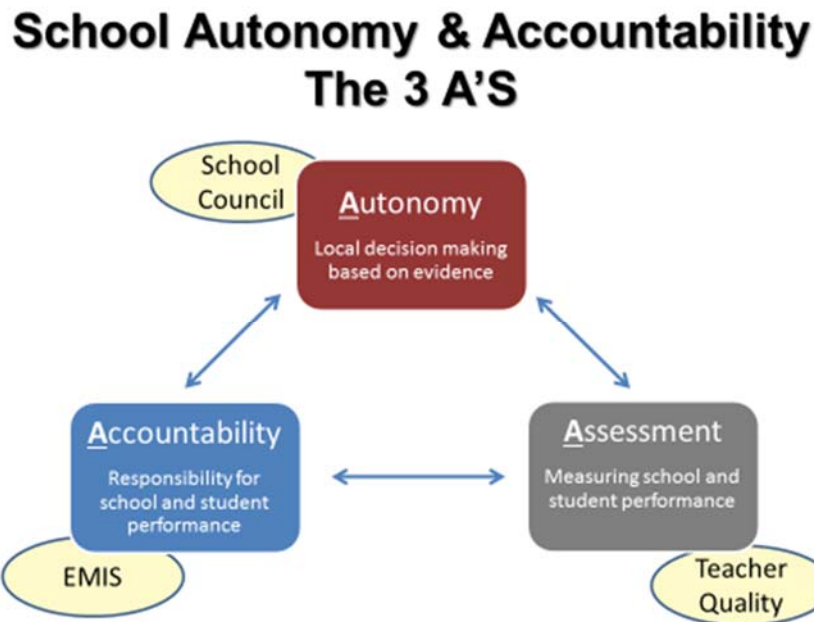
Source: Demas and Arcía 2015.
Note: EMIS – education management information system.

In managerial terms it is clear that the point of contact between autonomous schools and their clients is primarily through the school council (Corrales 2006). Similarly, school assessments are the vehicles used by schools to determine their needs for changes in pedagogical practices and to determine the training needs of their teachers. Both, pedagogical changes and teacher training are determinant factors of teacher quality (Vegas 2001). Finally, the role of EMIS on accountability has been well established and it is bound to increase as technology makes it easier to report on indicators of internal efficiency and on standardized test scores (Bruns, Filmer, and Patrinos 2011).

Results on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) suggest that when autonomy and accountability are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better student performance (OECD 2011). The experience of high-performing countries[3] on PISA indicates that:

- Education systems in which schools have more autonomy over teaching content and student assessment tend to perform better.

- Education systems in which schools have more autonomy over resource allocation and that publish test results perform better than schools with less autonomy.

- Education systems in which many schools compete for students do not systematically score higher on PISA.

- Education systems with standardized student assessment tend to do better than those without such assessments.

- PISA scores among schools with students from different social backgrounds differ less in education systems that use standardized student assessments than in systems that do not.

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[3] Examples of high-performing countries that have implemented school-based management policies and frameworks include The Netherlands, Canada, and New Zealand, among others.

As of now, the empirical evidence from countries that have implemented school autonomy suggests that a certain set of policies and practices are effective in fostering managerial autonomy, assessment of results, and the use of assessments to promote accountability. Benchmarking the policy intent of these variables using SABER can be very useful for any country interested in improving the performance of its education system.

SABER School Autonomy and Accountability: Analyzing Performance

The SABER School Autonomy and Accountability tool assists in analyzing how well developed the set of policies are in a given country to foster managerial autonomy, assess results, and use information from assessments to promote accountability. There are five policy goals for school autonomy and accountability. Below are the main indicators that can help benchmark an education system's policies that enable school autonomy and accountability:

1. **School autonomy in the planning and management of the school budget**
2. **School autonomy in personnel management**
3. **Role of the school council in school governance**
4. **School and student assessments**
5. **Accountability**

Each of these policy goals has a set of policy actions that make it possible to judge how far along an education system's policies are in enabling school autonomy and accountability. Each policy goal and policy action is scored on the basis of its status and the results classified as Latent, Emerging, Established, or Advanced:

Latent ◉〇〇〇	Emerging ◉◉〇〇	Established ◉◉◉〇	Advanced ◉◉◉◉
Reflects policy not in place or limited engagement	Reflects some good practice; policy work still in progress	Reflects good practice, with some limitations	Reflects international best practice

A *Latent* score signifies that the policy behind the indicator is not yet in place or that there is limited engagement in developing the related education policy. An *Emerging* score indicates that the policy in place reflects some good practice, but that policy development is still in progress. An *Established* score indicates that the program or policy reflects good practice and meets the minimum standards, but that some limitations in its content and scope may exist. An *Advanced* score indicates that the program or policy reflects best practice and it can be considered on par with international standards.

III. Guinea-Bissau's Performance: A Summary of Results

A summary of the results of the benchmarking exercise for Guinea-Bissau are shown below, followed by a breakdown by individual policy goal.

Summary

1. **Autonomy in planning and management of the school budget is "*Latent.*"** Legal authority over operational funds is centralized in Guinea-Bissau. Schools do not receive any operating budget and there is no clear process for school budget planning. A dispatch on school fees does represent a budget-related process for the third cycle of primary and the secondary school levels; however, no such guidance exists at the first and second cycles of primary school.

2. **Autonomy in personnel management is "*Latent.*"** Teaching staff are contracted at the central level through a competition administered by the civil service ministry; authority for teacher deployment is shared between the central and regional levels. Authority over the appointment of non-teaching staff lies mainly at the central level,

        although it is not clearly defined in the law. The regional level, in conjunction with sectoral inspectors, are tasked with evaluating school directors, but evaluations do not occur in practice.

3. **Participation of the school council in school governance is "*Emerging.*"** Community participation is a key feature of the education system in Guinea-Bissau. Various forms of school management committees are present throughout the system, but the country lacks a systematized definition, role, or support for these bodies. Models for participation and voice in school operations are being piloted on a small scale. None of the forms of current school management committees have legal authority or voice over personnel decisions.

4. **Assessment of school and student performance is "*Latent.*"** The education inspectorate conducts school inspections; however, it does not do so regularly in practice. Guinea-Bissau lacks regular assessment of school performance, and assessments are not used to inform pedagogical or operational adjustments. National examinations and standardized tests are not regularly conducted, and there are no provisions for sharing and reporting standardized test results.

5. **Accountability to Stakeholders is "*Emerging.*"** There are some regulations in place for complying with rules for financial management and school operations, but no linkage of rewards or sanctions for compliance. There is no mandate to simplify and explain student assessment results to the public in order to foster accountability of schools and the education system to the public.

1.   Autonomy in planning and managing the school budget is LATENT

This policy goal focuses on the degree of autonomy that schools have in planning and managing their budgets. In order to evaluate policy intent, the scoring rubric makes clear which areas should be backed by laws, regulations, and/or official rules in the public record. School autonomy in planning and managing the school budget is considered desirable because it can increase the efficiency of financial resources, give schools more flexibility in budget management, and give parents the opportunity to have more voice on budget planning and execution.

