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Policy Goals

Status

1. **Setting Clear Expectations for Teachers**

There are clear expectations for what students should learn and what teachers should teach in Samoa. In addition, teachers are expected to evaluate and improve their abilities and are given time to do so.

Established

2. **Attracting the Best into Teaching**

While opportunities for career growth may help attract aspiring teachers, it is unclear whether schools have attractive working conditions.

Established

3. **Preparing Teachers with Useful Training and Experience**

While integrating substantial practical professional experience into pre-service training may help prepare teachers, providing a deeper knowledge of content and how to research and experiment with new teaching methods could create more effective teachers.

Established

4. **Matching Teachers' Skills with Students' Needs**

By offering incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools and fellowships to attract teachers to subjects with a shortage of teachers, the system is more likely to ensure that it has teachers who can address student needs.

Established

5. **Leading Teachers with Strong Principals**

Principals are expected to support teachers in improving instruction, but do not receive any formal training. Requiring principals to have ongoing training in effective teaching methods and evaluation could empower them to improve learning outcomes in their schools.

Emerging

6. **Monitoring Teaching and Learning**

All teachers are evaluated every three years by inspectors; in addition, principals are required to conduct ongoing evaluations. Evaluations are designed to provide constructive feedback and improve teaching practice.

Established

7. **Supporting Teachers to Improve Instruction**

Teachers are not required to complete any continuing professional development training, and no policies ensure that professional development activities are collaborative and focused on improving instruction.

Latent

8. **Motivating Teachers to Perform**

Teacher performance can influence their promotions and appointment decisions. They can also be dismissed for poor performance, child abuse, and other misconduct.

Established



Overview of SABER-Teachers

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

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

SABER-Teachers collects data on ten core areas of teacher policy to offer a comprehensive descriptive overview of the policies in place in each participating education system (box 1). Data are collected in each participating education system by a specialized consultant using a questionnaire, ensuring comparability of information across different education systems. Data collection focuses on the rules and regulations governing teacher management systems.

This information is compiled in a comparative database. Interested stakeholders can access the database for detailed information organized into relevant categories that describe how different education systems manage their teaching force, as well as for copies of supporting documents. The full database is available at the [SABER website](#).

Box 1. Teacher Policy Areas for Data Collection

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

To offer informed policy guidance, SABER-Teachers analyzes these data to assess how well each system's teacher policies promote student achievement, based on the global evidence to date. Specifically, SABER-Teachers assesses each education system's progress in achieving eight teacher policy goals (box 2).

Box 2. Teacher Policy Goals for Evaluation

1. Setting clear expectations for teachers
2. Attracting the best into teaching
3. Preparing teachers with useful training
4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs
5. Leading teachers with strong principals
6. Monitoring teaching and learning
7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction
8. Motivating teachers to perform

Figure 1. Eight Teacher Policy Goals



All high-performing education systems fulfill these eight teacher policy goals to a certain extent in order to ensure that every classroom has a motivated, supported, and competent teacher. These goals were identified through a review of research studies on teacher policies, as well as analysis of policies of top-performing and rapidly improving education systems. Three criteria were used to identify the teacher policy goals: they had to be (1) linked to student performance through empirical evidence; (2) a priority for resource allocation; and (3) actionable, meaning that they identify actions that governments can take to improve education policy. The eight teacher policy goals exclude other objectives that countries might want to pursue to increase the effectiveness of their teachers, but on which there is too little empirical evidence at present to allow specific policy recommendations.

By classifying countries according to their performance on each of the eight goals, SABER-Teachers can help diagnose the key challenges to ensuring effective teachers. For each policy goal, the SABER-Teachers team identified policy levers (actions that governments can take to reach these goals) and indicators (which measure the extent to which governments are making effective use of these policy levers). Using these policy levers and indicators, SABER-Teachers classifies the

progress of education systems toward achieving each of the eight teacher policy goals using a four-tiered scale (latent, emerging, established, and advanced). The scale assesses the extent to which a given education system has put in place the type of teacher policies related to improved student outcomes (annex 1). The main objective of this assessment is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher policies of an education system and pinpoint possible areas for improvement. For a more detailed report on the eight teacher policy goals, policy levers, and indicators, as well as the evidence base supporting them, see Vegas et al. (2012).

