



Kazakhstan

SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SABER Country Report
2013

Policy Goals

1. Autonomy in Budget Planning and Approval

Education budgets are decentralized to the municipal (Akimat) level and allow for school principals to submit budget requests, but the Finance Department of the Akimat has full discretion to allocate budget to schools. Parent councils have no inputs. Centralized pay scales are used for determining salaries and schools can raise additional funds from sub-national governments and other sources.

Status

Emerging



2. Autonomy in Personnel Management

Salaries are relatively fixed by civil service rules or central guidelines but with bonuses allowed. The school principal controls the hiring and firing of teachers and non-teaching staff, and the municipal level, with some input from the MOES, appoints and dismisses principals.

Established



3. Participation of the School Council in School Governance

There are parent councils that participate strictly on a voluntary basis in school activities with no legal authority to voice opinion or to guide their participation.

Latent



4. Assessment of School and Student Performance

Kazakhstan regularly assesses school and student performance and makes the results available publically, however, the policies for use of assessment results to improve pedagogical practices and/or make operational adjustments at the school level is lacking.

Established



5. Accountability to stakeholders

School performance and learning outcomes of standardized tests are public, but with no mandate to simplify or to explain the results. School accountability is hampered by the lack of power of parents over budgetary issues and school personnel and for weak linkages between student performance and teacher and school accountability.

Emerging



Introduction

In 2011, the World Bank Group commenced a multi-year program to support countries in systematically examining and strengthening the performance of their education systems as part of the Bank's new Education Strategy.¹ This 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 tool fills a gap in the availability of data and evidence on what matters most to improve the quality of education and achievement of better results.

The objective of the Joint Economic Research Program (JERP): Raising the Quality of Learning - System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results is to enhance the Government of Kazakhstan's policy and institutional capacity towards evidence based decision making for raising the quality of education. The objective will be achieved through the application of the SABER tool in three key areas of education quality: student assessments, school autonomy and accountability and teacher policies. This country study is the second of the SABER case studies under this JERP and presents the findings and policy recommendations from the SABER-School Autonomy and Accountability tool.

Autonomy and accountability are key components that can contribute to ensuring education quality in an education system. The purpose of this particular SABER assessment scale is to diagnose the extent of policy development for school autonomy and accountability within an education system for the purpose of identifying weaknesses and strengths and to identify policy actions that can foster a better environment for

supporting teaching and learning. The goal of this effort is to identify policy areas and actions that support better alignment of managerial responsibilities at the school level, assessment of results, and use of assessments to promote accountability to increase education quality and student learning. The application of this SABER tool can be an important instrument for education system reform if used for planning and monitoring the enabling conditions for improving system performance. As such, it starts with the assumption that increased school autonomy and improved accountability are necessary conditions for improved learning because they align teacher and parent incentives.² Within this context it is recommended that the SABER methodology used here to benchmark Kazakhstan's school autonomy and accountability measures be considered an essential component of an overall strategy for improving learning outcomes.

The paper is divided in the following way: (i) Section I presents the background on the education system in Kazakhstan; (ii) Section II introduces the framework for analyzing school autonomy and accountability systems; (iii) Section III provides an analysis of the situation in Kazakhstan using the results of the SABER School Autonomy and Accountability tool; (iv) Section IV provides policy recommendations for strengthening school autonomy and accountability in Kazakhstan; and (v) Section V presents the status of School Autonomy and Accountability policy development in Kazakhstan in comparison to other countries.

I. Education in Kazakhstan

Education has always been a priority for the Government of Kazakhstan. During the economic crisis which began immediately after independence in 1991, education suffered from cuts in spending that affected primary completion rates and a decline in secondary enrollments. Strong economic growth driven by rising oil production significantly boosted Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 2000-2008 and lowered poverty

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 Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos 2011

levels to 13 percent. At the same time, the education sector undertook reforms resulting in new curricula, learning resources and teacher training. Today, Kazakhstan is an upper middle income country that has experienced high economic growth, with GDP growing at an annual rate of approximately seven percent in 2010 (World Development Indicators, 2012). Kazakhstan has now achieved near universal access to basic education, and the internal efficiency of the system is high with 100 percent transition from primary to secondary levels and very low repetition. Gradually, the investment in education has increased to 3.9 percent of GDP (Table 1).