In Guinea-Bissau, the issues of planning and management of the school budget are complicated by the non-transfer of operating budgets to schools. Given the severe constraints on the education budget, schools in Guinea-Bissau do not receive an operating budget. For example, resources distributed to schools by the central level in 2016–17 included only chalk and a record book for each school. About 97 percent of current education expenditures are allocated to salaries, leaving little for operational expenditures (MEN 2015). Article 11 of the most recent budget law, Lei do Orçamento 2014/2015, states that "the government is authorized to regulate the modalities for execution and supervision of the use of funds destined to public education institutions."

According to the Basic Law of the Education System of Guinea-Bissau (MEN 2010a), schools at the EB3 (grades 7–9) and secondary level (grades 10–12) can generate some income from school matriculation fees, a portion of which is supposed to be kept at the school level to manage and fund operations. A decree was issued in 2002 (*Decreto do Governo que aprova a tabela das propinas e o regulamento do fundo social de apoio as escolas: Despacho Nº 10/GM/02) (*MEN 2002) that contains a dispatch outlining procedures for the use of a portion of these funds for the support of the school via a social fund, *fundo social de apoio escolar* (FSAE), which in effect constitutes an operating budget. The dispatch includes directions and provisions for planning and management of the social fund by a school-level management committee. In Guinea-Bissau, decrees (which are issued by the Council of Ministers) and dispatches (which are issued by a ministry or the Prime Minister) are subordinate to laws (issued by the national assembly). Furthermore, with a change of government, it is possible that legislation may not be fully publicized, operationalized, or implemented, sometimes leading to a fragmented policy environment. So, while Dispatch Nº 10/GM/02 on FSAE is in force and being used by some schools (predominantly schools that teach grades 7–12 and receive school fees), it has not been extended across the system—most notably, at the primary education level.

With respect to salaries of both non-teaching staff and teachers, legal authority is centralized. Teachers are hired through the civil service, as are a portion of non-teaching staff, and salaries are set centrally by the civil service pay scale and the

Law on Teacher Careers (Lei sobre Estatuto de Carreira Docente: Lei nº 2/2011, MEN 2011b). While in practice additional non-teaching staff are informally hired directly by schools with salaries determined at the school level, this is not clearly stated in the law.

Based on the decree governing FSAE (Dispatch Nº 10/GM/02), all schools have the authority to accept funds from other sources (Article 2). Currently schools do raise additional funds from parents, community members, and donors, and given the lack of centrally provided resources, schools are reliant on these funds. However, feedback from officials emphasizes that this is not a clear authority and the scope of authority should be more clearly established within written policies. This same allowance might apply for the school to propose a budget to a subnational government for funding, but in practice this process does not occur. There is no explicit provision in current laws that schools should submit a budget request, or that regional directorates of education should use such budgets, nor is there is any mandated transfer of governmental resources to schools.

1. Legal authority over planning and management of the school budget is LATENT		
Indicator	**Score**	**Justification**
1A. Legal authority over management of the operational budget	Latent ◉○○○	A dispatch regarding the *Fundo Social de Apoio Escolar* (FSAE) outlines a budget preparation and management process involving schools, regions, and the central level. While some secondary schools participate, the dispatch is not widely applied and schools generally do not receive or manage operating budgets.
1B. Legal authority over the management of non-teaching staff salaries	Latent ◉○○○	In accordance with official policies, legal authority over the management of non-teaching staff salaries is centralized.
1C. Legal authority over the management of teacher salaries	Latent ◉○○○	The legal authority to manage teacher salaries is centralized. Salaries are determined by applying the Teacher Career Law and the civil service pay scale.
1D. Legal authority to raise additional funds for the school	Established ◉◉◉○	Schools can raise additional funds from parents, members of the community, private companies, and non-governmental institutions.
1E. Collaborative budget planning	Emerging ◉◉○○	There are some legal provisions that permit schools to propose a budget to the subnational level as a request for financing. According to the dispatch on secondary school fees, schools may be permitted to request financing from government agencies, which could include those at the regional level.

2.   School autonomy in personnel management is LATENT

This policy goal measures policy intent in the management of school personnel, which includes the principal, teachers, and non-teaching staff. Appointing and deploying principals and teachers can be centralized at the level of the ministry of education or it can be the responsibility of regional or municipal governments. In fully decentralized education systems, schools have the autonomy to hire and fire teachers. Budgetary autonomy includes giving schools responsibility for negotiating and setting the salaries of its teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as using monetary and non-monetary bonuses as rewards for good performance. In centralized systems, teachers are paid directly by the ministry of education or the ministry of finance under union or civil service agreements. As a result, in centralized systems schools have less influence over teacher performance because they have no financial leverage over teachers. Inversely, if a school negotiates teachers' salaries, as private schools routinely do, it may be able to motivate teachers directly with rewards for a job well done.

Authority over school personnel management in Guinea-Bissau is centralized as defined in the Law on Teacher Careers (MEN 2011). The majority of teachers are recruited via the civil service (Ministério da Função Pública), and the authority

for appointing teachers is at the central level. There are three categories of teachers: (i) *efectivos,* who are full civil servants, (ii) *novos ingressos*, or new entrants, who have been hired on a track to become civil servants, and (iii) *contratados*, who are hired on a contract basis for a school year and are not civil servants.

The central education ministry gathers information from regional directors, who compile requests from schools on the number of teachers needed for the following school year. From the numbers given by the regional directors to the central level, a list of vacancies (*listado de necesidades*) is determined by the central MEN. The ministry then requests a hiring competition (*concurso*) via the civil service ministry to fill the slots with candidates. The vacancies are first filled with trained teachers who meet the prerequisites and the remaining places are then opened for the regional level to hire contract teachers (World Bank 2016b). The current process for hiring teachers in Guinea-Bissau has led to some inefficiencies, for example, hiring contract teachers is sometimes delayed by months into the school year and there can be inconsistencies between estimates of teacher needs and the number of teachers hired. The process is currently under revision in order to base the number of teachers needed on reliable data and to start the recruiting process earlier in the school year (Ibid.).

Teachers are hired under the Public Administration Personnel Law (*Estatuto Pessoal da Administração Publica: Decreto nº 12-A/94)*. The governing legislation for teachers is the Law on Teacher Careers, which was officially passed in 2011. The Law on Teacher Careers regulates the teaching profession with the objective of defining the rights and responsibilities, duties, careers and salaries, disciplinary regime, and retirement scheme for teaching personnel (Lei nº 2/2011, article 2). However, after the law was passed, the resulting change in government left implementation of the law incomplete and with discrepancies, for example, with respect to determining the grade level of teachers within the pay scale.

