



Guinea-Bissau

TEACHERS

SABER Country Report
2012

Policy Goals

1. Setting Clear Expectations for Teachers

There are clear expectations for what teachers should do and what students should learn. Policies for guidance on teachers' use of time are not focused on ensuring that their work conditions allow them to improve instruction.

Status

Emerging



2. Attracting the Best into Teaching

Teacher qualifications are low relative to similarly skilled professions. Teacher pay, career opportunities, and working conditions may not be attractive to competent and qualified individuals.

Latent



3. Preparing Teachers with Useful Training and Experience

Teacher qualifications are low relative to similarly skilled professions. Teacher pay, career opportunities, and working conditions may not be attractive to competent and qualified individuals.

Emerging



4. Matching Teachers' Skills with Students' Needs

There are no incentives available for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools or teach critical shortage subjects.

Latent



5. Leading Teachers with Strong Principals

There are no specific requirements to become a principal and principals are not explicitly expected to provide support and guidance to teachers for the improvement of instructional practice.

Latent



6. Monitoring Teaching and Learning

Student achievement data are collected, but are not available to inform teaching or policy. There are no official systems in place to monitor teacher performance.

Latent



7. Supporting Teachers to Improve Instruction

Teacher professional development is required and includes some activities that are associated with instructional improvement.

Established



8. Motivating Teachers to Perform

Policies stipulate that teacher compensation and appointments are linked to teacher performance, but there are few mechanisms to hold teachers accountable.

Latent



Overview of SABER-Teachers

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

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

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

detailed information organized along relevant categories that describe how different education systems manage their teacher force, as well as copies of supporting documents. The full database is available at the SABER-Teacher website.

Box 1. Teacher policy areas for data collection

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

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

Figure 1: Eight Teacher Policy Goals



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

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

the extent to which a given education system has in place teacher policies that are known to be related to improved student outcomes. The main objective of this assessment is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher policies of an education system and pinpoint possible areas for improvement. For a more detailed report on the eight teacher policy goals, policy levers, and indicators, as well as the evidence base supporting them, see Vegas *et al.* (2012).

The main focus of SABER-Teachers is on policy design, rather than on policy implementation. SABER-Teachers analyzes the teacher policies formally adopted by education systems. However, policies "on the ground", that is, policies as they are actually implemented, may differ quite substantially from policies as originally designed, and in fact they often do so, due to the political economy of the reform process, lack of capacity of the organizations in charge of implementing them, or the interaction between these policies and specific contextual factors. Since SABER-Teachers collects limited data on policy implementation, the assessment of teacher policies presented in this report needs to be complemented with detailed information that describes the actual configuration of teacher policies on the ground.

This report presents results of the application of SABER-Teachers in Guinea-Bissau. It describes Guinea-Bissau's performance in each of the eight teacher policy goals, alongside comparative information from education systems that have consistently scored high results in international student achievement tests and have participated in SABER-Teachers. Additional detailed descriptive information on Guinea-Bissau's and other education systems' teacher policies can be found on the SABER-Teachers website.

Guinea-Bissau’s Teacher Policy System Results

Goal 1. Setting clear expectations for teachers

Emerging ●●○○

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

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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, there are clear expectations for what teachers are supposed to do, and for what students are expected to learn. Guinea Bissau has defined a set of standards that informs teachers of required subject content and measurable indicators of learning that should be achieved by students at different grades. The tasks that teachers are expected to carry out are officially stipulated.

(2) Policies for guidance on teachers’ use of time are not focused on ensuring that their work conditions allow them to improve instruction. Teachers’ working time in Guinea Bissau is officially defined as the number of hours spent teaching (contact time with students, as opposed to counting the overall number of hours spent at the school). This fails to recognize that teachers normally need to devote some time to non-teaching tasks, such as lesson planning, the analysis of student work, and professional development, as well as administrative tasks. This definition also contradicts some of the officially defined tasks that are stipulated for teachers. For instance, Guinea Bissau defines some official non-teaching tasks (outside of the classroom) that are related to school improvement. In Guinea Bissau, teachers are officially required to collaborate on

school plans as well as to participate in the evaluation system within their school (Figure 2).

Successful education systems such as Ontario, Finland, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore devote considerable time at the school level to such activities that are related to instructional improvement, such as collaboration among teachers on the analysis of instructional practice as well as mentoring and professional development (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011, Darling-Hammond 2010, Levin 2008). In addition, these systems tend to devote a smaller share of teacher’s time to actual contact time with students, and a relatively 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 this type of activities, while Ontario currently devotes 30 percent (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011).