Table 1: Selected education indicators	
Public expenditure on education (2009) ¹ :	
As % of GDP	3.9
As % of total government expenditure	17.6
Distribution of public expenditure per level (%) - 2010 ²	
Pre-primary	7.9
General Education	53.1
Vocational Education	6.5
Other education programs	23.3
Higher Education	9.2
Pupil/Teacher ratio in Primary	16.4
Percentage of repeaters in Primary	0.1
Primary to secondary transition rate	100

Sources: 1-World Development Indicators, 2012; 2-Government of Kazakhstan, National Report on the Status of Education Development, 2011.

The challenge for Kazakhstan is providing quality education. PISA results show that 59 percent of students scored below the basic competency level in math, 58 in reading, and 55 in the sciences. Better student performance on PISA tends to be associated with greater school autonomy in decisions relating to resource allocation, curricula, and assessments, particularly when schools operate within a culture of accountability (OECD, 2011).

Education in Kazakhstan is regulated by the National Law on Education of 2007. This law determines the national education policy, the objectives and principles of education, the administrative structure, and the system of public and private schools. The Law also ratifies the administrative and financial decentralization of education institutions. In addition, education is

regulated by the State Program of Education Development 2011-2020 which aims to strengthen education competitiveness and development of human capital through access to quality education. While education policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the municipal level's (Akimat) education departments are responsible for delivery.

The structure of the Kazakh education system is displayed in Table 2. Primary education is the first stage of compulsory education and spans a period of four years. The majority of children enroll at age 7, but six year olds can be admitted by passing an entrance test. Secondary education starts at fifth grade and consists of two levels: basic comprehensive (grades 5-9) and senior comprehensive (grades 10-11). After basic comprehensive, students can continue to senior comprehensive for two more years or enter technical vocational schools (colleges) for three years of study. After completing secondary education students may progress to higher education institutes and universities.

Table 2: School system structure			
Age	Grade	Level of Education	
Pre-school education			
5-6	Pre-School	Kindergartens, crèches (day nurseries)	Pre-primary
Secondary (complete) education			
6-11	1-4	Primary comprehensive	Secondary
11-16	5-9	Basic comprehensive	Secondary
16-18	10-11	Senior comprehensive, gymnasia	Secondary
16-19	10-12	Technical vocational schools	Secondary
Higher education			
19-22	13-16	Bachelor's degree	University
		Diploma of Specialist	Universities, academies, institutes
22+	17+	Graduate studies	University

Source: UNESCO World Data on Education, 6th edition, 2006-07.

II. The Case for School Autonomy and School Accountability

School autonomy and accountability are key components of an education system that ensure 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 2). 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 2: 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, budget management, 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 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, 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 professional and personal performance by teachers (Patrinos 2010).

The empirical evidence from SBM shows that it can take many forms or combine many activities (Barrera et al. 2009) with differing degrees of success (see Box 3). Unless SBM activities contribute to system closure, they are 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 3: 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 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).

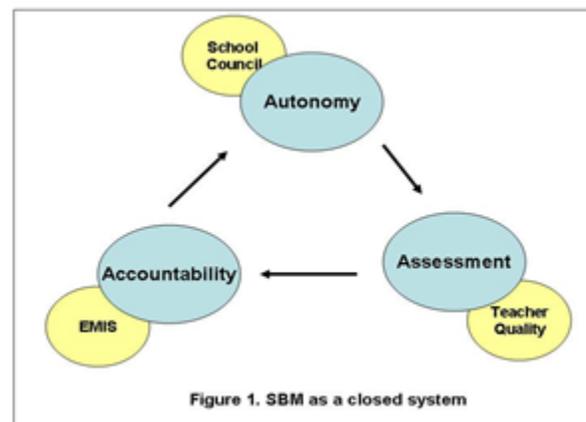


Figure 1. SBM as a closed system

Source: Arcia and others 2011.