Teacher deployment is a two-stage process that touches both central and regional levels of authority. The central level has authority over allocation of teachers to the regions. Within the regions, regional authorities allocate teachers to specific schools. According to the Organic Law (MEN 2006), regional education directorates have the mandate to gather the needs of the education system with respect to human resources and materials. The guidelines for the school year state that a commission should be formed for the process of teacher placement and transfer, which should include technical staff from the central ministry, but, ultimately it is the regional directors that conduct deployment.

Authority for the hiring and deployment of non-teaching staff is centralized, however in practice schools often hire non-teaching staff directly. A small number of schools in the country (generally larger schools) have non-teaching professional staff (such as a statistician or secretary) who are civil service employees and hired at the central level. Consultations indicated that in many cases, the schools or parent associations directly contract support staff (for example, cooks, cleaners, and security guards), although this is not explicitly permitted by law. According to the Organic Law, the regional level has a role to play in managing non-teacher personnel as well, with a mandate to "manage teachers and non-teacher staff in schools, in the terms of decentralization of the competencies of the general secretary to the regional directorates, without prejudice to the management bodies of the local schools." (MEN 2006, article 34, h).

School directors are to be appointed through the civil service per the Public Administration Personnel Law (*Estatuto Pessoal da Administração Publica*), which is a central level process. Directors are typically teachers who are nominated to serve in the role of director and therefore are also governed under the Teacher Career Law of 2011. Criteria were created for appointment of school directors based on merit, as outlined in a dispatch on criteria for directors (Dispatch No 21/GMEJCD/13, MEN 2013a); however, according to consultations with government officials, this dispatch is considered legally invalid because legislation in this area is not within the purview of the ministry, and requires a decree or law. Thus, the dispatch is not in effect. There are provisions within existing laws—including the Law on Teacher Careers (Article 43), the Organic Statute for the General Inspectorate of Education (Article 9, MEN 2015b), and the Guidelines for the Annual School Year (p. 9, MEN 2016) for the performance evaluation of directors to be conducted by the regional educational directorate in conjunction with the inspectorate. Consultations indicated that this does not occur with any regularity, and that in practice there is no director evaluation that determines their tenure, transfer, or removal.

2. Level of autonomy in personnel management is LATENT		
Indicator	Score	Justification
2A. Autonomy in teacher appointment and deployment decisions	**Emerging** ◉◉○○	Teachers are appointed at the central level by the ministry of education through the civil service ministry. Regional directors have legal authority to deploy teachers to schools.
2B. Autonomy in non-teaching staff appointment and deployment decisions	**Latent** ◉○○○	Officially, non-teaching staff should be appointed and deployed by the central government through the civil service ministry.
2C. Autonomy in school principal appointment and deployment decisions	**Emerging** ◉◉○○	Policy indicates that school directors should be appointed through the civil service and allocated by the central level. Their performance should be evaluated by the regional level and the education inspectorate.

3. Participation of the school council in school governance is EMERGING

The participation of the school/parent council in school administration is very important because it enables parents to exercise their real power as clients of the education system. If the council has to cosign payments, it automatically has purchasing power. The use of a detailed operational manual is extremely important in this area, since it allows council members to adequately monitor school management performance, help the principal with cash flow decisions, and become a catalyst for seeking additional funds from the community. The use of such manuals by the School Council is thus a good vehicle for promoting increased accountability and institutionalizing autonomy.

It is important to note that change management studies also have provided evidence that bringing stakeholders together to plan and implement meaningful activities also contributes to behavioral change in institutions, including schools. Collective school planning activities can provide a mutual vision and shared accountability of what parents and school staff can commit in terms of support to the school. These processes provide an enabling environment for better governance.

Broad public participation is recognized as a principal component of the education system in Guinea-Bissau. One of the key objectives outlined by the Basic Education Law is "to promote the participation of all of the population, namely students, parents and caregivers, teachers, and other actors in the education process, in the definition of education policy and school administration" (Lei de Bases, Article 3, part d, MEN 2010a). Given the severe limitations on government resources and capacity, parents and communities often step in to fill the void and marshal resources for education. Parents can also come together to form and fund "community schools." Despite the broad mandate for public participation and the role of the community, avenues for public participation in school management are not well institutionalized in the country's legislation.

Several bodies involving school level stakeholders play a role here. Parent associations are key actors in the system at both the local and national level and while they are mentioned within the law, they are not clearly defined in national legislation. Similarly, School Councils or the equivalent are not clearly defined in national legislation; however, several types of organizations formally provide communities (or their representatives) a role in school management. Several types of school committees were formed in response to donor programs (for example the administration of World Food Program resources) and persist in various forms. Two forms of school management bodies that are clearly documented are *comissões de gestão* (school management commissions) and *comités de gestão escolar* (school management committees, or COGEs).[4]

The first, comissões de gestão are management commissions formed to manage resources generated through FSAE as indicated by Dispatch Nº 10/GM/02, which was issued to regulate the management of school matriculation fees collected at the third cycle of primary and secondary education levels. These commissions administer the funds, with a mandate to

develop all activities necessary to improve school functioning and pedagogical conditions for teaching and learning. The FSAEs can be spent on learning inputs, including books and pedagogical materials (MEN 2002, Article 18).

According to the Dispatch No. 10/GM/02, Article 10, the FSAE management commission includes the school director (who serves as president), a secretary/treasurer (school financial officer), one teacher representative, one parent or caregiver representative, and one student representative—except in basic education, where there is no student representative. The commissions have legal standing as an organization and the FSAE is given administrative, patrimonial, and financial autonomy, but remains under the guardianship of MEN (MEN 2002, Articles 2 and 4). The commissions have a voice in non-salary budget items at the school level, through preparation of an annual program budget. For FSAE management commissions, there is no role listed in teacher appointment, transfers and removals. There is some voice on learning inputs, in particular as FSAE funds can be spent on learning inputs including books and pedagogical materials, and the related management committees define the activities in the plan for the funds. One of the competencies of the management commission listed in the decree is to "promote initiatives aimed at acquiring equipment or articles in order to ensure that learning and education of students are carried out in adequate conditions (Article 12)".

There are provisions for election of FSAE management commission members, and those who are elected have term limits. However, no guides (i.e., formal instructions, manuals, or mandates) exist to help organize volunteers to implement the activities managed by the commissions. Additionally, there are no guidelines for calling general assemblies with the wider school community to communicate the goals of the school and the plan to support to the school.

The second form, called comités de gestão escolar (COGEs), are school management committees that have been formed to raise funds and manage school resources mainly at the primary school level. The Government in conjunction with donor partners are piloting efforts to strengthen the COGEs, with a view toward formalizing them across the education system. While there is no official dispatch or law defining these committees, there are currently training materials that outline their characteristics and responsibilities developed and implemented by MEN, the National Institute for Education Development (INDE), and partners. COGEs have broad representation; their membership includes the head of the T*abanca* (village) or his or her representative; the administrator or representative; the school director (who serves as secretary); a faculty representative; a school service staff member; two students (a boy and a girl); two parent association (APE) representatives; a Culture and Sporting Association (ADC) representative, and a religious authority. Members are elected, there are term limits, and guidelines for calling general school assemblies exist. The religious authority and the representatives from the APE and ADC may all apply for the posts of president and treasurer. The COGEs have legal standing, but a ministerial dispatch and/or decree issued to formalize their specific composition.

