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Teacher Policies in the Republic of Cyprus

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Executive Summary

Purpose: This report presents the findings of a review of teacher policies in Cyprus conducted by the World Bank in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). The purpose of analysis is to identify options for strengthening the teacher policy framework, after first reviewing strengths and weaknesses of the current framework in six policy areas: initial teacher education, employment rules, professional development, teaching practice and autonomy, monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality, and school leadership.

Summary of Current Teacher Policies: In Cyprus' highly centralized education system, the current teacher policy framework has been in place since 1976, when Parliament passed a law establishing the policies for teacher hiring, monitoring, and evaluation. Despite the numerous attempts since then to change these policies, the law has remained largely unaltered for the past 37 years.

The review highlights two overarching strengths reflected in the current policy framework: first, there is high demand for education, and teaching has long been held in high esteem; and second, Cyprus' teaching force is highly qualified, because the teaching profession has historically attracted top university students who have high levels of educational attainment. These strengths could provide a foundation for reforms to further improve student achievement.

Other teacher policy areas pose major challenges, including two cross-cutting challenges: First, current policies privilege seniority over all other considerations, which likely reduces teaching quality and inhibits student learning. In practice, seniority is virtually the only characteristic used to assess and distinguish teachers from one another, in various policy areas—promotions, transfers, course loads, and even appointments. Second, there is little information on learning outcomes, which reduces teachers' ability to help their students and administrators' ability to assess and strengthen teaching and teacher policies.

Policy Options: The report offers policy options in each of the six areas. The areas in which reform is most needed, in the view of our team, are: teacher selection and recruitment; monitoring and evaluation of teachers; and teacher professional development. Key policy options include:

- *Selection and recruitment:* Reform the recruitment system, as proposed by the government, to one that takes objective measures of merit into account. Phase out the current policy of listing the earliest graduates first for appointments, while providing a reasonable transition period to allow current contract teachers an opportunity for appointment during the transition.
- *Evaluation:* Ensure that teacher evaluation is multi-faceted and not just based on assessments by inspectors and school principals, and that it includes both formative and summative components. Evaluate teachers earlier in their career, not just after 10 years, and make better use of the probation period to strengthen the teaching force. Make better use of teacher evaluations in promotion decisions. Over the longer run, allow student learning to influence evaluations, after strengthening the system of student assessment.
- *Professional development:* Ensure that mandatory TPD does not consist only of one-time sessions with no follow-up, but instead is more continuous and linked to teachers' needs. Evaluate TPD programs to assess how they affect teaching and student learning.

Background and Overview

Objective

1. The World Bank is working with the Government of Cyprus (GoC) to provide Programmatic Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS). The objective of the RAS is to deliver a set of reviews of the policies, functions, organization, and operation of selected public sector sectors/agencies, as well of the cross-cutting public management of human resources and the public sector salaries regime. The reviews are also meant to provide reform options for improving the functioning of the public sector, the delivery of services to citizens, and underpinning the sustainability of fiscal consolidation in the medium term.¹
2. This report presents results of a review of teacher policies in Cyprus conducted by the World Bank in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). The purpose of the analysis is to identify options for strengthening the education system of Cyprus, taking into account the country's context and future prospects across different areas of teacher policy.
3. The analysis focuses on the six teacher policy areas identified in Box 1, to see how policies in Cyprus can be informed by international evidence on best practice.

Box 1: Dimensions of Teacher Policy Analysis	
-Initial teacher education	-Monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality
-Employment rules	-School leadership
-Professional development	
-Teaching practice and autonomy	

4. The paper first provides a brief background highlighting the historical and institutional context of education policy in Cyprus. Second, it describes and analyzes existing teacher policies in Cyprus in these areas. As part of the analysis, it compares Cyprus' policies with examples from other countries. This comparative analysis highlights good examples of teacher policies that, according to international research, are associated with improved student learning and other outcomes. This section draws on original data collected by the World Bank in coordination with the MoEC. Third, we discuss how effectively teacher policies have been implemented in Cyprus, as well as past policy reforms and attempts at reforms. The paper concludes with a discussion of opportunities for strengthening the teacher policy framework in Cyprus, including a set of policy options that the government may wish to consider.

Structural and institutional context

5. One of the main characteristics of the educational system in Cyprus is that its administration is centralized and both primary and secondary schools are considered as governmental, rather

¹In June 2012, the Cypriot government announced it would need €1.8 billion of foreign aid to support its financial system. As a consequence of the bailout from the EU, the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Government of Cyprus is expected to carry out reforms that increase the efficiency of its public sector.

than community, institutions. The centralized system has historical and political origins (Kyriakides, 1999), and it is also the case that a fully decentralized system in a small country like Cyprus would be very demanding in manpower. With 332 pre-primary schools, 342 primary schools, 116 secondary schools, and 15 technical/vocational schools, Cyprus' education system has only about the same administrative range as a large local educational authority in England, and it is much smaller than an administrative region for education in France.² Nevertheless, even at this scale there is room for increasing efficiency and responsiveness of the education system to the needs of students by devolving some responsibility to district and school levels (as discussed in the functional review).

6. Pre-primary, primary, secondary, and vocational/technical education are all under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), which is responsible for educational policymaking, the administration of education, and the enforcement of educational laws. Teachers' appointments, secondments, transfers, and promotions are the responsibility of the Educational Service Commission (ESC), an independent five-member committee appointed by the Council of Ministers. School boards are largely responsible for the construction, maintenance, and equipping of school buildings, but they have no say in purely educational matters. One mitigating element, reducing the power of the state, is the fact that the teachers' trade unions are powerful and are always involved in negotiations over changes in pay/working conditions and teacher evaluation. There are three trade unions, one for each of primary, secondary, and vocational/technical departments, and membership in them is customary for teachers.

Teacher policy reforms

7. This section briefly introduces the history of teacher policy reforms and reform proposals in Cyprus, as a preface to more detailed discussion of the current situation and opportunities for reforms in the remainder of this paper. Since independence in 1960, Cyprus has made four major changes to teacher policies:
 - In 1972 by Cabinet decision, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute was established, and since then the CPI has been the main provider of teacher professional development.
 - In 1976, Parliament passed a law establishing the policies for teacher hiring, monitoring, and evaluation. Despite the numerous attempts undertaken to change these policies since they were deemed outdated—attempts that were invigorated during the past decade, as described below—the law has remained largely unaltered for the past 37 years.
 - In 1992, the Department of Education of the University of Cyprus admitted its first students, marking a new era in which primary school teachers would have a bachelor degree instead of a diploma.

² In 2012 there were 5,435 primary school teachers and 6,675 secondary school teachers in public schools, and another 2,270 teachers in private schools. There were 65,608 students in primary schools and 49,954 in secondary public schools. Additionally, there were 10,423 students in primary private schools and 10,583 in private secondary schools (MoEC 2012).

- In 2002, the pre-service training program for secondary school candidate teachers was launched.
8. Another important change, which provides context for later attempts to reform teacher policies, has been the increasing availability of internationally benchmarked assessment results for students in Cyprus. In the past two decades, Cyprus participated in international studies (e.g., Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, TIMSS: 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007; Programme of International Student Assessment, PISA 2012). The results of the TIMSS studies revealed that students' overall performance in Mathematics and Science in Cyprus was low relative to other European countries (Campbell & Kyriakides, 2000; Kyriakides & Charalambous, 2005; Martin, Mullis, & Chrostowski, 2004; Mullis, Martin, Beaton, Gonzalez, Kelly, & Smith, 1997; Olson, Martin, & Mullis, 2008).
 9. Over that same period, the past two decades, there have been a number of attempts to introduce far-reaching education reforms that would update the teacher-policy framework. In the mid-1990s, the Government of Cyprus requested UNESCO to undertake an appraisal of the education system in co-operation with the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), with the aim of reforming its education system. Published in 1997, the Appraisal Study on the Cyprus Education System laid out the first attempt to make major system wide reforms in the education system in Cyprus. It sought to introduce international ideals and ideologies, policies and practices and a mode of governing education systems that would place greater emphasis on outcomes, benchmarks, efficiency, accountability, and performance.
 10. Building on that study, in 2003 the Council of Ministers appointed the Committee of Seven Academics (CSA) whose mandate was to examine the education system of Cyprus and to submit proposals for a comprehensive reform. In August 2004, the CSA submitted its report, entitled Democratic and Human/Humane Education in a Euro-Cypriot State: Prospects for Reconstruction and Modernization. Soon after the beginning of the reform efforts, the coalition government, led by President Tassos Papadopoulos, stated that "an immediate qualitative upgrading and modernization of all levels of education"³ was a main goal of the administration. The reform initiative that followed the CSA's report is seen as "the first real major education reform in Cyprus" (Persianis 2010, 107). In 2007, after the reform initiative had already been launched, the MoEC undertook a review of the education that led to a comprehensive set of proposals for reforming the education system – Strategic Planning for Education: A Comprehensive Review of Our Education System (SPE) – with the stated goal of improving the quality of education.
 11. The CSA's report underscored that the teaching profession is highly valued and attracts top candidates in Cyprus, but also that given the supply of potential candidates, teacher policies have long been inadequate to make the best use of the human capital available. In practice, teacher recruitment and promotion are based primarily on seniority. According to the CSA's report, the promotion system is "outdated and counterproductive, an inseparable part of a centralized-bureaucratic system"⁴ and is often criticized on the basis that it fails to recognize

³Newspaper *Phileleftheros*, 31/01/2005.

⁴ Committee of Seven Academics (2004), op.cit., p. 266.

excellence through promotion and to make use of the most able teachers in a more responsible capacity until they have probably passed their peak⁵. The system has also been criticized on the grounds that it focuses on teacher activities and not on student learning and that inspectors have too much power. While pre-service training was carried out both in universities and in the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI)⁶, only the CPI is in charge of in-service training. It has been argued that CPI's courses are offered on a supply-driven basis with little participation of teachers themselves.

12. To address these problems, the CSA report proposed reforms to teacher recruitment, evaluation, and professional development. First, the report recommended that that Cyprus design a new teacher appointment system—one that would be more just, transparent, and meritocratic. For that purpose, all stakeholders should be invited to elaborate the new recruiting system and written examinations (covering also pedagogical ability) should be part of the selection criteria. On teacher evaluation, UNESCO's 1997 report had suggested that teacher evaluation procedures focus on educational outcomes as opposed to educational processes. In its report, the CSA proposed that the current external evaluation system be replaced by an internal system that would cover both tenure and promotion. The new system could include the following dimensions: (i) self-evaluation by teachers; (ii) evaluation by teacher counselors who will be experts in assessment and who will replace inspectors; (iii) evaluation by pupils; (iv) evaluation by peers; and (v) evaluation by the school principal. According to the CSA, this new system would enhance the quality of education and would promote the participation of all stakeholders in processes of education. Under this proposed reform, the controversial dual role of inspectors, evaluation and pedagogical support and mentoring, would be replaced by the new, comprehensive evaluation system and teacher counselors. Finally, the CSA suggested the CPI should reexamine its structure and seek closer collaboration with the University of Cyprus in order to provide in-service training to all teachers in Cyprus.
13. New rules for teacher recruitment and evaluation were also proposed by the SPE in 2007. For recruitment, it proposed placing more weight on results of examinations (60 percent), while academic qualifications and teaching experience would be given a weight of 20 percent each. An interview would also be part of the process. As for the teaching evaluation, the focus would be shifted from didactics and teacher practices to student learning outcomes (in agreement with the Athena Consortium⁷). The new rules would also create more career progression options for teachers, such as "Senior Teacher" and "Education Advisor" positions. The latter would be part of a mentoring scheme that was also proposed.
14. Of these three areas covered by the proposals—recruitment, evaluation, and professional development—Cyprus has so far implemented reforms in only professional development. Based on the reports' suggestions, the CPI was upgraded and its compulsory and optional in-service training programs enhanced, offering novel forms and patterns of professional development courses and seminars, such as school-based training and distance/on-line training. Pre-service

⁵ International Institute for Education Planning (1997), *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁶ The CPI was in charge of pre-service training for secondary education teachers until 2007.