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 countries³ 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.

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 indicators has a set of sub-indicators that make it possible to judge how far along an education system’s policies are in enabling school autonomy and accountability. Each indicator and sub-indicator is scored on the basis of its status and the results classified as Latent, Emerging, Established, or Advanced:

Latent ●○○○	Emerging ●●○○	Established ●●●○	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

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

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 there may be some limitations in its content and scope. An *Advanced* score indicates that the program or policy reflects best practice and it can be considered on par with international standards.

III. Kazakhstan's Performance: A Summary of Results

A summary of the results of the benchmarking exercise for Kazakhstan are shown below, followed by a breakdown by indicator.

Summary. While education policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the municipal level's (*Akimat*) education departments are responsible for delivery. Budgetary autonomy is *Emerging*. The *Akimat* allocates the school budget in accordance with resources available and based on proposals prepared by the school principal. Personnel management is well *Established*. Salaries are relatively fixed by civil service rules or central guidelines but with bonuses allowed. The school principal controls the hiring and firing of teachers and non-teaching staff, and the municipal level, with some input from the MOES, appoints and dismisses principals. Overall, participation of parents in school governance is *Latent*. There are quasi-parent councils that participate strictly on a voluntary basis in school activities with no legal authority to voice opinion or to guide their participation. School and student assessment is *Established*. Kazakhstan regularly assesses school and student performance and makes the results available publically, however, the policies for use of assessment results to improve pedagogical practices and/or make operational (non-pedagogical) adjustments at the school level is lacking. Accountability to stakeholders is *Emerging* as there are regulations in place for complying with rules for financial, learning, and school operations accountability, but not for reporting to oversight authorities or linking rewards and sanctions to compliance with rules or performance, which is a mechanism to encourage stakeholders to be accountable for following and performing at certain standard.

1. School autonomy in budget planning and approval is Emerging

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 the planning and management of 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.

School budgets in Kazakhstan are determined at the municipal level government (*Akimat*). School principals prepare a budget at the beginning of each school year depending on the number of registered students, number of teachers needed for the upcoming year and anticipated repairs, infrastructure and maintenance. As the financial departments of the *Akimats* are working with limited resources, they have the sole discretion and have no mandates for transparency in their decisions to reduce the budgets proposed by the principals. Therefore some schools might receive more funds than others which might create unequal allocation of funds regionally (urban/rural) and at the school level in the same district.

According to Republican and Regional Education Legislation, school principals have the right to request more funds from the *Akimats* and to solicit funds from other sources such as donors and parents; however, donor contributions are subject to taxes.

The pay scale for teaching staff is regulated by the Guidelines for Salary Payments for Teaching Staff approved by the Decree #40 authorized by the Minister of Education and in accordance with the Law on Education, Article 52. The school principals submit the justification of each teacher's salary to the *Akimat* according to the pay scale established by the MOES. The pay scale allows for bonuses but does not include rewards for performance. School principals also submit as part of the operational budget, the necessary non-teaching staff requirements and their salaries as set by MOES guidelines.

1. Legal authority over budget planning and approval is Emerging		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Legal authority over management of the operational budget	Emerging ●●○○	The Akimat (municipal government) has sole discretion to cut or pay in full the proposed operational budget submitted by the school principal.
Legal authority over the management of non-teaching staff salaries	Emerging ●●○○	School principals submit as part of the operational budget justifications for the non-teaching staff salaries in line with central guidelines.
Legal authority over the management of teacher's salaries	Emerging ●●○○	Following a centralized pay scale as a guideline, school principals submit justification of teachers' salaries to the municipal level finance department.
Legal authority to raise additional funds for the school	Established ●●●○	Schools can solicit additional funds from the Akimats, donors and parents.

2. School autonomy in personnel management is Established

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 decentralized education systems schools have autonomy in teacher hiring and firing decisions. Budgetary autonomy includes giving schools responsibility for negotiating with the staff and setting the salaries of its teaching and non-teaching staff and 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.