No institution is officially tasked with providing policy direction and support to FSAE management committees, or COGEs. In practice, the General Directorate of Education and INDE, along with multiple nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been providing policy direction and support to COGEs.

It is worth noting that there is a potentially stronger accountability role for COGEs. For example, some training materials declare that members of a COGE have the role, among others, to "guarantee the promptness and attendance of the professor and the students [by] controlling the attendance register and demanding from professors and students justification of absences" (Guinea-Bissau MEN INDE 2013, 12); however, this responsibility is not part of a legal document, so it is not yet considered a legal voice or oversight policy.

3. Role of the School Council in School Governance is Emerging		
Indicator	**Score**	**Justification**
3A. Participation of the school council in budget preparation	**Emerging** ◉◉○○	The school management commissions for FSAEs can have a voice in planning and preparing non-salary budget items at the school level, but final responsibility belongs to the school director or other government authority.
3B. Participation of the school council in financial oversight	**Established** ◉◉◉○	The school management commission for FSAE has legal standing as an organization and the authority to have voice on budget issues, but they do not have legal authority for oversight of budget issues.
3C. Participation of the school council in personnel oversight	**Latent** ◉○○○	School management commissions for FSAE and COGEs do not have legal rights or voice in the appointment, transfer, or removal of teachers.
3D. Participation of the school council in school activities	**Latent** ◉○○○	There are no formal instructions, manuals, or mandates for organizing volunteers to implement activities.
3E. Community participation in learning inputs	**Emerging** ◉◉○○	School management commissions for FSAE have legal authority to express opinions, but not supervision over learning inputs (such as student attendance, books, and learning materials).
3F. Transparency in community participation	Established ◉◉◉○	There are provisions for the open election of members of school management commissions. There are provisions for the election of committee members, but no formal guidelines for calling general assemblies.

4.   Assessment of school and student performance is LATENT

School assessments can have a big impact on school performance because they encourage parents and teachers to agree on scoring rules and ways to keep track of them. Measuring student assessment is another important way to determine if a school is effective in improving learning. A key aspect of school autonomy is the regular measurement of student learning, with the intent of using the results to inform parents and society, and to make adjustments to managerial and pedagogical practices. Without regular assessment of learning outcomes, school accountability is reduced and improving education quality becomes less certain.

In Guinea-Bissau school assessment falls primarily under the remit of the Directorate of Inspection (*Inspeccão*) of the MEN, whose mandate spans services for technical assistance; pedagogical inspection; and administrative, financial, and patrimonial inspection (Organic Law of the Ministry of Education, Article 28, CDM 2006). According to officials, school inspections should be carried out several times a year, but due to lack of resources, the scope and frequency of inspections are limited. Data collected during inspections via the Inspection Bulletin include, among others: (i) data to monitor the number of students, shifts, and teachers, (ii) whether or not the teacher is on time, (iii) school and/or classroom cleanliness, (iv) use of teaching plans, and (v) classroom conditions (e.g., language used, student participation, use of time, respect for gender, etc.). School inspections do not monitor learning outcomes and there are no provisions in the Organic Law that ask schools to conduct self-evaluations. Inspection results are not used to inform pedagogical and operational adjustments.

Regarding student assessment, a National Evaluation System Dispatch -Despacho No. 36/GM/2010 "Regulation for the Evaluation System for Basic and Secondary Education" (MEN 2010b) defines various levels of student evaluations, two of which could be considered standardized assessments: (i) an external evaluation to evaluate the education system as a whole, and (ii) national exams at the end of each school cycle. However, while the decree was passed, it remains limited in scope and effectiveness. In practice, standardized student assessments do not occur.

Consultations with government officials indicate that due to frequent changes in government, many dispatches in the country are issued by one administration but then never fully operationalized. National examinations have been conducted only one time in the recent past—in 2011. A one-time standardized international assessment was also conducted in 2012 based on the PASEC (Programme d'Analyse des Systemes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN) tool with a sample of second- and fifth-grade students (MEN et al 2015), but such evaluations have not been institutionalized within the policies. Nor are there policies or guides that outline the design, administration, implementation, analysis, or reporting requirements of such assessments. Schools do not use the results of standardized student assessments to make pedagogical adjustments or to adapt learning materials.

4. School and student assessment is LATENT		
Indicator	**Score**	**Justification**
4A. Existence and frequency of school assessments	Established ◉◉◉○	The inspectorate uses ministry of education criteria to assess schools. According to policy, school assessments should occur several times per year, but in practice due to limited resources frequency varies considerably.
4B. Use of school assessments for making school adjustments	Latent ◉○○○	Schools do not use school evaluations to make pedagogical adjustments or to adapt learning materials.
4C. Existence and frequency of standardized student assessments	**Emerging** ◉◉○○	Students do not take standardized tests. The national dispatch on the evaluation system indicates that students should be evaluated via national exams and benchmarked evaluations; however, neither the regulations nor the budget are in place to support this.
4D. Use of standardized student assessments for pedagogical, operational, and personnel adjustments	Latent ◉○○○	Schools do not use standardized student assessments to make pedagogical adjustments or to adapt learning materials.
4E. Publication of student assessments	Latent ◉○○○	The results of student assessments are not reported and no clear policy indicates how the results should be published.

5.   School accountability to stakeholders is EMERGING

Accountability is at the heart of school-based management. The systemic connection between budgetary and personnel autonomy, parent participation in a school's financial and operational activities and the measurement of learning outcomes are all aimed at reinforcing accountability. Only by being accountable to parents can educational quality be sustainable. The following indicators below address aspects of accountability that can be implemented within the framework of school-based management.

In Guinea-Bissau, the overall policy framework enabling accountability to stakeholders is emerging. With respect to the use of student assessments as accountability tools, the situation can be considered latent—the policy supporting regular standardized student assessment is weak and the practice has not been institutionalized. The use of student assessment results, analysis of school and student performance, and a mandate to simplify and communicate assessment results to the public are also latent, as there are no guidelines in these areas. The policies supporting financial and operational accountability are somewhat more developed.

Financial accountability at all levels of the education system is governed by basic general accounting rules of the country (which includes the requirement to provide receipts and justification of use of funds, for example, by MEN to the Ministry of Finance or from regional offices to the central ministry). Financial accountability falls under the remit of the annual Budget Law (*Lei de Orçamento*). The requirements stop short of linking rewards and sanctions with financial compliance at any level of the education system (e.g., school, regional or central level).