⁷ The Athena Consortium proposed the abolition of the inspectors and many more career development options for teachers.

training for secondary education teachers was relocated from the CPI to the University of Cyprus. Additionally, in 2008, an induction training program for newly-appointed teachers and mentors of all levels of education was launched so as to help towards the smooth induction of novice teachers. Finally, in the context of the introduction and implementation of the new curriculum in public schools, the CPI (a) participated in the production of new curriculum-related teaching materials, and, (b) designed and began to put into practice mass in-service training seminars for teachers and principals. However, there remain gaps in the professional development system, as the sections below will discuss: there are still few rigorous metrics to assess how effective the new professional development programs are, and in spite of the recommendations to staff the CPI in accordance with the needs defined by its mission, the Institute continues to rely heavily on seconded teachers.

15. In the area of recruitment, while no reforms have yet been implemented, the government has recently made concrete proposals. Following the recommendations of both the CSA and the SPE (and UNESCO), and after long negotiations with stakeholders, the MoEC released in May 2012, and then again in October 2013, a proposal for a new system of teacher recruitment. At the same time, it announced that it would be holding further consultation and dialogue with stakeholders on the proposal. The intention is to implement the new system in 2015 and eventually phase out the existing long waiting list for appointment (described below) by 2019, so there is a transitional period of 4 years between the new and the old system. The new system will be based on specific criteria and the collection of points. For the period 2015-2019, under the proposal, recruitment will be based on five criteria: (i) written exam, (ii) academic qualifications, (iii) teaching experience, (iv) year of first degree⁸, and (v) service to the National Guard.

Current Policy Framework and Implementation

16. This section presents an analysis of teacher policies in Cyprus, as well as of the quality of their implementation. The analysis builds on a framework for teacher policies, which is presented along with comparison to principles and activities of best practice that emerge from the academic literature. The analysis highlights what we know, based on existing research, of best practices in teacher policies. This section of the paper draws on data and information collected using a policy mapping approach that focuses on the seven policy areas listed above: initial teacher education, employment rules, professional development, teaching autonomy and practice, monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality, and school leadership.⁹ This section

⁸This criterion will be removed in 2019.

⁹The policy framework developed in this section was developed by the Human Development Network at the World Bank, based on an extensive global review of the teacher policies that are most associated with achieving improved student learning. For detail, see the SABER report “What Matters Most in Teacher Policies” (Vegas et al., 2012), which summarizes those policies, the methodology, and the literature on which they are based. Informed by this review, the ECA team developed the questionnaires and methodology for collecting teacher policy data in Cyprus and then worked alongside academics at the University of Cyprus to gather the data. To complement these policy data, the team drew also on other data provided by the GoC, on prior studies of teacher policies and practice in Cyprus, and on data from international assessments such as TIMSS and PISA. In addition, the research team conducted a mission to Cyprus in September and October 2013, during which it met with ministry officials, visited five schools, and held focus groups with head teachers and teachers. The team met with head teachers separately from teachers to gain a variety of perspectives and a better understanding of how policies were being implemented across the range

further discusses the relevant policy reforms and past attempts at reforms, both successful and not.

Initial teacher education

17. Initial teacher education refers to the formal education and practical training that individuals go through to become public school teachers. This initial education affects the skills and knowledge available to teachers, their motivation to enter the teaching profession, and the profile of those who decide to become teachers. Equipping teachers with the skills they need to succeed in the classroom is a critical step to ensuring the success of students in the classroom. Teachers need subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge concerned with generic teaching skills, and pedagogical content knowledge related to domain-specific teaching skills (Shulman, 1986).
18. Initial teacher education policies in Cyprus are designed to provide prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in the classroom. Virtually all education systems that produce high outcomes in student achievement 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).¹⁰ Policies in Cyprus stipulate that teachers have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, though the majority of teachers in primary and secondary education have Master's degrees or PhDs.
19. Four departments of education—the University of Cyprus, which is public, and three private universities—offer initial teacher training programs for primary school teachers. Candidates entering the UoC take University entrance exams, which are highly competitive. For example, in 2007, the lowest-grade applicant admitted to the Department of Education of the UoC (for the primary education program) scored 19.33 out of 20. During the last couple of years, because the interest in becoming a teacher has dropped, in 2012, the lowest-grade applicant admitted to the UoC scored 18.10. Although the difference between 19.33 and 18.10 might seem small to an outsider, in fact it is not, given how competitive entering the aforementioned program of the UoC has been. Private universities set more lenient admission criteria (e.g., an average of lower than 15 out of 20 in Mathematics, Greek Language and overall GPA at Lyceum is considered acceptable for admission). When the course program of the Department of Education of the UoC was designed, the needs of the educational system were taken into account. This program then served as a basis for the corresponding programs designed in the Departments of Education of the private universities, as a result of the process of evaluating these institutions by the Council of Educational Evaluation-Accreditation (SEKAP) and the Evaluation Committee of Private Universities. A few years ago, the program of studies of the Department of Education at the UoC was adapted to meet then-current needs (e.g., lack of qualified primary teachers for teaching English as a second language).
20. In all departments of education, the program of studies stipulates that prospective teachers participate in a fieldwork experience. Typically taking place during the last year of studies, the longer part of this fieldwork experience is organized jointly by the university departments and

of policy areas discussed in this section. The team also conducted a second mission in December 2013, to collect additional information and to discuss its tentative findings with ministry officials.

¹⁰ There is not substantial empirical evidence to suggest that teacher degrees are correlated with student learning.

the Department of Primary Education of the MoEC. However, up to this point there are no national standards of teaching stipulating the key teaching skills that student teachers are expected to demonstrate during their fieldwork. Instead, each Department of Education sets its own assessment criteria and standards. The same applies to all other courses offered in the program of studies of those departments. This is partly due to the fact that the accreditation procedure of those programs is mainly concerned with initial descriptions of the course content, rather than with prospective teachers' final learning outcomes.

21. As part of their studies, prospective teachers enrolled in the above mentioned departments are also expected to take courses in educational research, educational psychology, and pedagogical sciences. These courses are intended to equip them with research skills and knowledge to undertake postgraduate courses in Education (both within Cyprus and abroad, especially in very competitive universities in UK and the USA).
22. A prospective teacher who obtains a Bachelor's degree in Education from an accredited university abroad is also eligible to become a primary school teacher. Prospective teachers whose studies do not include the teaching of specific subjects required of all teachers in Cyprus (e.g., Teaching of Modern Greek, Teaching of History, and Teaching of Religious Education) are asked to attend a compulsory training program on those subjects offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI). The CPI, which is under the auspices of the MoEC, is the sole institution offering in-service training courses (see below).
23. Unlike prospective primary school teachers, prospective teachers aiming to serve in secondary general and vocational/technical education are not required to have any formal pedagogical training; they are expected only to obtain a Bachelor's degree in their subject specialty. This implies that prospective secondary teachers may have strong content knowledge but their pedagogical knowledge or their pedagogical content knowledge might be limited. Recognizing this deficiency, in 2002¹¹ the Ministry changed its policy: now, prospective secondary teachers are required to enroll in a *Pre-service Teaching* program and obtain a relevant certificate before being appointed. During this training, prospective secondary teachers discuss several pedagogical issues and are given the chance to teach their subject-matter in real classrooms/real time and receive feedback from staff from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI).
24. There is no formal national policy requiring practical classroom requirements for new teachers. Practical experience is an important factor in teaching quality, because it gives teachers opportunities to try out their pedagogical theories, subject-matter knowledge, and classroom management skills and become more prepared for their job. Early classroom experience has been associated with more effective classroom teaching and higher student achievement in numerous studies (Boyd et al., 2009; Chingos & Peterson 2010; Hanushek et al., 2005; Hanushek & Rivkin 2010; Rivkin et al., 2005). Additionally, some of these systems provide mentoring and

¹¹ This program was initiated and offered by the CPI starting from 1999. The CPI changed the program in 2002 and invited academics to offer courses. At this stage some significant changes in the structure of the program took place. In 2007, the Ministry of Education asked the University of Cyprus to offer this program, and some further changes in the program were introduced (including the more systematic use of mentors and their involvement in the evaluation of the prospective teachers).

support during the first and even second year on the job, which has also been found to be beneficial for newly appointed teachers (Darling-Hammond 2010; Ingersoll 2007).

25. In Cyprus, policies do include provisions for mentoring. In 2008, mentoring programs became obligatory for new teachers. Up until last year, new teachers were paired with a senior teacher in their school during their first year of teaching to assist them in their classroom preparation and to provide guidance in conducting their day-to-day work. This year, because of the economic crisis, the MOEC ended the mentoring program, but in some schools it continues informally.

Employment rules

26. Employment rules refer to policies and processes to: attract and recruit individuals into teaching; ensure that effective teachers remain motivated; and manage the allocation of teaching talent. These policies may affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession, the decision to remain in the teaching profession, the profile of those who decide to remain as teachers, and the performance of those teachers. This section includes a discussion of three types of teacher policy: (1) Teacher selection and recruitment, (2) standards and expectations for teachers, and (3) teacher transfers and workload.

Teacher selection and recruitment: Attracting the best into teaching

27. The structure and characteristics of the teaching career can make it more or less attractive for talented individuals to decide to become teachers. Research highlights that 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 (Darling-Hammond 2010; Ingersoll, 2001a, 2001b; Jackson 2010; OECD 2012).
28. In the last two decades, the teaching profession in Cyprus has generally been a highly regarded profession offering attractive pay, career opportunities, and working conditions. Two indicators of the attractiveness of the profession are the queue for teaching positions and the popularity of the education degree. First, there is a long queue of highly qualified candidates waiting to become teachers: more than three times as many candidates are waiting in the queue as there are teaching positions in the entire system. Second, the education major offered by universities in Cyprus has been one of the most popular majors available. Over the last five years, these indicators have worsened, as we will discuss below, but this decline should be set against the backdrop of the historical attractiveness of the teaching profession.
29. In the remainder of this section, we examine four factors that help determine the attractiveness of the teaching profession and the quality of the entrants into the profession: (1) requirements to enter the teaching profession; (2) competitive pay; (3) appealing working conditions; and (4) attractive career opportunities.

30. First, in Cyprus, *formal requirements* to become a primary or secondary school teacher are similar to those in top performing international education systems.¹² Teachers are required to have at least a four-year Bachelor's degree in order to be qualified to teach. To be appointed as a primary school teacher, a candidate needs to have a recognized Bachelor's degree in Education, equivalent to the BAQTS in the UK. The Cyprus Council for the recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS) is responsible for ensuring that degrees received abroad are equivalent to those awarded by the Department of Education of the University of Cyprus.
31. In both general secondary education and in vocational/technical education, candidates are expected to have a degree in the subject area in which they want to teach (for example, Mathematics teachers are expected to have a BSc in Mathematics). In addition, since 2002, the MoEC has required that newly appointed teachers or those who are about to be appointed (called *Pre-Service Education*¹³) go through an induction program. This program aims to help candidate/novice teachers to develop good pedagogical practices and an understanding of key pedagogical issues—material that, by and large, has not been part of the candidates' program of studies.
32. Unlike teachers in many other countries, teachers in Cyprus are not formally required to have acquired a minimum amount of practical professional experience, or to pass an assessment conducted by a supervisor based on their previous practical professional experience. In practice, however, nearly all incoming teachers enter the teaching force with some professional teaching experience. Newly appointed primary teachers typically come from the University of Cyprus, from one of the three private universities preparing primary school teachers, or from an international university, and each of these have such teaching requirements as part of their curricula. At the University of Cyprus and at private universities, there are also written exams as part of individual course programs, but at present there is no one officially mandated final written exam required to become a certified teacher in Cyprus.
33. This lack of objective measures of the knowledge and skills of the applicant is a weakness of the current system, which accords the highest priority for appointment to those who have been waiting the longest for a position. To remedy this weakness, the newly proposed education reform would introduce the requirement of an exam for all teacher candidates. The requirement of an exam would strengthen the entry requirements into profession and help the system to select the best and the brightest, and ultimately to attract them as well. Research suggests that no single criterion can be effective for teacher selection, but an entrance exam required alongside a comprehensive interview and review process can help improve the quality of teacher candidates selected (Darling-Hammond 2010).