Kazakhstan allows schools autonomy in teacher appointment and deployment; however, Parent Councils do not play any role in this decision. It is the school principals who have the legal authority to hire and fire school teachers. Teachers are appointed in accordance with the established list of required qualifications for a particular teacher's grade that were approved by government Decree #223 dated March 11, 2005 and MoES Decree #40 with approval from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. Appointing non-teaching staff is at the full discretion of the school principal in accordance with the core qualifications for non-teaching staff, MOES Decree #338. The current system for teaching and non-teaching personnel appointments works well. Parents have not been involved it is said, to avoid introducing any non-professional opinion to the hiring, transfer, or removal of teachers.

The appointment of school principals for public schools is conducted on a competitive basis and handled by the Akimat regional department of education with consultation provided by the MOES. The candidates list is prepared by the regional department of education. Each candidate must have an interview at the MOES prior to the appointment. Once appointed principals can serve for an indefinite period. While there is no formal evaluation of performance, there are clear criteria for passing an attestation process. This takes place every three years for each school principal and is carried out by central and regional/local education authorities. It is important to mention here that this is a formal attestation and is based on what is judged to be the principal's performance based on state education norms. Principals for private schools are appointed by the school founder or a committee of school directors.

2. School autonomy in personnel management is Established		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Autonomy in teacher appointment and deployment decisions	Advanced ●●●●	School principals have legal authority to hire and fire school teachers.
Autonomy in non-teaching staff appointment and deployment decisions	Advanced ●●●●	Parent councils do not participate in matters of school personnel. This is to avoid any bias of parents regarding particular teachers and teaching methods.
Autonomy in school principal appointment and deployment decisions.	Established ●●●○	The <i>Akimat</i> regional department of education appoints principals for public schools in consultation with MOES.

3. Participation of the School Council in school governance is Latent

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.

In Kazakhstan, while many schools have community-based Parent Councils, they are not legally registered

and only participate in non-monetary types of school-related activities. They are not involved in personnel or the finances of the school. There are no guidelines, manuals or mandates that govern the organization of the councils, their open election of officers or their activities. There is no legal authority for Parent Councils to voice an opinion or provide oversight on learning inputs. They can make recommendations on learning inputs, but there is no obligation by the school administration or government to take it into consideration.

3. Role of the School Council in School Governance is Latent		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Participation of the School Council in budget preparation	Emerging ●●○○	The school principal has responsibility for planning and preparing the budget. The school council may have a voice on non-salary budget items at the school level but only as "recommendations".
Participation in financial oversight.	Established ●●●○	Legal standing to have a voice, but no legal oversight authority on budget issues.
Participation in Personnel Management	Latent ●○○○	Parent Councils have no legal right or voice in school level personnel management.
Community participation in school activities	Latent ●○○○	Parent Councils have no formal instructions, manuals, or mandates for organizing volunteers to participate in school activities.
Community participation in learning inputs	Latent ●○○○	No legal authority to voice an opinion and no oversight on learning inputs to the classroom.
Transparency in Community Participation	Latent ●○○○	No provision for the open election of parent council members or for their general assembly.

4. Assessment of school and student performance is Established

School assessments can have a big impact on school performance because it encourages 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 a regular assessment of learning outcomes school accountability is reduced and, with it, improving education quality becomes less certain.

Kazakhstan has paid particular attention to education quality assessment and in doing so has envisaged a National System that includes institutional assessment across all levels, independent external assessment, and teacher performance assessment. The MOES website publishes aggregated information for transparency and results are discussed in an annual national report on the status of education development although information is somewhat limited and only includes consolidated data that impede thorough analysis of results for further policy changes. Taking into account that only 53 percent of the population in Kazakhstan uses the Internet, other media sources should be used to publish the assessment results to inform the broader public. The system provides for class assessment for all grades; standardized student assessment at grades 4 and 9; external assessment (Unified National Test); and international assessment by participating in TIMSS and PISA. School and student assessment are carried out regularly each year. However, the usage of results of the assessments to inform the improvement in quality of teaching and learning and holding those responsible in account is emerging. This is an area where the country could focus to further advance the supporting policies for assessment, but overall policies are established.

