OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education

GEORGIA

Richard Ruochen Li, Hannah Kitchen, Bert George, Mary Richardson and Elizabeth Fordham

In collaboration with unicef

OECD

OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Georgia

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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

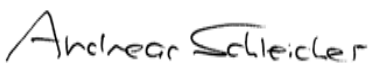
Georgia has made remarkable progress in expanding access to education and improving outcomes. However, the majority of children in Georgia still leave school without having acquired the basic competencies they need to compete in the 21st century economy. Furthermore, students from rural areas, national minority backgrounds and socio-economically disadvantaged contexts are at greater risk of being left behind compared to their peers. Therefore, education in Georgia needs strategic and targeted reforms so that all children in Georgia can learn and thrive.

This review was undertaken in partnership by the OECD and UNICEF at the request of, and in close collaboration with, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia.

Focused on the country's educational assessment and evaluation systems, this review offers suggestions that leverage several of the promising policies that have been enacted by the Government. At the centre of these proposals is orienting all evaluation and assessment practices to focus on student learning. This means that any recommendations with respect to how students are assessed, teachers are appraised, schools are evaluated or the system is evaluated are done with the ultimate aim of helping students learn.

The review builds on the collaboration between the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills with UNICEF's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and UNICEF's Country Office in Georgia. It has benefited from our organisations' complementary experience and expertise to provide an analysis that is grounded in the context of evaluation and assessment in Georgia's education system while drawing on international research and best practice from around the world.

Above all though, we hope that this review will be a useful reference for Georgia as it reforms its educational evaluation and assessment systems. This review discusses many of the policy options that the country is considering, from developing a new examinations system to introducing comprehensive school evaluations. The review also provides guidance that can be used to inform decision-making. We hope that the review's recommendations contribute to the further development of an education system that provides excellence for all.



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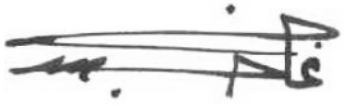

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The OECD review team was led by Elizabeth Fordham (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinated by Richard Ruochen Li (OECD Secretariat) and included Bert George (Ghent University), Mary Richardson (University College London) and Hannah Kitchen (OECD Secretariat). Within the OECD Secretariat we would also like to thank Manuela Fitzpatrick, Charlotte

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AMP	Assessment Mentoring Program
CAT	Computer adaptive testing
EdStats	Education Information Portal
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ERC	Education Resource Centre
ESCS	PISA index of economic, social and cultural status
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEL	Georgian lari
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
G-PriEd	Georgia Primary Education Project
HDI	Human Development Index
IEA	International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ITE	Initial teacher preparation
MAP	Measure of Academic Progress
MBT	Mentoring Beginning Teachers
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
NAEC	National Assessment and Examinations Centre
NCEQE	National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NRO	Netherlands Initiative for Education Research
NWO	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	OECD Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PST	Professional Support Teams
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SEN	Special Education Needs
SGE	Secondary Graduation Examination
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TALIS	Teacher and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TPDC	Teacher Professional Development Centre
UEE	Unified Entry Examination
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollars
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive summary

Georgia has seen tremendous recent improvement in educational outcomes. From 2009 to 2015, 15-year-old students in Georgia have improved their learning in reading, mathematics and science by roughly a full grade level. However, Georgia's progress has not been equitable across all population groups. Urban students outperform rural ones; socio-economically advantaged students outperform their disadvantaged peers; and students who speak Georgian at home outperform those who do not. Worryingly, these gaps in performance have widened from 2009 to 2015.

To improve educational equity in addition to excellence, it will be critical for Georgia to develop educational evaluation and assessments systems that can detect areas of inequity and address them before they become entrenched. This report looks at the design and implementation of policies related to student assessment, teacher appraisal, and school and system evaluation in Georgia and makes suggestions about how they can used enhance student learning. In particular, student assessment can more accurately identifying student performance; teachers can be trained to give students better support; schools can be given more oversight and resources to help them succeed; and the system as a whole can develop the research capacity and data tools needed to facilitate improved learning for all students in the country.

Improving learning outcomes and equity through student assessment

The primary purposes of student assessment are to determine what students know and are capable of doing, help them advance in their learning and take an informed decision on the next step in their education. In Georgia, despite several efforts from the government, the concept of assessment is widely understood as giving summative marks to students in order to judge their performance, a fact that is reflected teachers' classroom assessment practices, which are primarily summative. Adding to the assessment pressure that students and teachers feel is Georgia's examinations system, which, until recently, required students to take more than 12 subject tests over two grades at the end of upper secondary education in order to graduate and attend university.

Georgia can strengthen its student assessment system so it provides greater educational value. Formative assessment should be practiced more readily in classrooms so assessment is used to support student learning. The examinations system should also be reviewed to create a more positive backwash on learning and more accurately assess students in the most important academic areas. Finally, the assessment literacy of students, parents and teachers needs to be developed to help embed reforms and improve national understanding that assessment if not just *of* learning, but *for* learning.