¹² Causal analyses of the influence of entry requirements on teacher effectiveness, as well as case studies, suggest a higher level of selectivity of entry into the teaching profession (or entry into teacher initial education programs) contributes to a higher-quality teaching force (Alfonso, Santiago & Bassi, 2011; Auguste, Kihn & Miller 2010; Barber & Mourshed 2007; Cantrell et al., 2008; Constantine et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond 2010; Decker, Mayer & Glazerman, 2004).

¹³ Candidates in secondary/technical-vocational education have the right to apply for a teaching position upon graduation. When the ESC notifies them that they are about to be hired, those candidates are asked to attend the *Pre-service Education Program*. A stipend is typically given to those attending the program and, upon its completion, the candidates are fully appointed as school teachers.

34. Both concurrent and consecutive models for teacher training exist in Cyprus, but consecutive programs are offered only to candidates seeking to become secondary school teachers. Concurrent programs—that is, programs that teach subject knowledge and pedagogic skills relatively simultaneously—are the one pathway to enter the teaching profession for primary school teachers. The basic requirement for a person to become a primary school teacher is to have a BA from concurrent study. These concurrent programs are not available for secondary school teachers. According to the educational legislation¹⁴, a person can enter the teaching profession as a secondary teacher with a BA/BSc only through a consecutive program.
35. In Cyprus, having a BA or a BSc in a given discipline is enough to qualify as a secondary school teacher and enter the teacher waiting list. As explained above, teacher candidates participate in a pre-service training program offered by the CPI before being appointed to their positions.
36. After obtaining a Bachelor's degree, candidates interested in being appointed as schoolteachers (either in primary or in secondary education) are expected to submit an application to the MoEC and the Education Service Commission (ESC). Based on these applications, every year the ESC rank lists the candidates, using the year that the application has been made as the main criterion. Although other criteria are also taken into account (e.g., holding a Master's or a PhD degree), those criteria can be applied to only candidates within the same application year (that means, that a candidate without a Master's degree could be ranked above a candidate with such a degree, who submitted his or her application a couple of years later). Each year, as teaching posts become available in particular specialties, the ESC appoints new teachers from the top of the waiting list.
37. Because of the historical popularity of teaching, this waiting list has grown quite long: the number of candidates on the list is more than three times as great as the number of teachers currently in the system. Combine this long waiting list with the unusual first-in, first-out queuing procedure for teaching slots, and the result is that individuals who are newly appointed to teaching each year are generally the oldest among all the candidates in the queue. In many cases, the new teachers have been employed for several (or even many) years in other professions, including those such as banking that offer little relevant experience for a career in teaching. For example, in some subject areas in secondary education (e.g., Political Economy), a candidate is usually appointed only after 25 years on the list, meaning that he or she is likely to work for only about a decade before retirement. In other subject areas (such as German language), the situation is much worse, as explained below.
38. Over the past decade, the problem of the long waiting list has grown more severe. Now, in addition to the historically long list for teaching posts in secondary and vocational/technical education, a long list has also developed for primary-school candidates. For example, based on rough estimates, it is unlikely that a school candidate who submitted his or her application during the past couple of years will be appointed as a school teacher, barring a change in the waiting-list procedures. For example, based on the expected rate of new appointments and the large number of candidates on the waiting list, a new candidate for a spot teaching German language is expected to have to wait 2720 years for an appointment.¹⁵ There are several reasons for this: (a) as noted above, there has historically been a huge surplus of candidates

¹⁴ N84 (1)/99, OELMEC pp. 36-38.

¹⁵ *Add reference for this.*

relative to the number of positions; (b) because of generally good working conditions, the teacher “burnout” rate has been very low and almost all teachers have remained in the profession until retirement; and (c) no teacher since 1976 has been evaluated as unsatisfactory and hence dismissed (see above).

39. Recently, universities have observed a drop in the number of applications to pursue education degrees, signaling that the selection and hiring systems may be discouraging potential candidates from applying. An initiative has been launched by the MoEC to change the existing selection and hiring system. A committee comprised of six academics has been asked to provide the MoEC with proposals as to how the recruitment system can be improved. Recommendations made include that candidates be asked to pass a written test and that candidates with additional qualifications be ranked in the recruitment list higher than other candidates with no such qualifications, who, however, have submitted their application forms earlier. Officially announced to the public on October 14, 2013, this proposal is currently being discussed among the trade unions and political parties.
40. Second, *teacher pay* is an important factor in the quality of the teaching force. Evidence shows that applicants considering whether or not to go into the profession care about what they would earn in teaching relative to other occupations (Boyd, et al. 2006b; Dolton 1990; Wolter & Denzler 2003) and that higher salaries attract more able candidates into teaching (Barber & Mourshed 2007; Figlio 1997; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin 1999; Leigh 2009). While conditions may have changed recently, teacher pay in Cyprus has historically been competitive enough to attract talented and well-educated candidates into teaching. The more relevant concern among new entrants into the teaching profession in the Cypriot system is the long waiting list to enter the profession.
41. Salary levels influence not only who is attracted into the profession, but also how long they stay in teaching (Dolton and van der Klaauw 1999; Ingersoll, 2001a, 2001b; Murnane & Olsen 1989, 1990; Stinebrickner 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001a, 2001b). In the case of Cyprus, the high salaries likely contribute to the very low rate of exit from the teaching profession; as noted earlier, most teachers stay in the system until retirement. One benefit of this low rate of turnover is that investments in hiring and training may be more efficient relative to other professions.
42. A third important factor in the decision to become a teacher, in addition to the formal requirements and salaries, is the teachers’ *working conditions*. There is considerable evidence that teachers care a great deal about where they work (Boyd et al., 2005a; Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 2004a, 2004b; Jackson 2010), and under what conditions. Talented candidates who have opportunities in other professions may be discouraged from choosing to become teachers if working conditions are too poor.
43. In Cyprus, teachers’ working conditions do not appear to be a deterrent to qualified candidates, based on our discussions with teachers and MoEC staff and on an examination of some key indicator of those conditions. One indicator is student-teacher ratios, which in Cyprus are similar to those in education systems across Europe. Teachers generally prefer lower student-teacher ratios, typically classified as less than 30 primary school students per teacher and less than 20 secondary school students per teacher (UNESCO 2012). The average student-teacher

ratios in Cyprus are well below that, with an average of 11:1 for primary school students and 8:1 for secondary school students.¹⁶

44. A second indicator is the quality of infrastructure, hygiene, and sanitation in schools. In Cyprus, there are national standards in these areas, which should help to maintain decent physical working conditions, and qualitative evidence suggests this is not a major problem. The Technical Services department at the MoEC and locally elected school boards are responsible for the physical working conditions of the schools. Issues regarding infrastructure, hygiene, sanitation, and equipment standards are addressed by school boards. Technical Services is the policymaking and regulatory body for school working conditions, and school boards manage inspections of schools ensuring that schools comply with basic national regulations (e.g. if there are the appropriate number of toilets, classrooms, etc. given the number of students attending the school).
45. Working conditions of schools depend heavily on the quality of the locally elected school board and their attentiveness to the needs of each school. The functions of school boards are extensive. Beyond managing the physical working conditions, the duties of school boards, include: financial management and procurement of schools, appointment non-teaching staff, assessments of staff appointed to the school board by the government (school clerks, preparation of the budget every year in order to operate properly (necessary and needs), giving suggestions to the minister for the amount of students per school, managing a discretionary budget (6.83 Euros per student for each school in the 2013-2014 academic year). School boards are also responsible for making sure everything is in place at the beginning of each school year, and they are responsible for ensuring that needs of the head teacher and teachers are met within the school. Hence, head teachers and teachers rely on school boards to ensure proper working conditions.
46. A fourth element in attractiveness of teaching is the opportunities for *career advancement*. In Cyprus, these opportunities are on a par with those of other parts of the civil service. Teachers have opportunities to earn “vertical” promotions by applying to school administration posts (such as secondment assignments with the MoEC or positions as school principals). Positions for secondment to the MoEC are considered very prestigious and are advertised annually based on the needs of the ministry. Recently, however, the opportunities for vertical promotion (i.e., deputy principals and principals) have diminished, especially in primary education. Many current deputy principals and principals are relatively young and are expected to remain in their posts for many years, leaving minimal opportunities to their younger counterparts to get promoted to such posts. Moreover, there are few opportunities in Cyprus for “horizontal” promotions. These are promotions to academic positions that allow will allow individuals to grow professionally as teachers and yet remain closely connected to instruction, instead of moving up to managerial positions (OECD 2012, Darling-Hammond 2010).
47. The link between performance and career advancement may also affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession: if a system directly accounts for teacher performance in determining

¹⁶ These student-teacher ratios are based on 2012 data supplied by the MoEC to the World Bank. In an earlier publication, *The Cyprus Educational System: The Way Forward*, the MoEC stated that the 2011-2012 student-teacher ratio was 8:2.

promotions, more capable candidates are likely to be attracted to the profession (Darling-Hammond 2010). In Cyprus, opportunities for promotion appear on an annual cycle. First, the MoEC determines the needs at each school, and then it publishes a list of promotion opportunities to which teachers can apply (N. 44(I)/99). The MoEC has a committee create a shortlist of candidates for each post, and the shortlisting committee evaluates applicants based on a formula that includes three criteria: their level of education, scores from past evaluation, and years of service. After the shortlist comes from the ministry, the Education Service Commission (ESC) conducts an interview, in which it uses various criteria for evaluation (e.g. teacher's critical thinking, the way they talk, how well they understand their role, knowledge of current field, and personality).

48. But while performance can theoretically enter into the decision-making on promotions, the evidence shows that in practice, promotions depend little on teacher performance in Cyprus. Teacher performance as assessed during school inspections is one measure taken into account in deciding promotions, but the direct link between performance and promotions is not regulated in the law. In practice, there is very little variation in evaluation scores of teachers, and as a result, relative performance has very little influence on promotion decisions.
49. To summarize, this review of important factors affecting recruitment suggests that teaching has generally been an attractive career option for capable candidates in Cyprus: education qualifications and salaries are reasonably high, working conditions are good, and there are at least some opportunities for career advancement (though the way promotions are determined may not attract the most capable candidates). This summary is consistent with the direct evidence on the attractiveness of the profession: the large number of qualified (and often overqualified) candidates waiting in the list for a position that may never open up.
50. At the same time, there are clear indicators that teaching has become a less attractive career choice in recent years. One such indicator is the decline in the number of new education majors at universities. For example, the number of candidates who opted for the primary school teacher program of the Department of Education of the UoC as their *first* choice has dropped from 725 in 2007 to 134 in 2013—an 81 percent decrease. Moreover, this is not just a case of students choosing private teacher programs instead; enrollment in education departments of private universities has fallen too.¹⁷
51. What is driving the decline in popularity of teaching as a profession? From qualitative evidence, it appears that many students who would historically have chosen a teaching career are now being discouraged by the system of recruitment and by the very long waiting period that most would have to endure to join the teaching force. Moreover, the current year- and age-based queuing of candidates on the list likely discourages disproportionately those who would be the strongest candidates if queuing order were instead based on merit.

¹⁷ For example, the number of applicants applying to Departments of Education has fallen in private universities. The number of applicants to Frederick University has fallen from 95 in 2010 to 34 in 2013. While we do not know about the precise number of applicants, the number of accepted students at European University has fallen from 52 in 2010 to 13 in 2013, and the number of accepted students at the University of Nicosia is down to 23 in 2013 from 35 in 2010. These data were supplied by the Testing Service at the MoEC (<http://www.moec.gov.cy/vpexams/statistika-stoiheia.html>).