4. School and student assessment is Established		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Existence and frequency of school assessments	Advanced ●●●●	Schools are assessed on an annual basis and results are made public.
Use of school assessments for making school adjustments	Emerging ●●○○	Recommendations are made to the local education departments; they are not obligated to share them with schools.
Existence and frequency of standardized student assessments	Advanced ●●●●	Standardized student assessments are carried out annually.
Use of standardized student assessments for pedagogical, operational, and personnel adjustments	Emerging ●●○○	MOES sends recommendations based on results to the local education departments; they are not obligated to share them with schools.
Publication of student assessments	Established ●●●○	Limited data on assessment at an aggregated level is published on the MOES website.

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 the financial and operational aspects of a school, and the measurement of learning outcomes are all aimed to reinforce 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.

Kazakhstan has an emerging policy framework in place to begin enabling accountability to stakeholders, but it does not yet reach stakeholders close to the school level. It sets up regulations for complying with the rules for financial, operational, and learning accountability, but does not yet build in policies for oversight and

linking rewards and sanctions to compliance and performance outcomes. The aggregation of school and student performance results are public and this is good for transparency on system performance as a whole. Guidelines for the use of the results to adjust and improve the system and simplification and dissemination of local results so they are easily understood by parents and communities would help to improve accountability.

operations		but not for reporting and linking rewards to operating performance.
Degree of learning accountability	Latent ●○○○	There is no mandate for simplifying and explaining results of the student assessments to the public.

IV. Enhancing education quality: Policy recommendations for Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan has made progress in decentralizing parts of its education system. Improving school autonomy and accountability would help the country consolidate its decentralization policies. The results of the benchmarking of school autonomy and accountability policies indicate the following areas for potential policy changes:

1. Budget (emerging)

The authority provided to the school principal to propose a budget to the *Akimat* level allows for planning based on real resource needs at the school level but without much guarantee of receiving the proposed amount. A recommendation would be to provide more transparency and flexibility to the process for final review of the proposals and budget allocation decisions taken at the *Akimat* level. The government's plan to pilot a per-capita model for budget allocation could assist in providing transparency and allow further control in budget planning at the school level, leaving less discretion for final allocation at the *Akimat* level. To avoid creating a gap in learning between rural and urban areas, the per-capita finance model should account for compensating the negative effect of social variables. Several Eastern European countries have developed per capita financing formulae that factor in variables such as geographic location, school size, minority schools, etc., (Alonso and Sánchez, 2011).

Additionally, to facilitate budget management at the school level, a next step could be to provide authority to the school principal to manage non-teaching expenditures in consultation with parent councils using government guidelines. This provides for better accountability to stakeholders bringing the circle into closer alignment: autonomy – assessment – accountability.

5. Accountability to stakeholders is Emerging		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Guidelines for the use of results of student assessments	Latent ●○○○	There are no guidelines on the use of results of student assessments to improve outcomes.
Analysis of school and student performance	Emerging ●●○○	MOES is charged with gathering and analyzing the data, but there are no provisions for disseminating the analysis.
Collaborative budget planning	Emerging ●●○○	Schools can submit a budget request, but sub-national authorities are not required to take it into account in transferring resources.
Degree of financial accountability at the central level	Emerging ●●○○	There are regulations in place for financial accountability, but not for reporting to those with oversight and for linking rewards based on compliance.
Degree of financial accountability at the regional/ municipal level	Emerging ●●○○	There are regulations in place for financial accountability, but not for reporting to those with oversight and for linking rewards based on compliance.
Degree of financial accountability at the school level	Emerging ●●○○	There are regulations in place for financial accountability, but not for reporting to those with oversight and for linking rewards based on compliance.
Degree of accountability in school	Emerging ●●○○	Regulations for accountability in school operations are in place,

2. Autonomy in Personnel Management (established)

Kazakhstan does very well by decentralizing the hiring and firing of teachers to the school principal. One suggestion for allowing better alignment with assessment and accountability is to more closely associate teacher and principal evaluation of performance to hiring, promotion, and rewards practices. Bulgaria⁴ is an example of a country undertaking such school autonomy reforms in personnel management, see Box 3.⁵ Budgetary autonomy includes giving schools responsibility for negotiating and setting the salaries of its teaching and non-teaching staff and using monetary and non-monetary bonuses as rewards for good performance. If a school negotiates teachers' bonuses or salaries, as private schools routinely do, it may be able to motivate teachers directly with rewards for a job well done.