With respect to operational accountability, each school year the MEN issues "Guidelines for the School Year" (*Orientações Gerais para o Ano Letivo, MEN 2016*) that lay out regulations in areas such as school fees, procedures, system management, and the school calendar. The school-year guidelines are directed at all levels of the system (central ministry, regional directorates of education, school directors, others). MEN has published tools for school management, including *Despacho sobre instrumentos de gestao das escolas* in 2011 (Despacho nº 17/GM/2011), which touch on aspects of financial and operational accountability. Within these tools is an activity report for schools. The dispatch does not, however, have any description, instruction, or regulation as to when this report should be filed, to whom it should be submitted, or what information it requires. Informant interviews indicate that these reports should be submitted to regional directors but are not used widely in practice—nor is any data synthesized from the limited number of reports received by these authorities.

Tools appear to exist to hold school operations and activities accountable to parents and community members, but are not clearly defined, deployed widely, or used consistently. There is no school improvement plan (SIP) or school development plan described in the Basic Education Law (MEN 2010a). The concept of an educational plan is mentioned in this law and other documents, but not defined. This plan would in theory lay out the vision of the school. Informant interviews also indicated that a school "development plan," has also been present in the education system, but has been largely promoted by donors (e.g., Cooperação Portuguesa), but is not a part of official law or policy. No policies are in place that incentivize schools to improve their operations (such as through performance-based financing).

5. Accountability to stakeholders is EMERGING		
Indicator	**Score**	**Justification**
5A. Guidelines for the use of results of student assessments	Latent ⦿○○○	There are no guidelines for the use of student assessment results.
5B. Analysis of school and student performance	Latent ⦿○○○	There are no guidelines for the comparative analysis of student assessment results from different types of schools, across regions, and for previous years.
5C. Degree of financial accountability at the central level, regional, municipal, local and school level	Emerging ⦿⦿○○	Regulations exist on compliance with general financial management and transparency rules, but not for linking rewards and sanctions to compliance.
5D. Degree of accountability in school operations	Established ⦿⦿⦿○	There are regulations for complying with school operational rules and submission of operational reports to those with oversight authority, but not for linking rewards and sanctions with operating performance.
5E. Degree of learning accountability	Latent ⦿○○○	There is no mandate to simplify and explain student assessment results to the public.

IV. Enhancing Education Quality: Policy Recommendations for Guinea-Bissau

The SABER benchmarking exercise shows that Guinea-Bissau is currently at the early stages of developing the policy environment needed to support school-based management. The findings reveal that a key challenge to school autonomy and accountability is a fragmented policy environment in which policy gaps, inconsistent communication of policy, and unfunded policy implementation lead to unclear autonomy, confused roles, and varied implementation practices. The findings also highlight that the country has a few key policies that are considered developmentally *emerging* that provide an important foundation on which to build. Since the education system in Guinea-Bissau is partially decentralized to the regional level and parents and the community are considered fundamental partners in education, both regional and local actors can play important roles in school-based management. This will, however, require formal policies to define and recognize their roles, dedicated training and a budget to build their capacity, and real responsibility for managing budget and activities as their capacity and accountability grows.

Three principal policy recommendation areas emerge as priorities for Guinea-Bissau to move forward, in order to strengthen school autonomy and accountability to improve education outcomes:

1. **Systematically formalize and consolidate national policies** to clearly delineate authority in the education system, clarify roles and responsibilities at each level of the system, and enable accountability. Areas where formal national policies are needed include school budget planning and management, the hiring of non-teaching personnel at schools, the roles and authorities of school management committees (i.e., general roles and responsibilities, rather than for specific programs), and the use of data for evidenced-based decision making and accountability including through conducting and using assessment results and disseminating performance information to stakeholders.

2. **Build the capacity of those bodies that have been given authority at the central, regional, and school levels.** Once national policies are clearly defined that delineate authority to various levels, it is important to build the capacity at those levels so that they can execute their responsibilities and be accountable for them. This includes systematic communication of the national policies to all levels. It also includes developing guidelines, manuals, and training programs for regional and school authorities.

3. **Use data to strengthen accountability in the system.** School and student assessments need to be systemically implemented and policies for communicating their results to various levels of the education system need to be developed. Further, defining regular reporting procedures for financial and operational accountability are needed, as well as procedures to improve the use, synthesis, and sharing of the collected data.

These recommendations are examined in more detail below in relation to the five policy goals of SABER School Autonomy and Accountability.

1.   Autonomy over planning and management of the school budget

As Guinea-Bissau looks forward to achieving its future vision of education, one critical consideration will be to address resource allocation to schools. One stated goal of the Education Sector Plan (PSE) is to provide schools with an operating budget: "[to] obtain, from the 2017 budget, budget launches for the operation of the regional education directorates and, from 2019, for the operation of primary schools" (MEN 2015a, section 3.2.3). It will thus be critical for Guinea-Bissau to develop policies, procedures, and tools on the budgeting process for schools to receive an operational budget linked to their anticipated needs for the school year. Furthermore, as the budget situation of primary and secondary schools differ, policies should clearly specify what applies to each level of the education system and the differences between them.

At present, the policy landscape for preparing, managing, and executing operating budgets for schools is fragmented and in general, schools do not receive operating budgets. To improve this situation, two key policy and capacity-building actions emerge as recommendations.

1. Building on existing legislation, it is recommended to formally communicate Dispatch No. 10 (MEN 2002) to secondary schools throughout the system and provide associated training to school management commissions. Linked to this, MEN should develop a plan for rolling out communications and training. The government may want to use schools with successful FSAE management experience as "demonstration schools" so that other schools can learn from them.

2. For primary schools, it is recommended that the MEN develop a sustainable, national-level policy for providing operating budgets to primary schools. One option to consider is to start transferring small grants directly to primary schools. It is recommended to start with fixed amounts based on school size and location. Then, as more reliable school-level data becomes available, these amounts could be eventually based on a per-student financing

formula. It is also recommended that accompanying implementation guidelines be developed and clearly state the roles of primary schools in planning and managing their operating budgets. This should include documenting procedures and tools for budget preparation, approval, and management processes at the central and regional MEN levels, as well as at the school level.

While regional education directorates may not initially be responsible for administering school level funds, it is recommended to build their capacity to provide guidance to schools in developing their operating budget plans and oversight in how schools manage these funds. For example, processes and support tools can be designed to help regional directorates work with schools to develop and manage yearly budget plans. At the school level, it will be critical to train school directors about how to plan and manage the budget. Existing materials developed previously by NGOs should be systematized, aligned with national policies, and outline clear mechanisms for incorporating community voice and inputs into budget planning and reporting to the central level.

With respect to legal authority over the salaries of non-teaching personnel, an official decree is needed to provide clarity on the legal authority and processes for hiring non-teaching personnel for schools and determining the authority over their salaries. Given that schools generally directly hire non-teaching support staff, Guinea-Bissau may consider formalizing the practice with policies that allow schools and communities to directly hire non-educator support staff, such as cleaners, security guards, and cooks, and set their pay in accordance with a recognized central or regional pay scale as a guide.