Creating a highly qualified and motivated teaching workforce

Teacher appraisal can be a strong lever for modernising and improving teaching and learning. Georgia recognises the importance of appraisal for strengthening teaching, as reflected in the recently introduced certification requirements and performance career

scheme. However, these changes have so far had little impact in terms of professionalising teaching or encouraging teachers to adopt newer, more effective teaching techniques.

The lack of impact reflects the fact that moving up the career path is contingent on acquiring credits and not necessarily on demonstrating effective teaching. Other factors the lack of mandatory professional development, low entrance requirements into initial teacher education programmes and the oldest teaching population out of any country that participated in TALIS 2018.

Georgia should revise its professional career scheme to reward high quality teaching and develop the necessary in-service training opportunities to help teachers improve their skills. Georgia can improve the quality of incoming teachers by strengthening its initial teacher education programmes and raising the requirements for entry into the programmes. Finally, Georgia will need to take measures to make space for and attract talented new teachers into the workforce. These measures include establishing a retirement age for teachers and actively recruiting new teachers to fill high need subjects and teach in difficult to staff areas of the country.

Assuring quality schooling through external evaluation and school-led improvements

Compared to international benchmarks, schools in Georgia now have significant autonomy for assessment, curriculum, human resourcing and financial management (OECD, 2016[1]). The autonomy afforded to schools, however, has not been balanced is supposed to be by accountability and oversight mechanisms. This situation is problematic because many schools could be struggling but there are no measures to identify them and help them improve.

To assure quality of schooling, Georgia is planning to extend its authorisation model to all schools. However, because the country lacks the resources to visit all its schools in the short term, Georgia should develop a risk assessment model to identify those schools in greatest need of improvement and target them to be supported first. In the long term, Georgia's school authorisation can be further developed into a comprehensive school evaluation model, which would require that significant school-improvement expertise be built within NCEQE. School self-evaluation could be an effective method of assuring school quality in the meantime. For this to occur, however, the extant self-evaluation process will have to be made more meaningful because most schools currently view self-evaluation as a compliance exercise rather than a way to improve themselves.

Strengthening system processes to evaluate national education performance

Evaluating an education system holds the government and other stakeholders accountable for meeting national goals and provides the information needed to develop effective policies. In Georgia, system evaluation has seen significant development over recent years, especially in the areas of data collection and management.

Despite these advancements, however, some elements of system evaluation are still lacking. In particular, Georgia does not have a strong culture of using evidence to inform policy-making, partly because there are few tools that can help persons analyse the rich data that are centrally collected. In a context where educational inequity is worsening, it is problematic that these processes, which would help to systematically identify and address equity gaps, are not in place.

Georgia should create a research and evaluation unit whose explicit purpose is to analyse data and embed the use of evidence in decision-making. More data analysis tools need to be created to aid stakeholders at all levels in making sense of the available data, such analytical functions built into the E-School platform and a digital monitoring dashboard. Finally, Georgia should develop a national assessment strategy so external measures of student learning can be continuously collected and used to help guide school-level instruction and system-level strategic planning.

Assessment and Recommendations

Introduction

Georgia has seen tremendous recent improvement in educational outcomes. From 2009 to 2015, 15-year-old students in Georgia improved their learning in reading, mathematics and science by roughly a full grade level. However, Georgia's progress has not been equitable across all population groups. Urban students outperform rural ones; socio-economically advantaged students outperform their disadvantaged peers; and students who speak Georgian at home outperform those who do not. Worryingly, these gaps in performance have widened from 2009 to 2015.

To improve educational equity in addition to excellence, it is critical that Georgia develop educational evaluation and assessment systems that can detect areas of low and inequitable performance and address them before they become entrenched. In particular, student assessment can more accurately identify student achievement, teachers can be trained to give students better support, schools can be given more oversight to help them succeed, and the system as a whole can develop the research capacity and data tools needed to facilitate improved learning for all students in the country.

Main trends: learning outcomes are improving but are becoming less equitable

Participation in compulsory education has increased, but many students drop out between lower and upper secondary education

Georgia has achieved near universal participation in primary education, having increased its net enrolment to 98% in 2016 (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[1]). Student enrolment in secondary education also increased significantly and is now comparable to international benchmarks. However, while participation has increased overall, a large number of students drop out of school after grade 9. This is a concern for Georgia because the vocational education sector is underdeveloped (less than 2% of upper secondary students are enrolled in vocational education), so students who drop out do not have the opportunity to develop important competencies and enter the labour market without formal qualifications (Janashia, 2017[2]).