Box 3: The Bulgaria School Autonomy Experience: Setting Salaries and Linking Performance to Pay

In Bulgaria the government instituted school autonomy reforms in 2007-08 shifting away from a system where central government managed inputs and lacked outcome measures. In the new system, school principals in Bulgaria manage all funds allocated to the school and determine individual teacher's remuneration. Within two years of the reform, teacher salaries were gradually increased and four salary grades were established based on education levels and years of experience and seniority. Differentiated teacher pay was also introduced based on performance and hard work. The principal makes this differentiation based on a centrally defined framework and specific criteria determined at the school level. Additionally, while current legislation neither requires nor discourages the use of student assessment data for differentiating teacher's pay, principals are increasingly using student assessment test results for that purpose (The World Bank, 2010).

⁴ Spain and the United Kingdom are also examples of countries providing autonomy to the school to hire and fire teachers; Hong Kong for autonomy in setting salaries.

⁵ While there have been studies from both developed and developing countries that show benefits of pay for performance, the literature is still inconclusive in this area and the practice may be challenging to implement in an econometrically sound way.

3. Role of School Council on School Governance (latent)

Policy makers and program planners should be aware of the inherent tensions that deepening autonomy and accountability can bring in order to manage them properly and sequence their introduction. Relations between parents, principals, and teachers can be fostered and culminate in a more active role of parents in supporting the school. Change management experience and evidence has shown this a gradual process.

To start, it is recommended to improve the existing Parent Councils which are formed by class and multiple councils exist within one school, to a school-level Council that would have a representational mix of parents from across the classes. An example of this type of parent council exists in Mexico, called *Padres de Familia*. Each class nominates parents to represent them on the Parent Council at the school level. They are mandated by law and elect officers among the parent representatives.

It is also recommended to provide a legal framework for the participation of the upgraded Parent Councils with some guidance on election of officers or committee heads for the council and their operating rules. This could begin to facilitate greater accountability on what is happening at the school level and provide a more structured feedback mechanism for administrators concerning student learning needs, school performance, and facilities in the local context. It may also prove beneficial for administrators and teachers as community members could have special skills for raising funds and managing or contributing to volunteer projects that enhance the school and learning environment.

4. School and Student Assessment (established)

It is recommended to improve policies on the usage of results of school and student assessments to inform and plan necessary pedagogical, curriculum or instructional materials changes at the school level. This information could also be utilized more effectively for improvements or targeting of teacher training.

5. Accountability (emerging)

It is recommended to extend the policy framework to include oversight mechanisms and the linking of rewards and sanctions to compliance and performance. Establish guidelines for the use of the assessment results for making effective adjustments to aspects of the system. This will help to ensure better education quality and allow stakeholders to know what those recommendations are in order to better contribute to and/or monitor those who are responsible for the adjustments. Establish policy for local districts to package education results for their schools and the recommendations received for improvement in simple terms that are easily understood by teachers, parents and communities to improve accountability.

V. International Comparison of Kazakhstan's Level of School Autonomy and Accountability with other countries.

Table 3 presents the status of School Accountability and Autonomy policy development in Kazakhstan alongside a selection of OECD and Asian countries. The SABER-SAA classification system does not rank countries according to any overall scoring; rather, it is intended to share information on how different education systems address the same policy challenges. The Netherlands and Finland are home to some of the world's most comprehensive and developed SAA policies and they both achieve a benchmarking of "Established" or "Advanced" in all five policy goals.