Another way to make policy more robust is to enact a decree empowering schools to raise funds beyond what is mentioned in the dispatch on school fees (Dispatch No. 10), by including a statement to the effect that income directed to the FSAE can come from any public or private entity. Such a policy should clearly state the sources from which schools can raise funds (e.g., subnational government, the community, businesses, NGOs, and others). These efforts should link with capacity building efforts to improve financial management and transparency, as discussed in the accountability section below.

2.   Autonomy in personnel management

In Guinea-Bissau's education system, the central level has legal authority over the hiring of teaching staff, while the regional directorates play a significant role in the identification of staffing needs and the allocation of personnel based on school requests. A key recommendation for Guinea-Bissau is to improve the processes used in practice to ensure both accountability for personnel decisions and adequate planning at the central and regional levels. In particular, there is a need to strengthen the process for determining teaching personnel needs and fortifying the capacity of the regional directorates in collecting and verifying data in order to ensure that hiring decisions are optimized and based on consistent criteria, given the constrained financial resources of the system. For example, having verified data on the number of students in a school, the grades being offered at each school, and the relative locations of all schools will allow the central level to control the overall number of teachers in the system and ensure that their allocation is based on central-level criteria. With these processes in place, Guinea-Bissau could further put in place a policy that clearly authorizes Regional Directors to manage the annual hiring of contract teachers and formalize the process between the regions and the schools.

Currently, informal processes predominate in the hiring and deployment of non-teaching school staff. It is recommended that policy distinguish between the different types of non-teaching roles that are present in schools. Non-teaching staff that occupy support roles in schools (such as cooks, cleaners, school monitors ("*contínuos*"), and guards) are already hired informally by the schools themselves. It is recommended that the central ministry formally recognize this fact and create an official policy that allows schools to hire local school support following established guidelines.

With regard to the appointment and deployment of school directors in Guinea-Bissau, this is currently done by the central education ministry, with the law stating that directors be evaluated by the regional education directorates and the directorate of services of pedagogical inspection.

As a first step, it is recommended that resources be allocated to support the provisions of existing laws (Law on Teacher Careers, Article 43; the Organic Statute for General Inspectorate of Education, Article 9; and the Guidelines for the Annual School Year) regarding the performance evaluation of school directors to be conducted by the regional level in conjunction with the inspectorate. Allocating resources for school director evaluations to take place (even if only for a portion of school directors annually) will help ensure quality administrative and instructional school management, as well as provide an opportunity for school directors to receive performance feedback and opportunities for professional growth. It is therefore important to build the capacity of regional education directorates and the inspectorate to evaluate the performance of school directors and to formalize the tools to be used in such evaluations. A schedule and frequency of these school director evaluations should be created, mandated, and enforced.

Additionally, it is recommended to formalize the selection criteria and the role and/or voice of the regional authority in the nomination of teachers to the position of school director in accordance with the criteria contained in the Dispatch on Competencies of a Director (Despacho Nº 21/GMEJCD/13, (MEN 2013a). Since the director appointment is made official at the central level through the civil service change in a teacher's status and salary when promoted to director, input from the regional level with regards to decisions on school director nomination, evaluation, and transfer is important.

3.   Role of school committees in school governance

Community participation is a salient feature of the education system in Guinea-Bissau. The country can capitalize on the active role of the community in education by more clearly defining and supporting school management committees and their roles in school governance (see Box 3). There are currently multiple forms of school management committees that function within the Guinea-Bissau education system. Given the various forms and practices, the following three steps are considered critical:

1.   Create a clear, harmonized definition or role for school committees and pass appropriate legislation and policies, for the general set up and functioning of such committees. The definitions and roles can differ whether the school management committees are for primary or secondary education.

2.   Examine the foundations of various school management committee models currently in operation and build upon the best practices and features that work well.

3.   Standardize guidelines, tools, and training to support school management committees and institutionalize the mechanisms of support.

It is important that guidelines be clearly established, decrees and policies be created, and sufficient training and information passed down through MEN to the regional education directorates and the school level. For example, guidelines on budgeting issues should be created that reflect the financial laws of the country.

Box 3. Creating Effective School Management Committees: Country Examples

School management committees (SMCs) have the potential to improve student learning and school quality when they engage in the right kind of activities. The Center for Public Education identifies five characteristics associated with effective SMCs:

- **Focus on student achievement.** Effective SMCs understand that student learning is the priority, and they focus their school improvement plans and activities on goals that help improve the quality of education and the learning outcomes of students in their schools.
- **Allocate resources based on need**. These SMCs allocate available resources from school grants and their operating budget to focus on student learning priorities.
- **Are mindful of their own accountability to the community.** Effective SMCs routinely and regularly measure and report the return on investment of the education dollars they spend.
- **Use data whenever possible**. Effective SMCs track all available data about their schools through school report cards, student assessment scores, budget data, and any other data available and make this information available to the parents and communities they serve.
- **Engage the communities they serve.** Effective SMCs institutionalize parent and community involvement in policy making and setting school goals (Ward and Griffin Jr. 2005).

Composition of SMCs in Indonesia. SMCs in Indonesia are active, with regular meetings throughout the year. Their activities have been seen to correlate with improved student learning outcomes, especially when SMCs coordinate with local village councils and democratically elect their members (Pradhan et al. 2011). A 2002 ministerial decree requires that each SMC have at least nine members and these members must include representatives from parents, community leaders, education professionals, the private sector, teachers, community based organizations, and village officials. The decree further requires that SMCs encourage a larger role for the community in school management and that they seek to accommodate the aspirations of the community in their activities (World Bank 2011).

Targeted SMC training and improved student learning in Mexico. Targeted training for parents and SMCs on establishing learning goals for a school can be effective in improving student learning. Through Mexico's PEC Program (Quality Schools Program), parents play a key role in the composition and management of SMCs. PEC provided targeted training to SMCs on how to improve learning outcomes in their schools. This puts the school community's focus on learning and allows them to better support the teaching and learning efforts of the principal and teachers at their school (Wang et al. 2015). Increasing the responsibility of parents by involving them in the management of school grants made the most difference in lowering repetition and failure rates in comparison to control schools (Skoufias and Shapiro 2006; Gertler et al. 2006). Targeted training for parents on school improvement planning and monitoring also significantly increased language and math scores (Lopez-Calva, and Espinosa 2006; Arcia et al. 2013).

Budget preparation and financial oversight. One of the roles for school management commissions of FSAE is to aid in the creation of the school budget that is submitted to the regional education directorates. Dispatch No. 10 (MEN 2002) already includes some language to ensure that the FSAE formally receives training in order to create an acceptable budget. It is recommended that this dispatch be operationalized through training and capacity building for all school management commissions to help them in developing a school operating budget. It is also recommended to develop capacity at the regional level, so the regional education directorates can aid school management commissions in the budget preparation process and financial oversight.