The main focus of SABER-Teachers is on policy design, not policy implementation. SABER-Teachers analyzes the teacher policies formally adopted by an education system. This type of analysis is an important first step toward strengthening the policy and institutional frameworks that policy makers control most directly and that influence how well a system functions. At the same time, policies “on the ground”—that is, policies as they are actually implemented—may differ quite substantially from policies as originally designed. In fact, they often do differ, due to the political economy of the reform process, lack of capacity on the part organizations charged with implementing them, and/or the interaction between these policies and specific contextual factors. Since SABER-Teachers collects only limited data on policy implementation, the analysis of teacher policies presented in this report should ideally be complemented with other data-gathering efforts that focus on how well teacher policies are actually implemented on the ground.

This report presents results of the application of SABER-Teachers in Samoa. It describes Samoa’s performance with respect to each of the eight teacher policy goals, alongside comparative information from education systems that have consistently scored highly on international student achievement tests and have participated in SABER-Teachers. Additional detailed descriptive information on the teacher policies of the education systems of Samoa and other countries can be found on the [SABER-Teachers website](#).

Samoa's Teacher Policy System Results

Goal 1: Setting clear expectations for teachers

Established ●●●○

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

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

(1) In Samoa, the government has established expectations for what students should learn and for what teachers should do. The Ministry of Education, Sports, and Culture (MESCC) is responsible for setting education goals and controlling the national curriculum. Officially stipulated requirements exist for the minimum education, curriculum, and skills that students must attain in every subject in every grade.

The tasks teachers are expected to carry out are officially specified by the policy, including those necessary for them to be prepared and continually improve their instruction. Other examples are tasks such as supervising students, grading assessments, and standing in for absent teachers.

(2) Guidance on teachers' use of time could better align expectations with the goal of improving instruction. Teachers' working time in Samoa is officially defined as the overall number of hours worked (as opposed to the number of hours spent at the school or in contact with students). According to the School Staffing Manual, teachers are expected to dedicate 20 hours per week to teaching in the classroom, 15 hours to preparation and correction, and 5 hours to other

duties. If non-teaching time was used to collaborate with other teachers, reflect on assessments of student learning, and design better classroom activities, it could result in better student outcomes.

Non-teaching tasks related to instructional improvement are officially required of teachers in Samoa, but are not explicitly mentioned in the School Staffing Manual. Such tasks include collaborating on school plans and supporting other teachers (table 1).

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

Table 1. Comparison of Teachers' Official Tasks Related to School Improvement

	Mentor peers	Collaborate on school plan	Design the curriculum	Participate in school evaluations
Papua New Guinea				
Solomon Islands	✓	✓		✓
Samoa	✓	✓		✓
Philippines	✓	✓		✓
South Korea				
Singapore	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

Goal 2: Attracting the best into teaching

Established ●●●○

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

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

(1) In Samoa, teachers entering the profession are required to have at least a professionally oriented bachelor's degree. Prior to the reforms implemented in January 2014, teachers were required to obtain only a Diploma in Education to become a teacher. Beginning in January 2014, however, all new teachers must have a professionally oriented bachelor's degree, which requires a minimum of three years of post-secondary education (four to teach grades 12 and 13). While most teachers are required to obtain a bachelor's degree in education, secondary school science teachers must acquire an education-focused bachelor's degree in science. Most teachers receive their degrees from the National University of Samoa. All teachers in Samoa must also acquire practical teaching experience as part of their education and their practicum must be evaluated. In addition to providing useful experience, such stringent requirements may also attract more serious candidates into the profession.

In high-performing education systems, teachers are required to pass through a rigorous tertiary program that requires more than pedagogy and the requisite content knowledge typical of bachelor's degrees. Such systems provide teachers the ability to conduct education research and test new classroom techniques in order to continually hone their teaching practice. As opposed to the ISCED 5B standard, which is a professional degree, many successful education systems

require a research-oriented bachelor's degree of four years' duration or a master's degree.

In general, rigorous education requirements may convey that teaching is an esteemed profession. Given that less than seven percent of all Samoans have a university degree, the current requirement may attract relatively strong candidates (Samoa 2012). However, a professionally oriented bachelor's degree remains somewhat less stringent than the educational requirement of most countries that attract the best candidates into the teaching profession.