Setting expectations for teachers

52. Setting clear expectations for student and teacher performance helps guide teachers' daily work and helps align resources to ensuring 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. Two types of policies help to define expectations for teachers: (1) Clear expectations for what students should know and be able to do, and how teachers can help students reach these goals; (2) useful guidance on teachers' use of time to be able to improve instruction at the school level.
53. First, in Cyprus, expectations for what students are expected to learn and for what teachers are supposed to do to facilitate student learning are outlined in the national curriculum; however, there is no formal national evaluation system or regulatory mechanism to ensure that students are learning what is necessary to move from one grade to the next. Having standards for both students and teachers that are clear and are evaluated has been found to result in both a more effective teaching force and better learning outcomes (OECD 2011). The MoEC in Cyprus is responsible for setting education goals and controlling the national curriculum. There are officially stipulated guidelines for the minimum education, curriculum, and skills students should be attaining in every subject by every grade, but these are merely guidelines, not requirements. The tasks teachers are expected to carry out are officially stipulated in the curriculum and evaluated through both internal and external evaluation methods. Teachers have autonomy over how they develop their lesson plans and how they teach in the classroom.
54. While there was a proposal a decade ago to set national standards, it ultimately was not implemented. In 2004, having decided to set standards, the Government formed special groups consisting of academics and seasoned teachers for each subject. The groups worked for approximately one year to develop national standards. While the effort was still taking place, teacher unions and some political parties raised concerns about this endeavor, linking it with similar attempts undertaken in England and emphasizing that such standards could be used for summative reasons. To undermine the effort, these stakeholders highlighted the side effects of such efforts in UK (e.g., some cases of teachers becoming overstressed and schools having to be closed down). Therefore, although a first version of the standards does exist at the CPI, it has never been put in operation.
55. Two, expectations are set for the number of teaching hours that teachers are expected to be in the classroom, but there are no official policies regulating what teachers are expected to do in their non-teaching time. Additionally, the teaching workload (i.e., number of weekly teaching hours) decreases upon teachers' years of experience. In Cyprus, teacher's working time is defined as the number of hours spent at the school, or the overall number of working hours, which may include both teaching and non-teaching tasks. Global experience suggests that this may not be the best statutory definition of teacher's working time. Rather, counting the overall number of working hours at the school—including both teaching and non-teaching duties—may be the most conducive to learning, because it recognizes that teachers normally need to devote extra time to non-teaching tasks, such as lesson planning, the analysis of student work, and professional development, as well as administrative tasks. Teachers in Cyprus are expected to perform each of these tasks either at home or during free periods at the school, but there is no official recognition for when they are expected to do so.

56. In addition to their regular teaching workload, teachers have other teaching and non-teaching obligations. They are expected to replace colleagues who are absent (e.g., because of a sick leave). In primary education, each teacher is expected to replace his or her colleagues for 10 teaching periods within the school year, while in secondary education, a teacher is expected to do so for 7 periods. Usually, because more teaching-hour replacements are required than are available within the school year, at some point primary-school students whose teacher is absent are distributed to other teachers' classrooms. In secondary education, students are either kept occupied in various activities (e.g., studying in the school library, participating in a football game, watching a film) or are released (especially if it is at the end of the school day).
57. Sometimes teachers receive releases from their regular teaching loads to perform other duties. In secondary education, for instance, teachers are released from a specific number of teaching hours if they undertake other responsibilities. The release ranges from 1 to 5 teaching periods (per week), depending on the duties undertaken (e.g., 5 teaching periods for preparing the school timetable at the beginning of the year or leading the school choir, 3 periods for school parades or preparing the school sports teams, 2 periods for organizing each of the school laboratories, and 1 period for maintaining every 20 school computers).
58. Non-teaching tasks related to instructional improvement are officially a required part of teachers' work in Cyprus. Such tasks may include mentoring peers, collaborating on school plans, or participating in school evaluation. These activities align with activities in successful education systems such as Ontario, Finland, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. These systems devote considerable time at the school level to activities that are related to instructional improvement, such as collaboration among teachers on the analysis of instructional practice as well as mentoring and professional development (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011, Darling-Hammond 2010, Levin 2008). In addition, these systems tend to devote a smaller share of teachers' time to actual contact time with students than other systems do, 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 this type of activities, while Ontario currently devotes 30 percent (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011). In Cyprus, serving as mentors is accounted for as part of teachers' working time, but other such activities are not. Many teachers are left to prepare their lessons and perform other tasks during any free time they have at the school, or at home.
59. One issue with the allocation of teaching versus non-teaching time is that new teachers have the heaviest teaching workloads. A newly appointed primary school teacher is expected to teach for 29 40-min teaching periods. The number of these periods decreases to 27 periods after the 14th year of service and to 25 after the 20th year of service. In general secondary and vocational/technical education, a newly appointed teacher is expected to teach for 24 45-min teaching periods. The number of these periods decreases to 22 after the 8th year of service, to 20 after the 16th year, and to 18 after the 24th year of service. This seniority-based reduction in teaching hours means that the officially reported student-teacher ratio does not fully represent the effective ratio during teaching hours: the most experienced teachers are teaching 1/3 less than the newly appointed teachers, reducing the effective ratio.

Teacher appointments and transfers

60. Teacher appointments and transfers in Cyprus are highly centralized and managed by the ESC in coordination with the MoEC. Once appointed, a candidate enters a credit-system list, according

to which teachers get credits based on (a) their years of employment, (b) the types of schools in which they have served (e.g., single-teacher schools, schools with two teachers, schools with more than two teachers), and (c) the distance of the school from the teacher's home. At the end of each school year, the list is used by the ESC to determine where each candidate will be appointed the next school year. Teachers with more credits on this list have the opportunity to be appointed to schools of their preference. As a consequence, remote schools or schools with less favorable working conditions (e.g., those with more lower-SES and immigrant students and those located in disadvantaged areas) are the least preferred. In turn, this implies that the greatest majority of their staff comes from the newly appointed teachers, who, in essence, are the least qualified to serve in these schools. As recent studies have shown (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2011; Kyriakides, Creemers, Charalambous, Christoforidou, & Antoniou, 2013), this is one of the reasons for which the educational system in Cyprus does not promote equity in education (given that ultimately students who are in most need get the least out of schools). Therefore, it is not a coincidence that, as shown in international studies (e.g., TIMSS 1995, 2003, 2007; PIRLS, 2001) the variation of student outcomes among Cypriot schools is very large compared to other European countries (Campbell & Kyriakides, 2000; Kyriakides, 2005a; Martin et al., 2004; Mullis et al., 1997; Olson et al., 2008). Because the same procedure is also pursued for appointing and transferring deputy principals and principals, teachers newly promoted to those administrative positions are very likely to serve in schools enrolling students from lower SES.

Professional development

61. Professional development policy refers to policies in place to help public school teachers build their knowledge and skills on a continuing basis. Professional development policies may affect not only teachers' skills and knowledge but also their motivation to remain in the teaching profession and the profile of those who decide to stay. 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.
62. In Cyprus, there are multiple types of professional development, offered through the government's Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) and through other providers. Teachers are required to participate in teacher professional development, but only for two mandatory days at the start of the school year for primary school teachers and the start of the calendar year for secondary school teachers. Participating in professional development is not really a requisite to stay in the profession, nor is it a requisite for promotions. Specifically, in order to advance from one rank to another in the career ladder, teachers are not required to have participated in a given number of professional development seminars or workshops according to their rank, and professional development is not formally taken into account when deciding promotions or transfers.
63. Teacher professional development is provided free of charge by the CPI, which is the main institution responsible for providing teacher professional development courses. The programs offered by the CPI can be classified into three main categories:

- *Training offered to members of the school management team:* In secondary and vocational/technical education, two types of seminars are offered, one geared toward the newly appointed deputy principals and the second offered to the newly appointed principals. In general, such seminars focus on issues of school management, school evaluation, human resource management, management of change, and monitoring and evaluation of teaching. In primary education, such seminars are offered only to the newly appointed principals. In both primary and secondary/vocational-technical education, the seminars mainly aim at providing the participants with theoretical foundations on the issues considered rather than providing hands-on experience (recently, however, the CPI has tried to engage these participants in more interactive activities). It is important to note that this training takes place during the school working day (typically one day every week) and the participants are largely held responsible for only attending the seminars; in most cases, participants are not asked to complete any assignments. Although in the past several proposals have been made to ask teachers interested in becoming school managers to undergo professional development training and *then* become eligible to apply for promotion, these proposals met the resistance of the trade unions.
- *Training offered to newly appointed teachers (induction training):* This program is directed to newly appointed teachers in primary, general secondary, and technical-vocational education. Newly appointed teachers are asked to participate in seminars held at the CPI during afternoon hours (outside the school time). They are also expected to teach lessons and they receive feedback from trainers in CPI as well as their mentors. Before the economic crisis, newly appointed teachers received a stipend of 250 euros for their participation in the programs. The mentors who support the newly appointed teachers are more experienced teachers within the school; they are also asked to attend seminars offered by the CPI on how to support the novices. For the services they provide, mentors get a weekly workload release; before the economic crisis they were also granted a stipend of 200 euros.
- *Optional seminars addressed to all the teaching staff of the MoEC:* During the school year, several seminars are offered to teachers of the MoEC, covering a wide range of issues. Teachers can opt to attend as many seminars as they wish according to their interests without paying any fees. However, there is no national policy stipulating that school principals encourage their personnel to participate in seminars that are key for the functioning and the (local) needs of their own schools.

64. Opportunities for professional development are also offered by universities and teachers' unions. TPD is offered by research teams at the universities as part of research and professional development programs. These programs are approved by the MoEC and teachers/schools participate on a voluntary basis. For example, working with a network of schools on issues related to improving the quality of teaching, over the past three years the research team of educational effectiveness at the University of Cyprus has offered monthly seminars in which teachers have been asked to develop and implement action plans to improve their quality of teaching. The impact of these TPD on teaching quality and student outcomes has been closely monitored and documented in recent publications (Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2013). Teachers' unions also organize conferences on various educational matters by taking into account current educational issues, but these are not always free of charge, nor are they supported by the MoEC.

65. It is important to note that during reform implementation periods, the MoEC typically asks the CPI to offer seminars that pertain to the implementation of certain aspects of the reform. For

example, during the last year the CPI offered seminars about the reformed curricula in different subject-matters. Teachers were asked to attend two of these seminars, and an attempt was made that within each school the personnel *as a collective* attends all offered seminars.

66. In addition to the TPD offered by the CPI, during the last couple of years, a new TPD form has been implemented according to which two entire days during either the beginning of the school year (for primary education) or the beginning of the second semester (for secondary/vocational-technical education) are offered for professional development. School management teams either within a school or within a network of schools select topics of interest and solicit the expertise of academics or members of the CPI in presenting those topics. Occasionally, the topics can be presented by members of the school personnel with expertise in a particular area, given that, as mentioned above, teachers—especially those in primary education—often hold post-graduate degrees. During these two professional development days, students are not attending schools.
67. The types of teacher professional development provided by the MoEC include some activities that have been found by research to be associated with instructional improvement. Research suggests that effective teacher professional development is collaborative and provides opportunities for the in-school analysis of instructional practice, as opposed to being limited to one-time workshops or conferences (Barber & Mourshed 2007; Jackson & Bruegmann 2009; Rockoff 2008). Some education systems like Japan and Ontario devote as much as 30 per cent of school time to professional development and instructional improvement activities. Such activities include observation visits to other schools, participation in teacher or school networks as well as opportunities to engage in research, mentoring or coaching. In the case of Cyprus, the CPI offers observation visits to other schools (in the context of the mentoring program), but there are no formal teacher or school networks.
68. Teacher professional development in Cyprus is not 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 (Rockoff, 2008). Teacher professional development can be targeted to meet the needs of specific teachers. But while the CPI offers optional courses that might be related to teachers' perceived needs, there is no mechanism to ensure that these courses reflect the needs of each specific school unit.