Improving education quality – the right policy mix. In order to improve education quality it is not just a matter of providing additional resources; it also requires achieving the right policy mix. This is often difficult since policies and practices fit together to form the education system as a whole, and if one component is weak, it can undermine the whole system. The system may also fail if policy components are misaligned.

Generally we see that higher performing economies tend to have fewer misalignments between key policy components than lower performing economies. This held true when comparing a group of European and Asian economies. For example, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand have relatively well-

developed teacher policies and have no more than one misalignment between decentralization and information or parental influence.

There is a clear need to focus on improving several policy areas at the same time in order to further advance holistic education reforms. They must be linked and reinforced through:

- 1) Accountability mechanisms – rewards and sanctions;
- 2) A solid vision of where the system is headed – good stewardship; and
- 3) Feedback loops so that developments and lessons in one policy area are fed into and inform others.

The lack of clear rewards and sanctions, good system stewardship, and strong feedback loops, creates a danger that a country develops efficient "islands" of activity while remaining trapped in a low achievement environment.

Quality of Learning – linkages with teachers and school based management. It has been recognized that teacher policy and incentives are closely linked to quality of learning. The ability of schools to employ and retain good teachers is related to the degree of school autonomy and the decentralization of the hiring process. In order to provide policy makers in Kazakhstan with guidance on how to improve education quality, it is useful to look at the policies involving the teaching profession that are in need of improvement. The success or failure of these policies is also dependent on the relative autonomy of schools, and whether the complementary information and accountability mechanisms exist to ensure learning outcomes.

Effective decentralization – information and accountability. Moving decision-making away from central government and closer to the school level, increases the importance of information systems. With added responsibility at decentralized levels comes the associated need for greater accountability. Alignment between the degree of autonomy and the existence of information is crucial for decentralization to be effective.

Through assessment of the East Asian countries, we note that South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand

allow school directors to manage their own budgets (good degree of autonomy), but they also have a census-based assessment to hold schools accountable (balanced assessment and accountability). Lao and Cambodia, on the other hand, provide schools with the same level of budgetary autonomy, but do not have an assessment system that is officially designed for school results. This suggests a misalignment. Indonesia, Shanghai (China), and Mongolia, decentralize even further and allow schools to hire and fire teachers, but none of these economies have an assessment that holds teachers accountable. For these five cases therefore, there is an apparent misalignment between the degree of autonomy and the information required to hold schools accountable. Other economies such as Singapore, China, the Philippines and Japan have a more centralized system so the issue of information is less applicable.

As with Kazakhstan, several of the Asian economies are at the Established and Advanced stages related to their assessment policy goals. This suggests that, with only a little effort, as is the case in Kazakhstan, these economies could introduce and utilize results from these assessments, which would enable them to compare the educational performance of their schools, students, and teachers, and foster accountability throughout the school system.

Accountability as a condition for improving teacher quality. Although there is little formal evidence that *teacher* quality improves as a direct result of school-based management, there is a compelling argument that increasing school accountability is a necessary condition for improving teacher quality. Kazakhstan in comparison with the other countries in Table 3 is emerging relative to their established policies for accountability. Each of the comparator countries also generally achieves better results on international assessments.

The implementation of School Based Management (SBM) can increase the support that parents and school councils give to good teachers; for example through salary and non-salary incentives and by setting the right conditions to attract the best candidates into the teaching profession (Arcia et al, 2011a). While Kazakhstan has done well to reach an established degree of autonomy in personnel management, there is

an imbalance since the degree of accountability to stakeholders is only at the emerging stage combined with a latent degree of school council participation in school governance.

By allowing more local control over school operations, SBM fosters a new social contract between parents and teachers by improving communication and increasing local cooperation and local accountability.

Balancing parental influence, the strength of institutions and quality of teachers. Decentralizing an education system weakens the influence of the central authority. To offset this, the influence of clients, in particular parents, is important, especially when institutions at the local levels are weak. Decentralization can help get clients closer to the providers of education, ensuring better access to pedagogical and managerial methods aligned with their needs. However, such an approach, if taken to extreme, may result in a fragmented education system where standards may be reduced and local community values may become too parochial to benefit society at large (Ritzen, et.al. 1997). The lesson is that parents do not need to be the center of accountability if there are already well-running institutions that complement teachers of good quality.