Figure 2. Teachers’ official tasks related to school improvement

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

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 2: Attracting the best into teaching

Latent ●○○○

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

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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, school teachers are required to have qualifications that are equivalent to attending a vocational training program. Primary education teachers are required to complete between six months to two years of full-time study, whereas secondary school teachers must complete between two and three years of full-time study. Relative to many higher performing education systems, requirements to become a primary or secondary school teacher are low. For instance, teachers in Guinea Bissau are not required pass a written test or to have classroom experience prior to becoming a teacher. In systems such as Japan and Singapore, however, teachers must pass an exam, and they are additionally required to have minimal practical professional experience.

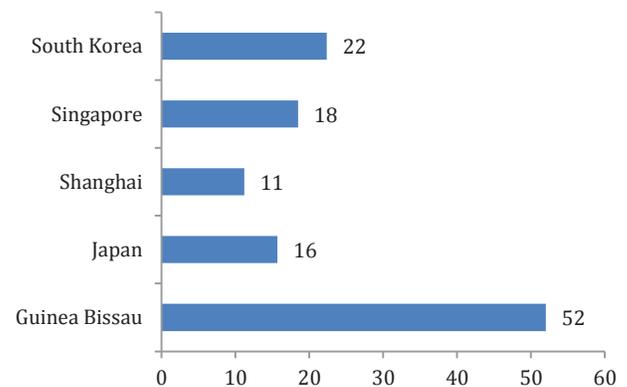
(2) Teacher pay in Guinea Bissau does not vary according to teacher performance. This is one way of potentially attracting better candidates into teaching. Linking compensation to performance on the job may send a signal to talented individuals considering entering the teaching profession that there are attractive opportunities for professional growth.

(3) Working conditions may not be appealing enough to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession. There are no data available on the percentage of schools that comply with infrastructure, hygiene, and sanitation regulations. In addition, student-teacher ratios (at 52 students per teacher) may

be too high to make working conditions appealing (World Bank 2010). High-performing systems have a maximum teacher-student ratio of less than 30 and 20 students per teacher, respectively, in primary and secondary education.

(4) Career opportunities may not be appealing enough to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession. Most education systems offer teachers the possibility of being promoted to principal positions at some point in their careers. In addition to these “vertical” promotions, most high-performing education systems offer teachers the possibility of “horizontal” promotions, to academic positions that allow them to grow professionally as teachers and yet remain closely connected to instruction, instead of moving up to managerial positions (OECD 2012, Darling-Hammond 2010). In Guinea Bissau, there are not policies in place that allow for teachers to apply school administration posts (such as school principals) or academic leadership positions. However, teacher advancement opportunities are officially linked to teacher’s performance.

Figure 3. Student-teacher ratio, primary school



Source: SABER-Teachers data; World Bank (2010)

Goal 3. Preparing Teachers with Useful Training and Experience

Emerging ●●○○

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

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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, primary teacher initial education takes place at the ISCED 4A level and secondary teacher education at the ISCED 5B level, which is low relative to many education systems. Virtually all high-performing countries, for instance, require that teachers have an educational level equivalent to ISCED 5A (a bachelor’s degree), and some systems, such as Finland, require in addition a research-based master’s degree (OECD 2011). In Guinea Bissau, primary school teachers are considered qualified to teach after completing the equivalent of vocational courses. Candidates take these courses after completing secondary education.

(2) There are limited practical classroom experience requirements. Practical experience is an important factor in teaching quality. The more teachers try out their pedagogical theories, subject matter knowledge, and classroom management skills, the better prepared they will be for their job. Most high-performing systems require their teacher entrants to have a considerable amount of classroom experience before becoming independent teachers, and some of these systems provide mentoring and support during the first and even second year on the job (Darling-Hammond 2010, Ingersoll 2007). In Guinea Bissau, student teachers can develop classroom experience both during their teacher initial education program and during mentoring programs once they have started their first job. Teacher trainees for primary and secondary education are required to have between three and six months of classroom experience during teacher initial education,

and to participate in mentoring programs. In high-performing systems, programs aimed at facilitating new teachers’ transition into teaching for both primary and secondary school teachers are usually longer than seven months. These programs have the potential to make teachers more effective in the classroom and reduce teacher turnover.