If schools are provided with small grant transfers, it could facilitate the strengthening of the COGEs capacity to manage funds and empowering them to have some control over school inputs, such as learning materials, the school environment, etc.

School personnel oversight. There is scope for the COGEs/FSAE management commissions to play a greater role in decisions on school personnel. As a step towards strengthening the ability of community members to express satisfaction

with teacher performance, it is recommended to establish policy that would provide COGEs/ FSAE management commissions with the ability to have a formal voice in requesting teacher transfers. This does not mean that the COGEs would actually make changes, but that they would have a legal right to have a voice that is considered by the authorities. This right should be coupled with other recommendations for school management committees that ultimately strengthen, clarify, and formalize their role.

Participation in school activities. To further enable community involvement, it is recommended that the government establish a mandate for organizing COGEs and create formal instructions, manuals, and mandates to assist COGEs to implement SIPs and community awareness campaigns regarding school activities. Existing instructions, manuals and mandates on COGEs may serve as a foundation on which instructions and guides could be built for school management committees in general. The government can further incentivize COGEs that are successful through, for example, public recognition (i.e., radio coverage, publicity, etc.). Additionally, while these instructions can be established by the central education ministry, the regional education directorates should have a role in monitoring and facilitating their implementation. It is also recommended that policy and instructions include reporting requirements and mechanisms on school activities so that it is known whether or not activities are being conducted in accordance with the mandate. It also would provide an opportunity for feedback loops within the education system.

Learning inputs. It is recommended that the current role of school management committees be expanded to strengthen their voice on learning inputs and to enable them to provide some oversight, such as monitoring teacher and student attendance, as well as verifying the existence and use of textbooks and learning materials in the classroom. Oversight and voice on learning materials can enable COGEs to assist in improving school quality.

Transparency in community participation. It is recommended to create one clear policy on the elections, term limits and composition for COGEs and FSAE management commissions and describe—in simple steps—the process in an accompanying manual. A uniform policy or mandate for holding general assemblies and a directive on their frequency should be established. The pilot initiative to support school management committees in Guinea-Bissau contains solid practices to build upon. For example, the training guides for COGEs and school directors list features of school management committees that are found in *established* systems, such as open elections, having a voice over learning inputs, and participation in financial oversight. Based on this documentation, the central education ministry could standardize tools and training and institutionalize mechanisms for providing support to COGEs.

There is no institution officially tasked to provide policy direction and support to FSAE management commissions or COGEs, according to Despacho No 10/GM/02 (MEN 2002), or the training guide for directors and communities for implementation of the COGEs (MEN, INDE 2013c). It is recommended that new and existing policies identify the departments that should provide policy direction, support and general guidance to school management committees. Such policies could formalize the current general practices of the General Directorate of Education and INDE, who have taken a leading role, based on the groundwork provided by NGOs.

4.   Enhancing school and student assessment

School Assessment. Policy on school assessments is established, so the recommendations offered here are to improve the execution of policy and provide training and financial resources to ensure that they are carried out in some form, whether it is through the inspectorate or school self-evaluation (see Box 4).

Box 4. Why Conduct School Assessments?

- *Insufficient information.* Information on how schools are managed, how much they cost, and what they produce is often limited in scope, unreliable, out of date, and not readily accessible.

- *Lack of accountability mechanisms.* Few accountability mechanisms are used to set school goals and hold students, parents, teachers, principals, and ministries responsible for results.

- *Weak demand.* Because education stakeholders are often unaware of problems and are not used to playing a direct role in improving learning, they seldom hold schools accountable or push for improvements.

- *Lack of shared vision*. Although most countries have a national curriculum, few have identified what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable performance or make clear provisions for the resources needed to reach curriculum goals.

Source: Ortega-Goodspeed 2006**.**

In Guinea-Bissau, the education inspectorate is tasked with assessing schools through regular inspections. Two key recommendations are to: (i) enable implementation of school assessments on a defined schedule and (ii) use the results of school assessments to inform necessary adjustments to school operations, personnel needs, and pedagogical practices, including materials to improve student performance and learning.

In the first area, the Organic Statute for the General Inspectorate of Education (MEN 2015b) does not state how frequently inspections should take place. A clear policy needs to specify the desired regularity of school inspections and require the tracking of whether this schedule of inspections is met. Schools should be assessed in all areas that have been outlined by the mandate of the directorate, including pedagogical, facilities, administrative, and financial inspection. These responsibilities are well laid out in Article 28 of the *Lei Organica* (CDM 2006).

It is important to note that Guinea-Bissau is currently in the process of approving new national school quality standards with which school inspections and any assessment tools should be aligned. Second, MEN needs to increase the capacity of the inspectorate to conduct such inspections, both in ensuring that adequate resources are available and in building the competencies of inspectors, such as training in school evaluation techniques and data handling. This capacity can be supported by putting appropriate manuals and guidelines in place to conduct school assessments. Additionally, it is recommended to create procedures requiring an actionable report be produced for each inspection and submitted for feedback to the school, regional education directorate, and MEN.

Third, to further improve the results of school assessments informing pedagogical practice, it is necessary to better capture data from inspections and analyze the results. For example, the central level could analyze results and provide feedback to schools on their strengths and weaknesses. Currently, there is not enough information in the Organic Statute for General Inspectorate of Education (2015) that indicates what the next steps are once the information is collected. It is recommended that reporting and analysis guidelines be created to ensure that information gathered from school assessments is analyzed by the ministry, and the results are shared with all relevant stakeholders. It is also recommended to formalize the practices of submitting reports from school assessments through written guidelines and mandates, ensuring that the MEN, the regional education directorates and schools receive school assessment results.

In many education systems, self-assessments are a tool utilized by schools to assess educational quality and used as an input for development of SIPs. School self-evaluation tools can assist in identifying how well a school is performing against standard minimum criteria (administrative, pedagogical, facilities, and financial). One option for the MEN is to develop a short, standard school self-evaluation tool aligned with the newly developed national quality school standards that school directors and school management committees could use for self-evaluation and management. The results of such

evaluations would inform the annual goals of the SIP and the school's operating budget. A SIP would allow the school to track data over the school year and use that information to analyze areas where it could improve its functioning. The inspectorate could also review the school's self-evaluation as part of its inspection.

Student assessments. The dispatch on the national evaluation system (Despacho No. 36/GM/2010, MEN 2010b) presents a clear basis for developing standardized student assessments and the attendant structures needed to implement them. It is recommended that the MEN strengthen the dispatch by creating accompanying guidelines for its operationalization, especially with respect to the benchmarking evaluation under article 11. This should describe the type of standardized student assessment, the grades in which it will be administered, the frequency of its administration (i.e., annually, every two years), and the basis for administration (i.e., sample or census based). It would also be important to clarify the institutional responsibilities for conducting, analyzing, and using assessment data to improve the education system. Finally, the MEN should allocate budget resources that support the implementation of national assessments and strengthen the capacities and district levels so that they can carry out student assessments.