School Councils in Europe where there are strong formal institutions that have taken decades to develop, take mostly an advisory role, leaving school management to the professionals. The Netherlands is an example of this. In the Dutch system, school operations are highly decentralized with professional School Boards responsible for school operations. The entire organization of the school system is based on checks and balances, where accountability is paramount. In the last 30 years in the Netherlands there has been a gradual move towards more parent-teacher interaction, and parents have begun to participate in the Advisory Council to the School Board in all schools. The School Board remains the main actor that oversees one school or several schools and their operations. Lower performing schools are found in areas supervised by voluntary one-school School Boards.

Conclusions. The available empirical evidence shows that it takes about eight years before school autonomy and accountability start affecting learning

outcomes (Barrera, Fasih and Patrinos 2009). The most successful combination of managerial components is still being studied, but an emerging body of practice points to a set of variables that foster managerial *autonomy*, the *assessment* of results, and the use of the assessment to promote *accountability* among stakeholders (Gertler et al, 2007).

By applying the policy recommendations offered in Section IV and enabling their implementation in the coming years, Kazakhstan should be able to build upon the strengths of the existing policy framework that have come to light from this assessment as well as to concentrate more attention to areas that show weaker policies related to school autonomy and accountability (Section III where Kazakhstan scored as Latent) with the goal of having better managed schools with higher performance. For example, more focus on Policy Goal 3 – Participation of the School Council in School Governance -- which has a latent rating could see early benefits over the next eight years beginning with the upgrading of the quasi-parent councils that currently only function as classroom parent committees on an ad-hoc basis with no guidelines. Setting the policy framework for a school-level parent council with

officers and duties can be done with relative ease, little cost (participation of the council is usually a voluntary commitment) and high yields. Packaging results of school and student performance at a more disaggregated level so it is useful to local administrators, principals, teachers and parents assists the system to have a better dialogue and understanding of performance and therefore make effective adjustments more easily when needed at the school level. This enables better accountability and can foster better motivation for teachers to deliver high quality education. Performance also improves when there are clear rewards and consequences or sanctions.

Approaching policy reform. The production of an enabling environment requires both administrative and parental engagement processes, which can be guided by autonomy, assessment and accountability policies, programs and resources from the education system. Managing administrative elements with change management processes can successfully contribute to the broader goals of school autonomy and accountability to improve the quality of learning in Kazakhstan.

Table 3: Comparison of Countries

SAA Policy Goals	Level of Development				
	Kazakhstan	Netherlands	Finland	Thailand	Indonesia
1. Autonomy in Budget Planning and Approval	Emerging ●●○○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○
2. Autonomy in Personnel Management	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○	Latent ●○○○	Emerging ●●○○
3. Participation of the School Council in School Governance	Latent ●○○○	Established ●●●○	Advanced ●●●●	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○
4. Assessment of School and Student Performance	Established ●●●○	Advanced ●●●●	Advanced ●●●●	Advanced ●●●●	Advanced ●●●●
5. Accountability to Stakeholders	Emerging ●●○○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○	Established ●●●○
Overall	Emerging	Established	Established	Established	Established

Definitions

School Council refers to an institutional body that may include parents, community members, teachers, and the school director/principal. There may be School Councils at the school level for each school; School Councils that oversee several schools; or School Councils that oversee all schools in a municipality. In some countries this institution may be called a School Board or a School Management Committee.

Parent-Teacher Association is similar to School Council but a School Council is a more institutionalized body than a Parent-Teacher Association in terms of the authority delegated to it. In countries where School Councils do not exist but Parent-Teacher Associations are widespread, they could be considered similar to School Councils.

School Principal is the person with the responsibility of managing the school on a day-to-day basis. In other countries that person may be referred to as a School Director, HeadMaster/Mistress, or HeadTeacher.

Oversight refers to the job of checking that a process of system is working well.

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

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