Teaching practice and autonomy

69. The amount of control teachers have over their own teaching practice, as well as the types of incentives they are offered during the course of their teaching career, can greatly influence their performance in the classroom.

Teachers' autonomy

70. In Cyprus teachers are given substantial autonomy over their own teaching practice. This is reflected in both the national curriculum as well as in the evaluation system. The education system, particularly when it comes to teacher evaluation, is built around the assumption that effective teaching and working processes enable teachers to perform their teaching and assigned tasks effectively, resulting in valuable and fruitful student learning outcomes or school achievement (Ministry of Education, 1994; UNESCO, 1997). From a systems perspective, teachers' efforts are transformed into educational outcomes through teaching and working

processes. These assumptions echo the main principles of the working process model of teacher effectiveness (Cheng & Tsui, 1999), according to which teachers are effective if they can ensure the quality of their teaching and working processes.

71. While autonomy for well-prepared and motivated teachers can be associated with better performance, one challenge of the model implemented in Cyprus is that evaluations of these autonomous teachers do not take into account any measures of the teachers' effects on student outcomes (including learning). Although congruent with the process-product research model (e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986), this conceptualization of teacher evaluation has little to do with children's achievement; instead, it is based on whether teachers can implement the educational policy developed and introduced in the schools, often following a top-down process. Consequently, one of the main weaknesses of any policy initiative to improve standards in Cyprus lies in teachers' perceptions that promotion can be achieved by saying and doing what inspectors and other important policymakers wish to hear and see. And because evaluation results have little effect on promotion in practice, even these behaviors do not matter much for promotion. Thus, teachers' autonomy in the classroom is not matched by accountability for their contribution to student outcomes.

Motivating teachers to perform

72. 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. As noted above, other dimensions of the teaching career, such as working conditions and the degree of autonomy they have, can be strong motivating factors. Here, we consider three other teacher policies specifically associated with motivating teachers to perform: (1) linking career opportunities to teachers' performance; (2) having mechanisms to hold teachers accountable; (3) linking teacher compensation to performance.
73. First, as discussed above, promotion opportunities in Cyprus are not strongly linked to performance on the job. Several studies find that the first few years of a teacher's experience are among the best available predictors of that teacher's performance later in his or her career (Chingos & Peterson 2010; Hanushek, et al. 2005; Hanushek & Rivkin 2010). Hence, linking a teacher's early performance to promotion opportunities is one way of providing incentives to high-performing teachers. As mentioned previously, promotion opportunities in Cyprus are determined based upon a formula. Points earned during school inspections are one of the criteria used in the formula. However, school inspections do not measure only teacher performance, and they include no direct link to student outcomes affected by teacher performance (i.e., student achievement gains). Another opportunity for performance-based advancement occurs at the beginning of each teacher's career, when the teacher receives open-ended status. Each teacher undergoes a mandatory probation period of at least two years before being granted open-ended appointments, and official policy stipulates that performance on the job factors into whether or not teachers receive this type of appointment. However, as discussed below, in practice this opportunity is not used to reward better performance.
74. In the second area, accountability, there are mechanisms in place to hold teachers accountable, though in practice these mechanisms are limited. Teacher performance is evaluated every two years through school inspections, after a teacher has been in the school system for at least a

decade (10 years for primary, 12 for secondary). In addition, during their two-year probation period after first being appointed, teachers are formally evaluated at least four times by a school inspector. Between the initial probation period and the ten- to twelve-year mark when school inspections begin, however, teachers only receive feedback from their school principal (and occasionally from the school inspector) on their performance, rather than any formal evaluation. This contrasts with the experience in most other European countries, where teachers are evaluated at all stages in their careers. As another accountability mechanism beyond evaluation, there are official mechanisms to respond to cases of teacher misconduct, child abuse, and absenteeism. However, in practice, the dismissal rate is very low—less than 1 percent per annum, according to unofficial data sources-- and there are no mechanisms to dismiss teachers for poor performance.

75. Third, teacher compensation is not linked to performance. Performance reviews do not carry salary implications for teachers; nor do high-performing teachers receive any monetary bonuses for good individual or school performance. Such pecuniary rewards can be effective tools for improving teacher performance, when there is a valid and well-accepted system of performance evaluation in place.¹⁸

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality

76. A good system for monitoring and evaluating teachers' progress and performance is essential to building a strong education system. Regular monitoring and evaluation can provide incentives for teachers to perform well in their jobs, especially when good results earn the teacher recognition and rewards and when poor results in an evaluation are followed by corrective action and if necessary sanctions. In addition, the evaluation of teachers' performance allows for the identification of those who need pedagogical support. Assessing how well teachers are teaching and whether students are learning or not is essential to devise strategies for improving teaching and learning. First, identifying low-performing teachers and students is critical for education systems to be able to provide struggling classrooms with adequate support to improve. Second, teacher and student evaluation also helps identify good practices which can be shared across the system to improve school performance.
77. In Cyprus, there are no systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform teaching and policy. Almost all high-performing education systems ensure that there is enough student data to inform teaching and policy, but they do so in very different ways. Regardless of the mechanism they decide to follow, high-performing systems ensure that three main functions are fulfilled: (1) there is a system to collect relevant and complete data on student achievement regularly; (2) there is a mechanism for public authorities to have access to these data so that they can use it to inform policy; and (3) there is a mechanism to feed these data and relevant analyses back to the school level, so that teachers can use it to inform the improvement of instructional practice. By contrast, in Cyprus such mechanisms are lacking. There are no national-level data on student performance, and the only national exam required of students is the exit exam upon graduation from secondary education, which is also used as an entrance examination for public universities. These examinations mainly serve the summative purpose of evaluation and therefore, they cannot be used for informing policymakers and the schools on

¹⁸ Refer to the discussion on pay and promotion on page 11.

how well the system/school meets the wide range of curriculum goals. The lack of good student learning data has a variety of consequences for the way the education system functions; one important issue is that student achievement is not a factor used in guiding teachers or in evaluating them.

78. There are systems in place to monitor teacher performance, through internal evaluations conducted by the principal and external evaluations conducted by school inspectors. In Cyprus, the process of conducting teacher evaluation is prescribed in the law related to the duties and responsibilities of primary and secondary/vocational-technical teachers (House of Parliament, 1976). This was voted in 1976 by the House of Parliament and, since then, it largely remains unchanged. Specific regulations were developed by the MoEC in 1976 and the teachers' trade unions accepted them. These regulations, developed by the MoEC inspectors took into consideration the results of "process-product" research conducted in the 1970s in the USA (Brophy & Good, 1986), which revealed that certain teacher behaviors were consistently correlated with student achievement. This can be attributed to the fact that inspectors involved in these initiatives pursued graduate studies in USA and were informed of the results of "process-product" research. For this reason, the approach to teacher evaluation in Cyprus draws on the main findings of "process-product" research and focuses especially on the form and quality of teachers' lessons, involving giving information (structuring), asking questions (soliciting) and providing feedback (reacting).
79. Since 1976, policy makers (i.e., inspectors of the MoEC) and representatives of teachers' trade unions have identified a number of limitations of the current evaluation system and reported that neither the formative nor the summative purpose of teacher evaluation is being accomplished (Kyriakides, 2001). Stakeholders have made several proposals to reform the evaluation system, but due to disagreements, these proposals have never become policy.¹⁹ For this reason, the regulations of 1976 have essentially never been altered, and teacher evaluation has not been informed by current teacher effectiveness research.
80. Teachers are evaluated every year by the school principal, who is obliged to complete a report for each teacher of his/her school and submit it to the inspector of the school. The form of

¹⁹ For example, in 1990, the Primary-School Teachers' Union (POED) suggested that the two roles that inspectors hold—that of the evaluator and that of the consultant—be separated. The union also asked for a more transparent evaluation system and suggested that inspectors themselves undergo through professional development. In 1997, the UNESCO report emphasized the need to revamp the teacher evaluation system, while in 2003, the Secondary-School Teachers' Union (OELMEC) proposed changes in the teacher evaluation system, including the need for teacher self-evaluation and evaluation of the evaluators. In 2004, the Committee of Seven Academics formed to develop a comprehensive proposal for reforming the educational system in Cyprus also put forward several recommendations, including the need of using multiple resources for teacher evaluation (e.g., classroom observations, portfolios, student evaluations, in-school evaluation, external evaluation, etc.). In 2006, a group of academics hired by the MoEC developed what came to be known as the ATHENA Proposal, a comprehensive proposal for teacher and school work evaluation. This group suggested, among other recommendations, that (a) formative and summative evaluation be separated; (b) three separate systems for teacher evaluation be developed, including a system for monitoring and supporting novice teachers, a system for monitoring and supporting seasoned teachers, and a system for evaluating and promoting teachers; (c) pedagogical consultants be appointed in schools; (d) incentives be given to teachers so that good teachers remain in the classroom and avoid pursuing more administrative roles (as deputy principals); (e) evaluators go through a process of professional development; (f) the evaluation system be transparent to teachers (e.g., the criteria used for their evaluation be made known to them in advance), and (g) a meta-evaluation mechanism be developed to assess the functioning of the evaluation system and introduce adjustments as needed (included in the proposal were also instruments for developing such a meta-evaluation mechanism). Analogous proposals were made by the MoEC in both 2007 and in 2009, while in September 2012 a new attempt was launched to revamp the teacher evaluation system.

report is given in the law of 1976 and principals are required to provide information on four topics: teachers' professional knowledge (e.g., subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, attendance of in-service training seminars, and scientific conferences), teaching skills, classroom organization, and teachers' behavior in school and in community involvement.

81. Teachers are also evaluated by their inspector. Each inspector has the responsibility of visiting specific schools in a district and observing teachers in their classrooms while teaching; since 2009, and as a result of the pressure exercised by the trade unions, these visits are announced a couple of days in advance. At the end of each school year, inspectors are obliged to complete a report for each teacher. Every two years, as noted above, the inspectors give grades to primary-school teachers who have more than 10 years teaching experience and secondary-school teachers with more 12 years of teaching experience. These grades relate to each of the four topics reported on by the school principals. Inspectors can give up to 10 points for each topic, and they operate with formal guidelines for thresholds: below 20 overall or below 5 in any topic is unsatisfactory; 20 up to 25 is satisfactory; 26 up to 30 is good; 31 up to 35 is very good; and more than 35 is outstanding. Based on the reports and the grades awarded to teachers by inspectors, each teacher can apply for promotion. Those teachers who have the highest grades are invited to participate in interviews with the ESC. On the basis of their interview performance, the last two grades which were awarded by the inspectors, and the length of teaching experience, teachers may be promoted to deputy principals, and deputy principals to principals. Thus, the main focus of teacher evaluation is to promote those who are judged to be the most effective according to the school principals' and the inspectors' reports. Although the process is clearly specified, in practice it is highly problematic in several areas. Below, we identify those areas and also consider other broader issues related to teacher evaluation.
82. New teachers are officially evaluated by a school inspector four times during their mandatory probation period (first two years of teaching). This evaluation is similar to the school inspection that occurs for teachers with 12 or more years of service. An inspector observes a new teacher in his/her classroom and visits are announced. Inspectors also receive feedback from the school principal on the performance of each new teacher. Qualitative feedback suggests that, like regular inspections, these inspections are often very pro forma. Moreover, the inspector acts as both an evaluator and mentor to new teachers, and depending on the situation a teacher may receive useful qualitative feedback on how to improve his/her teaching or not.
83. The criteria used to evaluate teacher performance are not focused on criteria that influence student achievement. Research suggests that no single method of evaluating teacher performance is failsafe, and most high-performing systems conduct teacher evaluations using a multiplicity of mechanisms of data collection and varied criteria for assessment. In Cyprus, each teacher is evaluated annually by his or her principal and every two years by school inspectors, but since student achievement is not factored into teacher evaluations, there is no direct measure of teacher outcomes.

Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

84. Although the purposes of teacher evaluation in Cyprus are not explicitly described in any policy document or in the relevant educational law (House of Parliament, 1976), various purposes for teacher evaluations are indirectly encouraged in several documents (e.g., Kyriakides, 2005b; Kyriakides & Pashiardis, 2006; Ministry of Education, 1994). Inspectors argue that the teacher evaluation system should attempt to achieve several purposes, including: a) licensing/credentialing, b) tenure determination, c) self-assessment, and d) professional

development. These specific purposes refer to two more general functions of the evaluation system: accountability and improvement. The accountability purpose—which reflects the need of determining teachers’ competence to ensure that services delivered are effective—has typically been viewed as summative in nature (Stronge, 1997). The improvement purpose reflects the need for professional growth and development of the individual teacher; typically, it has been considered to be formative in nature (Beerens, 2000). For teacher evaluation systems to serve both purposes, there must be a rational link between them (Stronge, 1995). In Cyprus, currently that linkage does not exist, because as discussed above, the main focus of teacher evaluation is upon promotion procedures rather than on teachers’ continuing professional development.

85. This emphasis is reflected in the content of the various regulations which have been introduced by the MoEC during the last three decades. These regulations can be seen as attempts to ensure that valid data about teachers’ abilities are collected, thus guaranteeing that teachers who are promoted are the most effective. Although there have been disagreements between the MoEC and teachers’ trade unions, these disagreements have been about the validity of the effectiveness measures only. The concept of improvement through teacher evaluation has been less emphasized.

The Dominant Role of Inspectors

86. An important feature of effective teacher evaluation systems is the use of multiple data sources for documenting performance (Peterson, 2000). In Cyprus, the system involves two principal data sources: inspectors’ ratings of teaching performance based on classroom observations; and the school principals’ annual reports on teachers’ performance and contribution to the school life. There are significant problems with the operation of this system, the most important of which are identified below:

- Inspectors do not have a common and public framework for observation and grading, and there is no training for conducting classroom observations, so allegations of bias or invalidity are widespread (Kyriakides & Campbell, 2003);
- Individual teacher evaluation instruments stress teacher personality characteristics, which have been shown by research to not be clearly associated with teacher effectiveness (Borich, 1992; Brophy & Good, 1986);
- The number and length of observations which inspectors conduct (i.e. less than five observations for 40 minutes each during a school year) are inadequate for making generalizations (Brennan, 1992); in fact, no research has ever been undertaken to determine how many observations need to be conducted to obtain reliable estimates of the quality of teachers’ work;
- School principals’ reports do not discriminate between teachers; more critically, frequently principals draw upon a standard set of descriptors for these reports for all teachers (Kyriakides, 2001);
- Despite the threshold guidelines, the grades awarded by inspectors have a very limited range, with all teachers being awarded above 32 points out of 40 and the great majority of teachers be given a grade ranging from 35-37 (Kyriakides & Campbell, 2003). Interestingly, no teacher has been evaluated as unsatisfactory since 1976;
- No account is taken of student outcomes;
- No account is taken of parents’ or other stakeholders’ satisfaction (Kyriakides, Demetriou, & Charalambous, 2006);

- The emphasis on performance measurement has driven out any serious commitment to use the system for professional development and improvement (Kyriakides, 1999); and
- The focus on the individual teacher has led to an evaluation de-contextualized from the school effect, because teacher effectiveness has been de-coupled from school effectiveness.

87. Above all, the collection and control of teacher effectiveness data are located exclusively in the inspectorate, which cannot easily be held accountable for how the judgments about teacher performance are made. In contrast to other evaluation systems (e.g., the British one), there is no published methodology for school inspection and teacher evaluation.

School leadership

88. School leadership policies refer to policies that affect school principals. Teacher policies are important determinants of the quality of teaching. However, for both political and economic reasons, it is often difficult to introduce reforms that directly affect teacher quality. An approach is to improve the quality of teaching through the school management team. The quality of school policy for improving teaching is an important predictor of student learning outcomes. Capable head teachers 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 (Boyd et al., 2009; Ingersoll, 2001a, 2001b; Mulford 2003).

89. In Cyprus, there are established programs to support the development of principals' leadership skills, specifically through an induction program offered to new principals. Existing research from other education systems suggests principals can develop leadership skills 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).

90. To become a school principal in Cyprus, an applicant in primary education has to have served in the position of Deputy Head for at least three years and have a minimum of 13 years of education experience (five of which have to have been served at a school). Principals are appointed through promotion opportunities. Even though teachers can be appointed to the post of deputy principal, no clear job description for this post exists.²⁰ there is also a "Deputy Principal A" post; the latter is considered the leader among the deputy principals of the school. One "Deputy Principal A" is appointed to each lower secondary school (e.g., Gymnasium), and three "Deputy Principals A" are appointed to upper secondary school (Lyceum), regardless of the school size.

²⁰As a result, it is upon the school principal's discretion to allocate responsibilities to the deputy principals in his/her school and negotiate these responsibilities with them. In secondary and technical/vocational education, in addition to the deputy principal post The number of the deputy principals in secondary and vocational/technical education is determined based on the number of students within each school. A provision is also taken into consideration that, to the extent possible, enough deputy principals are appointed to each school to cover all the different subject matters (whereas in primary education, the number of deputies is determined by the number of classes).

91. There is an induction training program available for newly appointed principals. This training takes place during a principal's first year of service and consists of six training modules covering issues such as the functioning of the school unit, educational leadership, monitoring and improving a school unit (including issues of school self-evaluation), school organization, and school reforms. The program lasts for 19 daily meetings (typically one every week or every other week) during which newly appointed principals gather at the CPI in either Nicosia or Limassol and attend lectures or workshops. Because the program covers multiple issues, newly appointed principals are not given the opportunity to elaborate on particular issues, let alone to discuss into more depth issues that are more pertinent to the needs of their own school unit.
92. There are no clear criteria for evaluation of principals. Unlike evaluation of teachers, which is based on criteria concerned with teachers' behavior in the classroom, the working process model is not used to identify criteria for principals' evaluation. As a consequence, school evaluation is regarded as tantamount to evaluation of principals. Hence, in primary education, a school evaluation is conducted every three years by a group of inspectors, including the inspector assigned to school. During their daily visits to the school, this group of school inspectors observes selected teachers offering lessons, monitors the functioning of the school, and examines the school's paperwork. Based on this information, the group assigns a grade to the principal that can be used for promotion purposes (to the post of inspector). Formative feedback may also be provided. In secondary education, the school evaluation takes place only when a principal applies for promotion to the post of inspector. Like what happens with teachers', principals' performance is not linked to compensation. However, it is important to note that there is little variance in the grades assigned to principals, be it in primary or secondary education.
93. Principals in Cyprus are expected to monitor teacher performance and to provide support and guidance to teachers for the improvement of instructional practice. Once education systems get talented candidates to become principals, they need to provide time for the principals 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).
94. Many of the tasks that are expected from principals in Cyprus are aligned with instructional leadership tasks that research suggests are associated with high student performance. In Cyprus, principals are expected to advise teachers and review their performance. However, because of the multiple duties assigned to school principals, they do not have sufficient time to exercise this instructional leadership role effectively (especially in large urban schools). Principals are also responsible for conducting an annual evaluation of each teacher and for providing feedback on teachers to school inspectors. Principals not only assess teachers' performance, they also are responsible for providing support to teachers throughout the year. For instance, one way in which principals support teachers is through staff meetings. Primary schools hold weekly 40-minute staff meetings during which the school personnel discuss issues related to the functioning of the school, are informed about and discuss circulars sent from the Department of Primary Education of the MoEC (of which there are often quite a few), and occasionally (depending on the personnel's expertise) also discuss pedagogical issues. Many

primary school principals also teach, with the number of teaching hours per week depending on the school size. In secondary and vocational/technical education, the school personnel meet every month to discuss issues related to the functioning of the school; monthly meetings are also held to discuss pedagogical issues, while the school management team meets every week for coordination.

95. In addition, principals are responsible for the communication between the MoEC and the school, the cooperation between parents and the school, the functioning of the school unit, and the communication with the local school board. A large proportion of the principal's time is often dedicated to paperwork that pertains to the communication between the school and the MoEC, which can be administratively burdensome and can detract from their ability to perform other school- and teacher-related tasks.
96. The schools have a very limited budget, and the school principal is held accountable for how this money is spent. Consequently, there is no money available for organizing professional development seminars or for recruiting experts for supporting the schools in their functioning. In fact, there is no money for even organizing the two-day professional development seminars discussed above; thus, the seminars are offered for free from personnel within or outside the school. Unlike what happens in Western European countries, schools are not allowed to be sponsored by any agency unless the MoEC is informed and approval is obtained—which happens very rarely. As a consequence, the school resources being allocated by the MoEC are solely based on the number of students within each school.
97. It is important to note that no national policy exists on promoting school-parents partnership. The only exception is that each school has a Parents' Association, which meets at the beginning of the school year to elect its representatives. The representatives hold monthly meetings during which decisions are made on how the association can financially support the functioning of the school in terms of resources/equipment and extra-curriculum activities. The school principal is present for part of those meetings and informs the parents' representatives about the functioning of the school, problems that might arise, and financial needs. During the last couple of years, because of the financial crisis, the parents' associations work closely with the school principals to identify and support students who are in need of financial aid.

Summary of Current Teacher Policies

98. The analysis of teacher policies presented above highlights what we know about teacher policies in Cyprus, assessed in light of research on what types of policies are associated with improving student outcomes in leading systems. Below we provide a summary of the above analysis, followed by a set of policy options to consider for strengthening teacher policies.
99. Teacher policy in Cyprus has several strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. In particular, this review highlights two overarching areas of strength in existing teacher policy and two cross-cutting policy themes that present opportunities for reform. In Cyprus, teacher policy benefits from two particular strengths. First, there is high demand for education in society, and

the population holds education in high esteem.²¹ Second, the country has a highly qualified teaching force. Cyprus benefits from the fact that top university students have often sought out jobs in the teaching profession, which is not always the case in other countries across Europe and elsewhere, and also that many teachers are highly educated themselves, with MAs and PhDs. These two elements provide a framework for building upon existing teacher policy to produce better student achievement across the island.

100. Two cross-cutting themes emerge across teacher policies that may pose particular challenges to ensuring that the teaching force is the best it can be. One, current teacher policies privilege seniority: they are designed to provide more benefits to teachers as those teachers progress through their careers. This seniority preference appears across policy areas—in the course loads required of teachers, the transfer rules, promotion decisions, and even in the appointment system, which gives priority to the most “senior” candidates (those who have been on the waiting list longest). Teacher seniority is virtually the only characteristic used to assess and distinguish teachers from one another. On the one hand, this produces a very transparent—and thus in some sense “fair”—system for teachers. On the other hand, research on successful education systems and determinants of student achievement indicate that this system may not be most beneficial to students in Cyprus, nor to many teachers and teacher candidates.

101. A second cross-cutting theme is that, across education policy areas in Cyprus, there is little emphasis on learning outcomes of students. This is an area to consider strengthening, both in terms of setting standards for students as well as assessing student learning. Doing so can also better inform policymakers responsible for developing teacher policy. Virtually all high-performing education systems ensure that there is enough student data to inform teaching and policy. They do so in very different ways, but regardless of the mechanism they decide to follow, high-performing systems ensure that three main functions are fulfilled: (1) there is a system to collect relevant and complete data on student achievement regularly; (2) there is a mechanism for public authorities to have access to these data so that they can use it to inform policy; and (3) there is a mechanism to feed these data and relevant analyses back to the school level, so that teachers can use it to inform the improvement of instructional practice. Given that in Cyprus, no metrics are used to assess students across classes, or as they pass from one grade to the next, it is very difficult to assess how well existing teacher policies facilitate student learning, and how they may better do so.