One area not addressed within the current policy on the national assessment system is how results from assessments are analyzed and disseminated. It is recommended that guidelines be created for the analysis and dissemination of standardized student assessment results to all levels of the education system. A good practice in this area is for policy to include a mandate to simplify and share results to various levels of the education system, including the community. The guidelines should clearly state what unit is responsible for analyzing the data, how the analyzed results are disseminated and to whom, such as the regional education directorates, schools, and the public.

5.   Foster accountability to stakeholders

Information for accountability mechanisms can help strengthen the dialogue among school stakeholders and enable them to monitor school performance, set goals and push for improvements in their children's schools. Student assessment results are a powerful tool to enable accountability in the system because they provide data on whether or not students are learning. As such, it is necessary that assessment results be communicated in a simple and direct way to stakeholders in the system. This is important at all levels, including the central ministry, regional level, schools, and communities and/or parents.

Guidelines. It is recommended that Guinea-Bissau create clear and specific guidelines about the use of results of student assessment shared with MEN, regional education directorates, and schools. Section 2.7.2 of MEN's Education Strategy (Carta Política do Sector Educativo, MEN 2011a) which outlines that assessments of both schools and students should be administered periodically and that information from these assessments should be published for all of the actors and partners of the school, could serve as a starting point for developing guidelines to put this policy into action.

Analysis of performance. Since there are no regulations regarding the analysis of school and student performance, an important recommendation is to create policy and guidelines that identify the areas of comparative analysis of student results. Among others, this would include analysis of the performance of students across regions and across schools with different types of management structures (e.g. public versus community versus private schools). Comparative analysis could also provide information on factors that may affect student performance and provide MEN with data that it could use to make decisions on where to invest limited resources. Comparative analysis may also reveal which types of schools perform better, which in turn could aid the development of other schools.
Furthermore, initiatives such as outreach, training, and guidelines for communities on their roles and responsibilities, as well as how to use school and student data, are important to help communities fulfill their role for greater accountability. Particularly in settings where literacy and school attainment levels of the community may be low, it is imperative that adequate support be provided for community accountability to be effective.

Financial accountability. Given budget constraints at all levels of the education system, improved financial accountability is crucial. Financial accountability is governed by general accounting rules in the country (i.e., the need to provide receipts and justification of use of funds by MEN to the Ministry of Finance), as stated in the annual Budget Law (*Lei de Orcamento*). Since some regulations for financial accountability, as well as some standard forms for reporting to the regional education directorate and the MEN are currently in place, it is recommended that MEN policy clearly define reporting procedures and mechanisms, specifically, with regards to how frequently financial reports are to be created, what their content should be, and to what level within MEN this information is to be reported.

For example, the activity report that schools are required to submit to the regional education directorates contains a line (#14) with an open entry field that instructs the school to attach a financial report and/or accounting document as an annex. The activity report was distributed accompanying Despacho nº 17/GM/2011 on management tools for schools. Within this dispatch, however, there is no description, instruction, or regulation regarding when this report should be completed, to whom it should be returned, or what information is required to answer this question in the report.

Operational accountability. The only recommendation here is to strengthen policy execution of Dispatch No. 17 regarding school management tools by implementing the school activity report tool and monitoring reports to capture, analyze, and synthesize the school-level data that is submitted. This means elaborating clear regulations on the completion of the report (who should complete the form, when, what data should be submitted, how the results are to be used, etc.), as well as supporting regional directors to collect and analyze the data and having the central education ministry review their analysis. These new regulations can be linked with the development of simple school assessment tools and SIPs.

Degree of learning accountability. Since parents and local communities are intended to be active partners in Guinea-Bissau's education system, it is recommended that within policies on the dissemination of school and student assessment results, mandates also be introduced about sharing the results of the assessments in simple, uncomplicated language for parents and school communities. General guidelines should be created by the central level about what information to include in simple status reports on school and student performance. Such information could provide a basis for what to include in a school level report card (Box 5).

While it is important to share the results, it is equally important that the school director and school management committee work together and share with the community a plan for how to improve the school's results. A school general assembly meeting is a good forum to hold these types of presentations and discussions. Tools to communicate information could, as mentioned above, be in the form of a simple school report card and corresponding SIPs. Delivery of school information can be coupled with training and/or guidelines for communities regarding their role in school accountability.

Box 5: School Report Cards

School report cards can be an effective tool for monitoring and communication at the school level and beyond if they are kept simple and direct and stakeholders have the capacity to use them.

School report cards can be a useful method for disseminating information to school level stakeholders so that they can better understand the following:
- The criteria for assessing performance.
- The performance of the school from year to year and in relation to other schools in the education system.
- The actions needed to improve school performance.

Used in this way, school report cards engage parents and the community and build a partnership in demand for better results and solutions for reaching the intended educational outcomes.

Paraná State in Brazil undertook an accountability program by collecting school-level information for each school in the state and generating individual school report cards. The stated goals of the initiative were to increase parental knowledge about the quality of instruction in schools, and to raise parents' voice in school matters at both the school council and state level. The initiative also aimed to increase awareness among school personnel about their schools' instructional quality and academic performance. The report cards were relatively simple three-page documents that included the following information:
- Test-based performance (4th- and 8th-grade test scores)
- Student flows (promotion, retention, and dropout rates)
- School characteristics (average class size and teacher qualifications)
- Parental opinion and satisfaction with several aspects of school life (e.g., facilities, security, teaching practices, quality of education, and parental involvement)
- Parental opinion on the availability of information on school performance and activities (Bruns, Filmer, and Patrinos 2011)

The report cards, which were published in a newsletter and widely disseminated, also included comparative information on the performance of neighboring schools. Parents and communities were easily able to access them and engage in discussions with teachers and school officials about how they might improve the quality of their schools.

Sources: Wang et al. 2015; Bruns et al 2011.

Acknowledgments

Acronyms

ADC	Association of Sports and Culture
APE	Association of Parents and Caregivers (*Associação de Pais e Encarregados*)
COGE	School Management Committee (*Comité de Gestão Escolar*)
CONFEMEN	Conférence des Ministres de l'Éducation des États et Gouvernements de la Francophonie
EB	Basic Education (*Ensino Basico*)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FSAE	Social Fund for Support of Schools (*Fundo Social de Apoio Às Escolas*)
GDP	gross domestic product
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HDI	Human Development Index
INDE	National Institute for Education Development (*Instituto Nacional para o Desenvolvimento da Educação)*
MEN	National Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Youth and Sports (*Ministério de Educação Nacional, Cultura, Ciência, Juventude e dos Deportes*)
PSE	National Education Plan (*Plano Sectorial em Educação*)
PASEC	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN
SAA	school autonomy and accountability
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SIP	school improvement plan
SBM	school-based management

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This report focuses specifically on policies in the area of School Autonomy and Accountability.

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