While some barriers prevent the most qualified from entering the profession, it's important to eliminate barriers that would hinder the entrance of effective candidates. For example, mid-career professionals with degrees not in education should have a pathway into the profession that recognizes the value of their knowledge and experience.

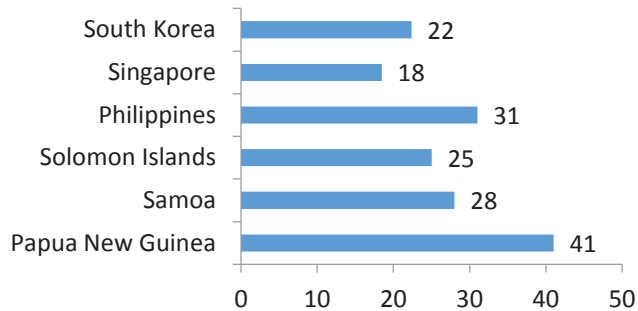
In the past, an alternative pathway to becoming a teacher allowed candidates to complete a bachelor's degree through the Alternative Training Program for primary teachers. This program, offered at the National University, incorporated part-time study and in-school experience.

(2) Teacher pay may not be appealing for talented candidates. In Samoa, the minimum annual teacher salary is SAT\$ 12,459 (US\$ 5,400), and the maximum, SAT\$ 23,353 (US\$ 10,100). By way of comparison, a records analyst employed by the government would receive a similar salary and a nutritionist, SAT\$ 17,300 (Public Service Commission 2014b). Because promotions are based in part on performance, salaries are determined more on merit, which may attract more able candidates.

(3) It is unclear whether working conditions are attractive. Working conditions can play an important role in an individual's decision to become a teacher. Talented candidates who have opportunities in other professions may be discouraged from choosing to become teachers if working conditions are very poor. Pupil-teacher ratios can play a significant role in this consideration. These ratios are low in Samoa: there are 28 primary school pupils per teacher and 17 secondary

school pupils; both are similar to the ratios in high-performing systems (figure2).

Figure 2. Comparison of Student-Teacher Ratios in Primary School



Source: SABER-Teachers database and UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

School conditions are important for teacher morale. If many schools have inadequate facilities, candidates may choose a profession with a more pleasant environment. In Samoa, standards have been established for school facilities, but there is no data on what percentage of schools meet these minimum standards. It is unknown, moreover, if the lack of information means that standards are not followed or not systematically monitored and reported.

(4) Opportunities for career advancement may be sufficiently appealing to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession. Teachers in most education systems are offered opportunities to be promoted to principal at some point in their careers. In addition to these “vertical” promotions, most high-performing education systems also offer teachers the possibility of “horizontal” promotions: academic positions that allow them to grow professionally as teachers, yet remain closely connected to instruction, rather than move to managerial positions (OECD 2012, Darling-Hammond 2010).

Policies in Samoa offer teachers various opportunities for career advancement. Teachers have, for example, the option of applying to become school principals based on their performance as teachers. After teaching for seven years, teachers may also apply to become

master teachers (MESC n.d./ Leadership Capabilities). Master Teachers are expected to serve as pedagogical leaders; their duties include collaborating with other teachers to improve teaching and learning in the schools where they work. Promotion to the level of master teacher includes an increase in responsibility and an allowance incentive. The promotion is based on performance evaluations, not simply seniority. This link between promotion decisions and performance is another way of improving career opportunities in the teaching profession in order to attract the best candidates. That is, opportunities to advance to principal or master teacher in Samoa may help attract motivated candidates.

Goal 3: Preparing teachers with useful training and experience

Established ●●●○

It is crucial to equip teachers with the skills they need to succeed in the classroom. To be successful, teachers need subject matter and pedagogic knowledge, as well as classroom management skills and a great deal of teaching practice. Good preparation puts all teachers on an equal footing, giving them a common framework for improving their practice.