Figure 4. Required classroom experience, secondary school teachers

	Guinea Bissau	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
6 months or less	✓				✓
12 months or less			✓		
12-24 months				✓	
More than 24 months		✓			

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 4: Matching teachers’ skills with students’ needs

Latent ●○○○

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

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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, there are no incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools (Figure 5). Additionally, teacher’s performance is not considered when deciding transfer priorities. Attracting effective teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools (schools that are in disadvantaged locations or serve underprivileged populations) is a challenge for many countries, and often requires specific incentives. Considering teacher’s performance in transfer decisions, however, is one way to have a more positive effect on equity, as teachers tend to gravitate towards schools that have more appealing working conditions.

(2) Guinea Bissau has not identified critical shortage subjects, or subject areas in which there is a severe shortage of qualified teachers. It is important to assess different subject areas and identify areas in which there may be a shortage of qualified teachers who are willing to teacher particular subjects. In high-performing and top-improving systems, various incentives exist to attract talented professionals, particularly from high-demand fields, to teaching critical shortage subjects.

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

	Guinea Bissau	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Better chances of promotion			✓		✓
Higher basic salary		✓			
Monetary bonus		✓	✓		
Subsidized education			✓		
Housing support		✓			✓

Source: SABER-Teachers data

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

Goal 5: Leading teachers with strong principals

Latent ●○○○

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

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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, there are no specific programs to support the development of principals’ leadership skills, nor is their performance rewarded. Principals’ leadership skills can be developed through supported work experience or through specific training courses. High-performing systems such as Japan, South Korea, Shanghai, and Singapore require the participation of applicants to principal positions in specific coursework and/or a specialized internship or mentoring program aimed at developing essential leadership skills (OECD, 2012; Darling-Hammond 2010). In Guinea Bissau, there are no minimum requirements for becoming a school principal. There are also no specific training mechanisms to ensure that applicants to principal positions can develop the necessary skills to act as instructional leaders, such as specific coursework or participation in a mentoring or internship program. Mechanisms to attract competent individuals to principal positions, such as performance rewards, are absent in Guinea Bissau. Instead, the Ministry of Education, at the national level, is responsible for hiring principals.

(2) Principals in Guinea Bissau are not explicitly expected to provide support and guidance to teachers for the improvement of instructional practice. Once education systems get talented candidates to become principals, they need to structure their time to focus on improving instruction (OECD 2012, Barber & Mourshed 2007). High-performing education systems such as Finland, Ontario, and Singapore think of their principals as instructional leaders. Principals are expected to be

knowledgeable in teaching and curriculum matters, as well as to provide guidance and support to teachers. They evaluate teachers, provide feedback, assess the school’s needs for professional development, and direct instructional resources where they are most needed (Darling-Hammond & Rothman 2011). In Guinea Bissau, there are official specifications regarding the role of school principals; however, they are not explicitly required to evaluate teacher performance, a common task of principals in many of the higher-performing systems.

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

	Guinea Bissau	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
Courses or other training requirements			✓	✓	✓
Participation in mentoring or internship program		✓		✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 6: Monitoring teaching and learning

Latent ●○○○

Assessing how well teachers are teaching and whether students are learning is essential to devise strategies for improving teaching and learning. First, identifying low-performing teachers and students is critical for education systems to be able to provide struggling classrooms with adequate support to improve. Second, teacher and student evaluation also helps identify good practices which can be shared across the system to improve school performance.

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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, policy stipulates that student achievement data are collected at the national level through exams. All high-performing education systems ensure that there is enough student data to inform teaching and policy. These ensure that three main functions are fulfilled: (1) There is a system to collect relevant and complete data on student achievement regularly; (2) There is a mechanism for public authorities to access these to inform policy, and (3) There is a mechanism to feed these data back to the school level, so that teachers can use the data to improve classroom practice. Officially, in Guinea Bissau, student assessments are with students ages 14 and 17. These assessments are sample-based, and student learning data cannot be linked to teacher information. In addition, Guinea Bissau has not participated in any international assessments of student achievement. While the information collected through the national government’s sample-based assessments may be useful to diagnose the overall performance of the system, it may be of little value for the government to identify schools and teachers who may need additional support, and for teachers to evaluate and adjust their own practice.

(2) Teachers are required to participate in an external evaluation but not in any internal evaluations. At present there are no systems in place to track teachers and monitor their performance over time. High-

performing countries often have different systems for managing teacher information, and teachers are often assigned individual identification numbers, which allow countries to track their performance over time. This is one additional way of ensuring teacher accountability.