102. Taking these strengths and weaknesses into account, the below table and following section of this paper present strengths and weaknesses in different teacher policy areas and provide a set of recommendations for reforming the current system.

²¹ This can be attributed to the fact that in the 1960s, when the Republic of Cyprus was established, a high-school graduate could be appointed as an officer in the public sector, thus, moving from a lower social stratum to an upper one (Karagiorges, 1986; Persianis, 1978). Although this situation is no longer true, Cypriot people still look upon graduates from Universities: in fact, the distinction between a holder of a university degree and someone who just graduated from secondary education is tantamount to that between rich and poor (Kyriakides, 1999). As a consequence, Cypriot parents invest a lot of money on ensuring that their children receive the best education, even if that means paying money for afternoon private lessons. A recent survey in Europe has shown that Cyprus is the second country among the European countries in investing money on private tutoring. Moreover, Cyprus is among the top countries in terms of the percentage of students studying in tertiary education.

Opportunities for Strengthening Teacher Policy

Building on the diagnosis of the current teacher policy framework presented in the previous section, this section offers policy options in each of the six teacher policy areas. The concluding subsection suggests which of these might be priority areas for reform. For a detailed listing of the strengths and weaknesses in each area, linked with the policy options that correspond to them, please see Annex Table 1.

Initial teacher education

Current teacher initial education systems at the University of Cyprus and at the private universities in Cyprus are designed to ensure good quality teachers. Beginning teachers have opportunities to develop practical teaching skills before they are expected to teach without guidance, but this experience is not nationally regulated.

- Establish national requirements for classroom teaching practice before teachers obtain certification. Most OECD and higher-performing systems require their teacher entrants to have a considerable amount of classroom experience (at least 7 months, and often more) before becoming independent teachers (Darling-Hammond 2010, Ingersoll 2007).
- Restart the mentor program, and ensure that teachers have necessary time to act as mentors and to participate as mentees. Consider conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness of the mentoring program in the past.

Employment rules

Employment rules include three types of teacher policy: teacher selection and recruitment; setting expectations for teachers; and teacher appointments, transfers and workload.

Teacher selection and recruitment: attracting the best into teaching

Requirements to enter the profession, teacher pay, working conditions, and career advancement opportunities may be appealing for talented candidates, but the current system of recruitment—the long and unrealistic waiting list, as well as the process of teacher placement—is discouraging. There are no criteria to ensure the best and brightest are appointed as new teachers. At present appointment is merely determined by when teacher obtained his/her degree and how long he/she has been on the list. However, the MoEC has recently announced a proposal of a plan to reform the selection process that puts more weight on qualifications at the expense of seniority. According to the proposal, the new system would be phased in gradually, from 2015 to 2020. In line with what has been proposed, we recommend the following:

- Reform the recruitment system—to one that takes objective measures of merit into account and phases out the current procedure of listing the earliest graduates first, as proposed by the government.
- Consider a system that provides better promotion and pay opportunities to teachers who perform well in the classroom (provided a solid system of teacher evaluation can be established).
- Ensure that head teachers have more autonomy over the working conditions of their school, so that they do not have to address the school board for minor improvements and repairs to schools: this authority should allow head teachers to improve working conditions for the teaching staff and promote student learning

- Set caps on the number of teachers that can be on secondment and limit the number of years a teacher can serve in their position when on secondment. The purpose of secondment should be to provide an attractive career advancement opportunity to a select number of high-performing teachers. Ensure that positions created for teachers on secondment are appropriate to the training and skill levels of teachers.
- Place greater effective weight on teacher performance, and less weight on seniority, in decisions on teacher promotion (both vertical and horizontal) and career advancement. This reform will depend on changing teacher evaluation, so that there is greater variation in teacher ratings and more effective teachers can be distinguished from their less effective colleagues. Virtually all education systems offer teachers the possibility of being promoted to principal positions at some point in their careers. In addition to these “vertical” promotions, case study research on OECD countries shows that most of these 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).

Setting expectations for teachers

Clear expectations for what teachers are expected to teach--outlined in the national curriculum, but there are no national standard for what students must know to pass from grade to grade. The non-teaching tasks related to instructional improvement (e.g., writing lesson plans) are officially a required part of teachers’ work in Cyprus, but in some cases there is no specified time allotted for when teachers are to complete these tasks. Moreover, the number of expected teaching periods decreases as teacher’s gain more seniority.

- Reconsider the national student education standards proposed in 2004. Develop and operationalize a set of national standards for what students must be required to know to pass from one grade to the next.
- Develop a statutory definition of teacher's working time that includes time for non-teaching tasks and instructional improvement within a teacher's work day. Successful education systems (e.g. Ontario, Finland, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore) devote considerable time at the school level to activities that are related to instructional improvement, such as collaboration among teachers on the analysis of instructional practice as well as mentoring and professional development (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011, Darling-Hammond 2010, Levin 2008). In addition, these systems tend to devote a smaller share of teachers’ time to actual contact time with students than other systems do, 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 this type of activities, while Ontario currently devotes 30 percent (Darling Hammond & Rothman 2011).
- New teachers typically require more time for preparing lessons, and more senior teachers require time for professional development, mentoring and refreshing their knowledge. Reconsider the system that gives lighter course loads as a benefit to senior teachers. This may not be most beneficial to students.

Teacher appointments, transfers, and workload

The point system associated with teacher appointments and transfers is transparent, but the system is based on seniority, which may be least beneficial to students, particularly in disadvantaged or more remote areas which are considered less desirable and are only be serviced by newly appointed teachers.

- Provide incentives for teachers to work in disadvantaged or more remote locations. Evaluate the system to ensure more equity in the types of teachers appointed across different types of school systems.

Professional development

There are multiple kinds of professional development, including two mandatory days of professional development, and all professional development activities offered by the MoEC and CPI are provided free of charge. The CPI recognizes the need for and strives to offer continuous types of professional development, but most activities take the form of one-time trainings with very little follow up for evaluation. At present, professional development does not directly influence evaluations of teacher performance, and professional development activities are not formally assigned based on perceived needs of teachers.

- Provide incentives for teachers to seek professional developments, beyond those of merely self-improvement. Reward teachers for seeking out TFD opportunities.
- Inspectors may recommend TPD activities to teachers, but there is currently no formal mechanism for assigning TPD to teachers who need it. Consider if such a policy may be helpful in Cyprus. Providing additional professional development to struggling teachers can offer them the tools they need to improve, and for this it is necessary to have a mechanism to identify those teachers who may need support. In addition, research finds that mentors can impact teacher effectiveness (although their effect varies with mentor experience and quality of the program (Rockoff 2008), so assigning tutors, supervisors or coaches to low-performing teachers may offer guidance to struggling teachers.
- Ensure that mandatory TPD does not consist of merely one-time sessions with no follow up activities, but that TPD is continuous. Two days of TPD cannot provide a continuous benefit for teachers throughout an academic year. There is a growing body of evidence that finds that collaborative types of professional development, such as teacher networks or mentoring programs, can improve teacher performance, (Barber & Mourshed 2007; Jackson & Bruegmann 2009; Rockoff 2008). High-performing countries such as Japan, with its lesson-study system, are well known for providing opportunities for teacher collaboration and research on instructional methods at the school level, with a strong focus on best-practice sharing.
- Ensure that there is follow up to TPD opportunities offered by the MoEC and CPI.
- Evaluate TPD programs. Survey teachers on their usefulness. Conduct experiments to see if TPD provided results in better student learning outcomes.

Teaching practice and autonomy

In Cyprus, teachers are given substantial autonomy over their own workload, but there is no way of knowing if the current level of autonomy is accurate for producing the best results in student outcomes since student outcomes are not assessed. There are mechanisms in place for holding teachers accountable through the mandatory probation period and regular teacher evaluations, but in practice, the probation period is not fully utilized, and evaluations of teachers during this period are treated as a

pro forma exercise. Additionally, teachers are not formally evaluated during the first 10-12 years of their teaching career.

- There is a need for a systematic evaluation of teacher performance that takes into account its effects on student learning, to ensure the teachers can use their autonomy effectively to benefit students.
- Put the mandatory probation period to better use to identify strengths and weaknesses of new teachers. This would allow the ministry to provide new teachers with genuine feedback as they progress in their careers, and also, if necessary, to deny tenure to the lowest-achieving among them (Gordon, Kane, and Staiger 2006).
- Evaluate teachers earlier in their career. Research suggests that starting teachers may need more guidance than senior teachers, but all teachers need to be evaluated (Darling-Hammond & Wentworth 2010).

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality

There are systems in place to monitor teacher performance through internal evaluations conducted by the principal and external evaluations conducted by school inspectors. However, evaluations are purely summative; there are no formative evaluations of teachers. In addition, there are no systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform teaching and policy. The system is structured such that inspectors formally wield substantial power in determining the evaluation scores of teachers, and other kinds of evaluation are not used to provide any check on the inspector's evaluation. In practice, however, because the inspection ratings of teachers of typical promotion age do not vary much—ranging between 35 and 37 on a 40-point scale—seniority matters much more as a determinant of promotion than performance does. Moreover, teachers are not formally evaluated until they've been teaching for at least 10 years, reducing the ability of teachers to learn about and improve their performance and reducing the ability of administrators to gauge strengths and weaknesses of the less experienced teachers. Finally, the purpose of evaluations varies across different participants (such as teachers and inspectors).

- In accordance with setting standards for students, set metrics--exams or other criteria--by which students can be evaluated.
- Ensure that teacher evaluation is multi-faceted and not just based on assessments by inspectors and school principals. Evaluate teachers earlier in their career. There is a need for a mixture of formative and summative teacher evaluations (Rockoff & Speroni 2010; Rockoff, et al. 2010).

School leadership

School principals often enter their positions with a great deal of experience given the stringent requirements to become a school principal; however, qualifications are devised such that only very senior teachers can acquire the position. There are no opportunities for younger talented individuals to compete for the position of school principal. There are established programs to support the development of principals' leadership skills, specifically through an induction program offered to new

principals. The program meets 19 times during a principal's first year of service, but the 19 sessions are not well coordinated to provide "continuous" training, meaning that the sessions follow a coordinated order and build on one another in a meaningful way. Principals are expected to monitor teacher performance and to provide support and guidance to teachers for the improvement of instructional practice, but they also have a heavy administrative workload which may detract from their abilities to facilitate student learning and to guide teachers. Additionally, principals lack incentives: they are not rewarded—with monetary or other types of rewards—based on the performance of their schools. Principals also lack any formal autonomy over the budget of their school. School budgets are largely controlled by school boards, and principals must usually ask the school board for approval, even for small repairs and obtaining supplies for their school.

- Consider a system for hiring principals that provides opportunities for talented individuals who may not have as many years of experience in the teaching force.
- Ensure that the modules in the induction program are connected in such a way that provides continuous training and professional development to new principals. Survey principals to better understand how they have benefited from the program and what they suggest as ways of improving it.
- Survey principals and assess their roles and responsibilities to consider ways that may decrease their administrative burden.
- Consider a system that links a principal's performance to his/her compensation (if a solid system of principal evaluation can be established).
- Provide principals with more autonomy over the budget for their schools, as well as the training necessary to allow them to assume these new responsibilities.

Setting priorities

In this report, we have offered policy options in each of the six areas. Like every system, Cyprus' teacher policy system faces many challenges, and there are numerous areas that could be improved. Given the constraints on budget and policy attention, however, it will clearly be necessary to set priorities. In the view of the team, and in light of international experience, there are three areas in which reform is most sorely needed: teacher selection and recruitment; monitoring and evaluation of teachers; and teacher professional development. To summarize the discussion above, the most important policy options include:

- *Selection and recruitment:* Reform the recruitment system, as proposed by the government, to one that takes objective measures of merit into account. Phase out the current policy of listing the earliest graduates first for appointments, while providing a reasonable transition period to allow current contract teachers an opportunity for appointment during the transition.
- *Evaluation:* Ensure that teacher evaluation is multi-faceted and not just based on assessments by inspectors and school principals, and that it includes both formative and summative components. Evaluate teachers earlier in their career, not just after 10 years, and make better use of the probation period to strengthen the teaching force. Make better use of teacher

evaluations in promotion decisions. Over the longer run, allow student learning to influence evaluations, after strengthening the system of student assessment.