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

(1) The recent policy change that raised the minimum education requirement to a bachelor’s degree may lead to teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. Virtually all high-performing countries require teachers to complete an educational level equivalent to ISCED 5A that imparts both the practical knowledge needed to teach and the skills needed to research and assess effective teaching methods. Some systems, such as that of Finland, go beyond ISCED 5A to require a research-oriented master’s degree (OECD 2011). As mentioned earlier, the initial educational level required of teachers in Samoa is the ISCED 5B (a bachelor’s degree with a practical component; table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of Required Educational Levels of Primary School Teachers

	At or below ISCED 4A	ISCED 5B	ISCED 5A	Above ISCED 5A
Papua New Guinea		✓		
Solomon Islands		✓		
Samoa		✓		
Philippines			✓	
Singapore			✓	
South Korea			✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

(2) Practical classroom experience is well integrated into the requirements for teachers in pre-service training. Teachers in training need opportunities to hone their craft during their education, enabling them to participate in both theory- and practice-based study. The more teachers try out their pedagogical theories, subject-matter knowledge, and classroom management skills, the better prepared they will be for the job. Most high-performing systems require teacher entrants to have a considerable amount of classroom experience before becoming independent teachers. Some of these systems provide mentoring and support during a teacher's first and even second year on the job (Darling-Hammond 2010, Ingersoll 2007). In Samoa, practical professional experience is required of both primary and secondary school teachers in pre-service training. All graduates with a bachelor's in education are required to complete six teaching practicum courses, comprising about one-fifth of their required education credits. The practical courses include internships and focus on particular teacher skills, such as managing classrooms and practicing and reflecting on teaching methods (National University 2014).

Goal 4: Matching teachers' skills with students' needs

Established ●●●○

Ensuring that teachers work in schools where their skills are most needed is important for equity and efficiency in an education system. First, it is a way of distributing teachers as efficiently as possible, making sure that there

are no shortages of qualified teachers in any given grade, education level, or subject. Second, it is a means of ensuring that all students in a school system have an equal opportunity to learn. Without purposeful allocation, it is likely that teachers will gravitate towards schools serving better-off students or located in more desirable areas, deepening inequalities in an education system.

SABER-Teachers considers two policy levers that school systems can use to reach goal four: (1) incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools and (2) incentives for teachers to teach subjects in which there are critical shortages of instructors.

(1) Mechanisms exist to address teacher shortages in hard-to-staff schools. Attracting effective teachers to hard-to-staff schools (schools that are in disadvantaged locations or serve underprivileged populations) is a challenge for many countries, and often requires a specific set of incentives. In Samoa, teachers who work in such schools are offered monetary bonuses (remote locality allowances) and housing support, which may help attract more teachers to those positions (Public Service Commission 2009). Many education systems offer similar incentives for the same purpose (table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of Incentives for Teachers to Teach in Hard-to-Staff Schools

	Promotion	Higher basic salary in hard-to-staff schools	Monetary bonus	Subsidized education	Housing support
Papua New Guinea			✓		
Solomon Islands			✓		✓
Samoa			✓		✓
Philippines			✓		
Singapore					
South Korea	✓				✓

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

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

(2) Samoa has identified critical-shortage subject areas and there is a policy to systematically address them.

Subjects with too few teachers to meet student needs are present in nearly all education systems. Many systems develop policies that offer incentives to teachers to teach these subjects (table 5). In Samoa, teacher shortages exist in some vocational subjects, such as agricultural science and design and technology, at the secondary level. Teachers in pre-service training can receive fellowships for concentrating in these subject areas (MESC 2011).

Table 4. Comparison of Incentives for Teachers to Teach Critical-Shortage Subjects

	Promotion	Higher basic salary	Monetary bonus	Subsidized education	Housing support
Papua New Guinea					
Solomon Islands					
Samoa				✓	
Philippines		✓	✓		
Singapore					
South Korea					

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

Note: Singapore instead directly controls how many candidates enter pre-service training by subject.

Goal 5: Leading teachers with strong principals

Emerging ●●○○

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

SABER-Teachers considers two policy levers that school systems can use to reach goal five: (1) investment by the education system in developing qualified school leaders and (2) the decision-making authority given to school principals to support and improve instructional practice.

(1) In Samoa, principals receive no formal or on-the-job training. Research from high-performing education systems suggests that principals can develop leadership skills through supported work experience or specific training courses. High-performing systems such as those of Japan, South Korea, Shanghai, and Singapore require applicants for principal positions to participate in specific coursework and/or a specialized internship or mentoring program aimed at developing essential leadership skills (OECD 2012; Darling-Hammond 2010).