(3) In Guinea Bissau, teachers are assessed based on their knowledge of the subject matter they teach. Research suggests that no single method of evaluating teacher performance is fail-safe. Most high-performing systems conduct teacher evaluations using a multiplicity of mechanisms of data collection and varied criteria for assessment (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Criteria to evaluate teacher performance

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

Source: SABER-Teachers data

Goal 7: Supporting teachers to improve instruction

Established ●●●○

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

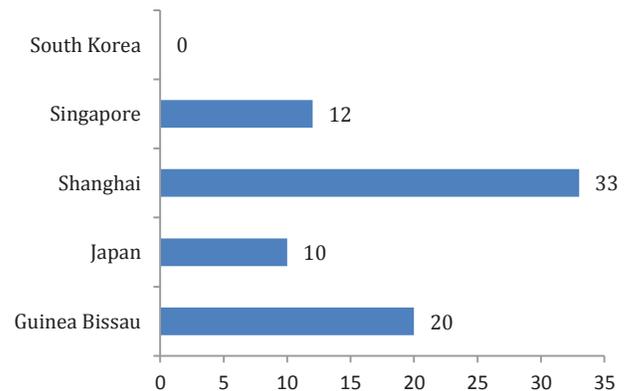
SABER-Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) availability of opportunities for teacher professional development; (2) teacher professional development activities that are collaborative and focused on instructional improvement; and (3) making sure teacher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

(1) In Guinea Bissau, teachers are required to participate in 20 days of professional development each year (Figure 8). This is on par with many high-performing education systems such as Singapore and Shanghai. Sub-national and local government authorities are responsible for teacher development, and teachers are not required to pay for the costs of professional development.

(2) It is unclear what professional development activities in Guinea Bissau actually include. Research suggests that effective teacher professional development is collaborative and provides opportunities for the in-school analysis of instructional practice, as opposed to being limited to one-time workshops or conferences. For instance, teacher development activities may include observation visits to other schools, participation in teacher networks, or participation in school networks.

(3) Teacher professional development is formally assigned based on perceived needs. Assigning professional development to teachers when they score low on performance evaluations is one way of potentially improving instructional practice. Teacher professional development can be targeted to meet the needs of specific teachers.

Figure 8. Required or suggested days of teacher professional development per year



Source: SABER-Teachers data; training requirements based on an eight-hour school day

Goal 8: Motivating teachers to perform

Latent ●○○○

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

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

(1) There are official policies that link teacher promotion opportunities in Guinea Bissau to teacher performance evaluations. Open-ended appointments are informed by performance history. There is a mandatory probation period of three to six months for teachers before they are granted open-ended appointments, and official policy stipulates that performance on the job factors into whether teachers receive this type of appointment.

(2) There are few mechanisms in place to hold teachers accountable, particularly primary education teachers. Requiring teachers to meet some standards to remain in the teaching profession can facilitate the removal of ineffective teachers. One minimum standard is consistent teacher attendance. Research in both developed and developing countries indicates that teacher absenteeism can reach high levels, negatively impacting student performance (Chaudhury et al. 2005; Herrmann & Rockoff 2009; Miller, Murnane & Willett 2008; Rogers & Vegas 2009). Education systems can encourage teacher attendance by taking it into account in teacher evaluations, providing teachers with incentives to be present in school, and dismissing

teachers if they are consistently absent. In Guinea Bissau, policy stipulates that teachers can be dismissed for absenteeism and misconduct. At present, primary education teachers are not required to participate in professional development activities or performance evaluations as a requirement for remaining in the profession, but secondary school teachers are required to participate in both.

(3) In Guinea Bissau, teacher compensation is not officially linked to performance. Performance reviews in Guinea Bissau do not carry salary implications, and high-performing teachers do not receive monetary bonuses for good individual performance. Providing monetary bonuses for good teacher performance is potentially one way to improve teacher performance, but both require an adequate system of performance evaluation.

Figure 9. Requirements to remain in the profession, primary and secondary school teachers

	Guinea Bissau	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	South Korea
<i>Primary school teachers:</i>					
Professional development			✓		
Performance evaluations			✓	✓	
<i>Secondary school teachers:</i>					
Professional development	✓		✓		
Performance evaluations	✓		✓	✓	

Source: SABER-Teachers data

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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 policy.

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