- *Professional development:* Ensure that mandatory TPD does not consist only of one-time sessions with no follow-up, but instead is more continuous and linked to teachers' needs. Evaluate TPD programs to assess how they affect teaching and student learning.

In this draft report, much of our discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of various teacher policies has been couched in terms of what policies are most efficient and effective in raising student learning. But fairness considerations also underlie some of the key policy options presented here. For example, the government's proposed appointments reform could increase fairness—to teacher candidates, to their future colleagues, and to the students that will be entrusted to their care—by allowing the system to appoint first those candidates who are most likely to be effective teachers. Fairness to students and to inexperienced teachers also suggests that teachers should be evaluated systematically in their first ten years in the profession, from both a formative and a summative standpoint. Such evaluation could affirm the contributions of effective teachers and identify those who need support to teach more effectively, benefitting those teachers, their colleagues, and their students. Fairness considerations would suggest using the probation period more effectively, to reinforce good practices and to assist—and occasionally even divert to other career paths—those who do not teach effectively. Finally, fairness to school communities would suggest incorporating more effective measures of performance into promotion decisions, rather than letting seniority have so much influence. In short, Cyprus now has an opportunity to improve teacher policies in a way that will promote both efficiency and fairness at the same time.

Annex Table 1. Cyprus Teacher Policies: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Options

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
Initial Teacher Education			
	Teacher initial education policies in Cyprus are designed to provide prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in the classroom.	No major weakness.	n/a
	The program of studies in Cyprus universities stipulates that prospective teachers participate in a fieldwork experience.	No national standards of teaching have been set to stipulate the key teaching skills that student teachers are expected to demonstrate during their fieldwork.	Set national requirements for teaching skills, especially a requirement for hours of practical professional classroom experience a student teacher needs to demonstrate to obtain a teaching certificate. National requirements could also be implemented for the courses that prospective teachers are expected to take (see movement of defining national standards of teaching in different countries)
	There is an established mentor program for new teachers.	The mentor program was suspended after the financial crisis. ²²	Evaluate the mentor program. Survey teachers who have benefited from mentor programs and former mentors to find out how to improve the program. Build on lessons and reinstate an improved mentor program.
Employment Rules			
Teacher selection and recruitment: Attracting the best teacher candidates	The teaching profession has been a highly regarded profession with attractive pay, career opportunities and working conditions.	There is a long waiting list to enter the profession.	Reform the recruitment system along the lines proposed by the government, to include more objective measures of merit (most notably, exam scores) and move away from the list prioritizing year of graduation.

²²We are currently working to clarify this with the MoEC.

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
		Teaching profession is losing its popularity--fewer applicants to Departments of Education at the university (81.5 percent decline in applicants at UoC over the last 5 years).	As proposed by the government, revise the system to allow new entrants an opportunity to compete on a merit basis for new slots. As in the government's proposal, provide a transition period of 5 years to help ensure those who have been acting as contract teachers have the opportunity to come up for appointment before enacting the new system.
		No criteria to ensure the best and brightest are appointed as new teachers--appointment is merely determined by when teacher obtained their degree and how long they've been on the list.	As recommended above, reform the recruitment system along the lines proposed by the government, to include more objective measures of merit (most notably, exam scores) and move away from the list prioritizing year of graduation.
	Teacher in Cyprus earn the same as public servants on the pay scale and salaries are considered attractive.	Teacher pay does not vary according to teacher performance, but only by seniority.	Consider a system that provides better promotion and pay opportunities to teachers who perform well in the classroom (provided a solid system of teacher evaluation can be established).
	System of promotion is generally regarded as "fair" and transparent.	Promotion opportunities in Cyprus are not directly linked to teacher performance.	
	Generally desirable working conditions.	Little school-level discretion over working conditions--Head teachers and teachers rely on school boards to ensure proper working conditions.	Ensure that head teachers have more autonomy over the working conditions of their school, so that they do not have to address the school board for minor improvements and repairs to schools. Head teachers' teaching time should be held to a reasonable level (e.g., a maximum of 6 hours per week), so that they have time to perform all of their other duties.

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
	There are opportunities for both vertical and horizontal promotions.	Teachers on secondment to the ministry tend to remain in these positions for a very long time, lessening opportunities for other teachers and increasing the overall size of staff at the MoEC.	Set caps on the number of teachers that can be on secondment. Limit the number of years a teacher can serve in their position when on secondment. The purpose of secondment should be to provide an attractive career advancement opportunity to a select number of high-performing teachers, rather than merely an administrative job within the ministry. Ensure that positions created for teachers on secondment are appropriate given the training and skill levels of teachers.
Setting expectations for teachers	Clear expectations for what teachers are expected to teach--outlined in the national curriculum.	No national standards in operation for what students must know to pass from one grade to the next.	Reconsider national student education standard proposed in 2004. Develop and operationalize a set of national standards for what students must be required to know to pass from one grade to the next.
	Non-teaching tasks related to instructional improvement are officially a required part of teachers' work in Cyprus.	Expectations are set for the number of teaching hours, teachers are expected to be in the classroom, but there are no official policies regulating what teachers are expected to do in their non-teaching time. The number of expected teaching periods decreases as teacher's gain more seniority.	Develop a statutory definition of teacher's working time that includes time for non-teaching tasks and instructional improvement within a teacher's work day. This contradicts existing research and global best practice. New teachers typically require more time for preparing lessons, and more senior teachers require time for professional development, mentoring and refreshing their knowledge. Reconsider the system that gives lighter course loads as a benefit to senior teachers. This may not be most beneficial to students.

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
Teacher appointments and transfers	Point system associated with teacher appointments and transfers is transparent.	The point system is based on seniority, which may be least beneficial to students, particularly in disadvantaged or more remote areas which are considered less desirable and are only be serviced by newly appointed teachers.	Carry out evaluation to assess the effects of the current deployment system on equity of teacher distribution and outcomes. Depending on the results of the evaluation, consider providing greater incentives for teachers to work in disadvantaged or more remote locations.
Professional Development			
	In Cyprus there are multiple kinds of professional development.	Professional development does not directly influence evaluations of teacher performance.	Provide incentives (beyond simply a desire for self-improvement)for teachers to seek professional development. Reward teachers for seeking out TPD opportunities.
		Teacher professional development in Cyprus is not formally assigned based on perceived needs.	Inspectors may recommend TPD activities to teachers, but there is currently no formal mechanism for assigning TPD to teachers who need it. Consider if such a policy may be helpful in Cyprus, once the ministry has put in place an evaluation system that more effectively differentiates among teachers and identifies their strengths and weaknesses.
	There is mandatory professional development.	Mandatory professional development is not continuous.	Ensure that mandatory TPD does not consist of merely one-time sessions with no follow up activities, but that TPD is continuous. Two days of TPD cannot provide a continuous benefit for teachers throughout an academic year.
	Government professional development programs are provided free of charge.		Ensure that there is follow up to TPD opportunities offered by the MoEC and CPI.

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
	TPD includes activities that have been found by research to be associated with instructional improvement.		Evaluate TPD programs rigorously (e.g., through experimental design) to gauge what types of PD are most effective in improving teacher practices and student learning. Survey teachers on their usefulness.
Teaching Practice and Autonomy			
Teachers' Autonomy	In Cyprus teachers are given substantial autonomy over their own teaching practice.	There is no way of knowing if the current level of autonomy is accurate for producing the best results in student outcomes since student outcomes are not assessed.	There is a need for a systematic evaluation of teacher performance across classes year-on-year to better understand how teacher autonomy influences student results.
Motivating teachers to perform	Teacher promotion opportunities are perceived as "fair" and transparent.	There are no incentives--monetary and others--for recognizing a high-performing teacher	Addressed above: Consider a system that provides better promotion and pay opportunities to teachers who perform well in the classroom (provided a solid system of teacher evaluation can be established).
	There is a mandatory probation period for newly appointed teachers.	The probation period is not fully utilized, and evaluations of teachers during this period are treated as a pro forma exercise. Only a tiny percentage of teachers on probation are judged to be ineffective and eventually dismissed.	Put the mandatory probation period to better use to identify strengths and weaknesses of new teachers and to provide them with genuine feedback as they progress in their careers. ²³ When necessary, use the probation to help ineffective teachers transition to a different career.

²³When we use the term mentor program, we refer to the in-service training program offered to the newly appointed teachers. In this program, newly appointed teachers received support from mentors on how to improve their teaching practice. At the same time, tutors from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute provide INSET courses to them on effective teaching. This program was offered (till last year) to both primary and secondary newly appointed teachers. Due to the financial crisis, it is now not possible to run this program. However, to keep the program alive, CPI searched for teachers who would be willing to act as mentors on a volunteer basis (with no benefits); unfortunately, the CPI was not successful in finding enough mentors. The second program which used to have mentors was the pre-service program (proypiresiaki) offered by the University of Cyprus to prospective secondary school teachers. The program was offered for the last time two years ago. In fact, the program is not really needed right now, given that no new teachers are appointed to secondary schools.

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
	There are mechanisms to hold teachers accountable--evaluations and guideline for teacher conduct.	In practice, the teacher dismissal rate is extremely low and teachers are not formally evaluated during the first 10-12 years of their teaching practice.	Evaluate teachers earlier in their career. Research suggests that starting teachers may need more guidance than senior teachers, but all teachers need to be evaluated.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching Quality

		There are no systems in place to assess student learning in order to inform teaching and policy.	In accordance with setting standards for students, set metrics--exams or other criteria--by which students can be evaluated. ²⁴
	There are systems in place to monitor teacher performance, through internal evaluations conducted by the principal and external evaluations conducted by school inspectors.	On paper, inspectors play a dominant role in the evaluation system (even if in practice seniority matters most), and other measures of performance are not taken into account.	Ensure that teacher evaluation is multi-faceted and not just based on assessments by inspectors and school principals. Evaluate teachers earlier in their career. There is a need for a mixture of formative and summative teacher evaluations, perhaps by assigning these roles to different actors, as proposed by the government.
		Teachers are not evaluated until they've been teaching for at least 10 years.	
		Inspection visits are always announced ahead of time, even for teachers on probation. As a result, inspectors do not necessarily observe typical teaching practice, although they may get a good sense of what teachers can achieve with sufficient preparation.	
		Inspection ratings lack variation, ranging between 35-37 for most teachers.	
		Overall purpose of evaluations varies across different participants (teachers, inspectors, etc.).	

School Leadership

²⁴Add details after linking with recommendations from functional review.

Policy Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Policy options
	Stringent qualifications to become a principal	These are devised such that only very senior teachers can acquire the position--no opportunities for younger talent.	Consider a system for hiring principals that provides opportunities for talented individuals who may not have as many years of experience in the teaching force. As advocated above, achieve this by place greater weight on evaluations and less weight on seniority in promotion decisions.
	There are established programs to support the development of principals' leadership skills, specifically through an induction program offered to new principals.	The program meets 19 times during a principal's first year of service, but the 19 sessions are not well coordinated to provide "continuous" training.	Ensure that the modules in the induction program are connected in such a way that provides continuous training and professional development to new principals. Survey principals to better understand how they have benefited from the program and what they suggest as ways of improving it.
	Principals are expected to monitor teacher performance and to provide support and guidance to teachers for the improvement of instructional practice	Heavy administrative duties may detract from their ability to focus on teachers and student needs.	Survey principals and assess their roles and responsibilities to consider ways that may decrease their administrative burden.
		Principal performance is not linked to compensation.	Consider a system that links a principal's performance to his/her compensation (if a solid system of principal evaluation can be established).
		Principals lack autonomy over the budget for their school.	Provide principals with more autonomy over the budget for their schools.

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