To become a school principal in Samoa, a candidate must have a background in teaching. Candidates are also required to have a Diploma in Education. This was the same education level that was required of new teachers until 2014; it represents the typical education level of teachers who are now in the system. However, there are no additional formal education requirements related to the position of principal.

Beyond having a good understanding of teaching, principals need to be effective managers and school leaders. While applicants for principal positions in Samoa are selected based on their demonstrated leadership abilities, there are currently no specific training mechanisms to ensure that these applicants can develop the necessary skills to act as instructional leaders.

According to the Public Service Commission’s Recruitment and Selection Manual (2005), induction is “a critical step in the recruitment selection process and is often overlooked. . . . Induction programs should be provided to all new employees.” However, there is no evidence of systematic induction of principals or head teachers in the country.

Given that new principals often lack peers to learn from, programs that allow them to be mentored during their initial months by nearby experienced principals, or to receive increased support from education officers, can help them become more effective. This kind of support makes it possible for principals to learn good practices from others instead of learning only from their own experience. Table 5 shows a comparison of support mechanisms used in Samoa and other Asian countries.

Table 5. Comparison of Mechanisms Used to Support Principals' Leadership Skills

	Courses or other training requirements	Mentoring or internship program
Papua New Guinea	✓	✓
Solomon Islands		
Samoa		✓
Philippines	✓	✓
Singapore	✓	✓
South Korea	✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

(2) Despite having limited access to leadership programs, principals in Samoa are formally required to serve as educational leaders and help teachers become more effective in the classroom. Once education systems attract talented candidates to become principals, these leaders need to structure their time so as to focus on improving instruction (OECD 2012, Barber and Mourshed 2007). High-performing education systems such as those of Finland, Ontario (Canada), and Singapore think of their principals as instructional leaders, not simply administrators. Principals are expected to be knowledgeable in teaching and curriculum matters and to provide guidance and support to teachers. They evaluate teachers, provide feedback, assess teachers' needs for professional development, and direct instructional resources where they are most needed (Darling-Hammond and Rothman 2011).

In Samoa, principals are assessed in part based on the quality of their educational leadership: "As the educational leader, the principal accepts the responsibility for ensuring that the learning of students in the school is optimal. They are also community educators who understand national and international trends on curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment and can relate them to the school setting" (MESC n.d./ Principal Job Description). Principals are expected to monitor teachers and ensure that they receive the support they need in order to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. Because they are oriented towards learning, principals are more likely to help teachers improve. In the absence of training, however, it is unclear how effective they can be in helping teachers improve.

Goal 6: Monitoring teaching and learning

Established ●●●○

It is essential to assess how well teachers are teaching and whether students are learning in order to devise strategies to improve both processes. First, education systems must identify poorly performing teachers and students before they can provide struggling classrooms with adequate support. Second, teacher and student evaluations help identify good practices, which can be shared across the system to improve school performance.

SABER-Teachers considers three policy levers that school systems can use to goal six: (1) availability of data on student achievement, (2) adequate systems for monitoring teacher performance, and (3) multiple mechanisms for evaluating teacher performance.

(1) Internal and external systems are in place to help teachers improve. In Samoa, principals are expected to provide insight into how teachers can continuously improve and hone their craft. They are explicitly required to conduct classroom observations. Such observations help teachers improve their effectiveness in the classroom and are thus one component of a teacher evaluation system.

In addition, teacher performance appraisals are conducted every three years for all teachers (every two years for new teachers). These formal evaluations are conducted by the MESC and are supported by school review officers at the district level, and by principals at the school level. The process begins with a teacher's self-appraisal, followed by a formal evaluation. Overall, performance appraisals focus on developing an improvement plan to help teachers build their competencies.

(2) Teacher performance evaluations incorporate a variety of perspectives. Research suggests that no single method of evaluating teacher performance is fail-safe. Most high-performing systems conduct teacher evaluations using a multiplicity of data collection

mechanisms and assessment criteria. Ideally an evaluation system includes a comprehensive teacher evaluation framework that combines student results, teachers' portfolios, classroom observations, and feedback from students and/or parents. International experience and research suggest that none of these approaches taken separately can produce a balanced and objective evaluation of a teacher's performance.

The criteria for formal teacher performance appraisals are explicitly described in Professional Standards and Performance Appraisal for Samoa's Teachers (MESC n.d.). In addition, ongoing monitoring of teacher effectiveness by principals is outlined in detail in the Leadership and Capabilities Framework (MESC n.d.). Samoa makes use of a variety of criteria in its evaluations. These criteria and those used by countries in Asia are shown in table 6.

Table 6. Comparison of Performance Criteria for Teacher Evaluations

	Subject matter knowledge	Teaching methods	Student assessment methods	Students' academic achievement
Papua New Guinea	✓	✓	✓	
Solomon Islands	✓	✓	✓	✓
Samoa	✓	✓	✓	✓
Philippines	✓	✓	✓	✓
Singapore	✓	✓	✓	
South Korea	✓	✓	✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

Goal 7: Supporting teachers to improve instruction

Latent ●○○○

Support systems help improve instruction at the school level. In order to continually improve instructional practice, teachers and schools need to be able to

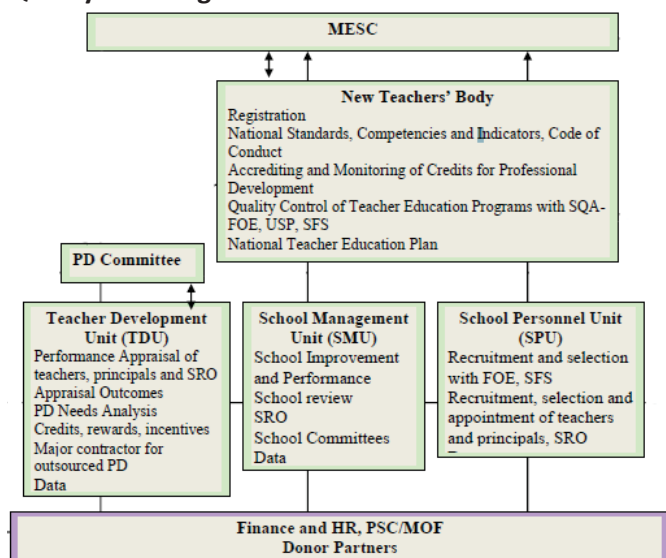
analyze the specific challenges that they face in classroom teaching, access information on best practices to address these challenges, and receive specific external support tailored to their needs.

SABER-Teachers considers three policy levers that school systems can use to reach goal seven: (1) opportunities for teacher professional development; (2) collaborative professional development activities that focus on instructional improvement; and (3) assigning professional development training on the basis of perceived need.

(1) Teachers are required to participate in professional development training, but the policy does not specify how often. The National Teacher Development Framework (MESC 2011) stipulates that all teachers in Samoa must receive professional development and that "improvement of teaching-learning outcomes in the classroom will be at the core of education, training, and staff development programs." However, the Framework includes no details on how much professional development teachers should take part in; moreover, it implies that professional development training may be provided to only 30 percent of primary teachers and 50 percent of secondary teachers (table 7 outlines recommended guidelines in Samoa and other Asian countries)). While the Framework outlines the institutional arrangements needed to provide and sustain teachers' professional development in Samoa, it is unclear whether the necessary institutions—the Teachers Advisory Council, the Teacher Development Unit, and all other mentioned bodies—are operational (figure 3).

Teachers are more likely to receive the professional development they need if there are no financial barriers to accessing such training. Education policy in Samoa stipulates that professional development is provided free by MESC.

Figure 3. Proposed Institutional Structure for Ensuring Quality Teaching



Source: MESC (2011).

Table 7. Comparison of Recommended/Required Days of Professional Development per Year, Primary School Teachers

	Unknown/ Undefined	1 to 5 days	6 to 9 days	10 or more days
Papua New Guinea	✓			
Solomon Islands	✓			
Samoa	✓			
Philippines	✓			
South Korea		✓		
Singapore				✓

Source: SABER-Teachers database; Darling-Hammond (2010).

(2) Professional development policies don't explicitly describe professional development activities known to improve teaching practice. Research suggests that effective professional development for teachers is collaborative and provides opportunities for in-school analysis of instructional practice. As noted earlier in this report, high-performing education systems such as that of Japan and Ontario (Canada), devote as much as 30 percent of teachers' school time to professional development and instructional improvement activities. These activities include observation visits to other schools; participation in teacher or school networks; and engaging in research, mentoring, or coaching. While Samoa's National Teacher Development Framework

explicitly mentions that professional development should be practice-based, no documents specify the kinds of activities that would be most effective in such training, nor how to successfully carry them out (table 8).

Table 8. Comparison of Types of Professional Development

	Observation visits	Teacher networks	School networks	Research	Mentoring/ coaching
Papua New Guinea					
Solomon Islands					
Samoa	✓				✓
Philippines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Korea		✓		✓	✓
Singapore	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: SABER-Teachers database; Darling-Hammond (2010).

(3) Teacher professional development is formally assigned based on perceived need. Assigning professional development training to teachers when they score poorly on performance evaluations is one way to potentially improve their instructional practice. Such training can be targeted to meet the needs of specific teachers. In Samoa, this practice is built into the teaching profession. Teacher work plans are developed based on principals' observations and formal evaluations; such plans are expected to include professional development plans.

Goal 8: Motivating teachers to perform

Established ●●●○

Mechanisms that motivate teachers signal a school system's seriousness about achieving educational goals. They also make the teaching profession attractive to competent individuals by rewarding good performance and ensuring accountability.

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

(1) Teachers' promotional opportunities are linked to their performance on the job in Samoa. There is a mandatory probation period for new teachers before they are granted permanent appointments and official policy stipulates that their performance on the job factors into whether such appointments are made.

(2) There are mechanisms in place to ensure that teachers comply with minimum standards and a code of conduct. Requiring teachers to meet certain standards to remain in the teaching profession can facilitate the removal of ineffective teachers. In most high-performing systems, teacher performance is evaluated annually and official mechanisms are used to address cases of misconduct, child abuse, absenteeism, and poor performance. In Samoa, the requirements that teachers take part in evaluations by school evaluation officers, and that principals regularly monitor teachers, may help hold teachers accountable. Teachers can be dismissed for five consecutive unexcused absences or misconduct in the country, and permanently dismissed for child abuse. Teachers are also given support to improve poor teaching performance before further action is taken (table 9).

Table 9. Comparison of Incentives for Encouraging Effective Teacher Performance

	Individual monetary bonus	School-level bonus
Papua New Guinea		
Solomon Islands	✓	
Samoa		
Philippines		
Singapore	✓	
South Korea	✓	✓

Source: SABER-Teachers database.

(3) Teacher compensation is linked to teacher performance. In Samoa, teachers receive promotions based on a Quality Assured Performance Appraisal (QAPA). They do not otherwise receive bonuses if they or their school performs well. Basing part of teacher pay on performance can be an effective tool for improving teacher motivation.

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Annex 1. SABER-Teachers Ratings

The SABER-Teachers team has identified policy levers (actions that governments can take) and indicators (which measure the extent to which governments are making effective use of these policy levers) for each of the eight policy goals referenced in this country report. For example, for teacher policy goal 1, setting clear expectations for teachers, the SABER-Teachers team has identified the following policy levers and indicators:

Table A.1 Setting Clear Expectations for Teachers

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

Each goal is defined in the first paragraph of the section relating to that goal in the country report. Policy levers for achieving that goal are identified in the second paragraph. The remaining paragraphs in each section provide details about the indicators that measure each of the levers.

Using these policy levers and indicators, the SABER-Teachers tool evaluates the performance of an education system on each of the eight teacher policy goals, using a four-tiered scale (latent, emerging, established, and advanced) that describes the extent to which the system has put in place teacher policies associated with improved student outcomes.

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

- **Advanced**—Systems that are rated “advanced” on a particular policy goal have put in place multiple policies conducive to learning for each policy lever used to achieve that goal.
- **Established**—“Established” systems have at least one policy and/or law in place that uses those policy levers.
- **Emerging**—“Emerging” systems have only some appropriate policies in place to achieve the policy goal.
- **Latent**—“Latent” systems have no or few teacher policies.

See Vegas et al. (2012) for more details about these definitions and a detailed review of the policy levers and indicators used by the SABER-Teachers tool.

For more information regarding SABER-Teachers methodology, please contact: HelpdeskTTP@worldbank.org.

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

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

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