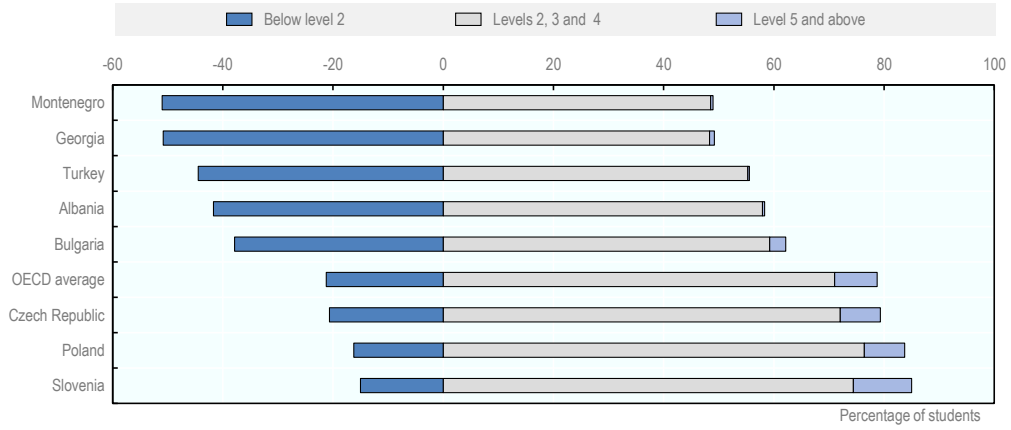
Learning outcomes have improved, but are still low overall

National assessment data are limited in Georgia, but results from international surveys can be used to analyse student outcomes in Georgia. In the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Georgia increased in science performance by 38 score points (equivalent to over one year of schooling) between 2009 and 2015. Similar improvements were observed in reading (27 score points) and mathematics (25 score points). Georgia's improvement mostly resulted from a reduction in low-performers (students performing below PISA Proficiency Level 2) of nearly 15 percentage points in science, 11 percentage points in reading and 12 percentage points in mathematics (OECD, 2016[3]).

Despite these improvements in student learning, overall learning outcomes remain low compared to neighbouring and European countries (OECD, 2016[3]). In PISA 2015,

Georgian students scored over 80 score points less than the OECD average in science, equivalent to over two years of schooling. Georgia's share of low achievers in science (51%), while decreasing, is still one of the highest among PISA participating economies and is much larger than the OECD average (21%). In addition, less than one percent of students were considered top-performing students in science, meaning they perform at Level 5 or above, compared to 8% on average across OECD countries (see Figure 1) (OECD, 2016[3]).

Figure 1. Percentage of students in different proficiency levels in science in PISA 2015



Source: OECD (2016[3]), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.

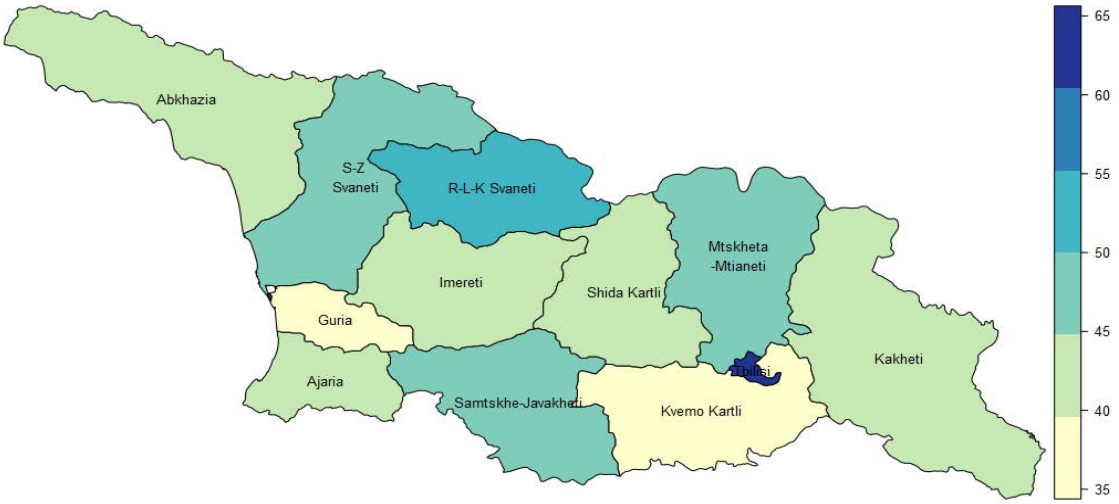
Participation and outcomes vary considerably according to student demographics

There is significant variation in both participation and outcomes across a range of dimensions. Although Georgia has increased enrolment considerably, enrolment varies across different student population groups. For example, net enrolment in secondary education was 72% for Azerbaijani students, compared to 90% for ethnic Georgians (UNICEF, 2008[4]).

With respect to outcomes, in 2015, socio-economically disadvantaged students in Georgia scored 78 points less than advantaged students, equivalent to roughly 2.5 years of schooling. This gap is larger than in Russia (58 score points difference) and Turkey (59 score points difference) (OECD, 2016[3]). Other dimensions according to which student outcomes in Georgia vary include:

- **Geographic location:** Students from rural areas scored 44 score points behind their peers in cities, equivalent to nearly 1.5 years of schooling (see Figure 3). This difference can be seen at a regional level, where almost two-thirds of students are above the PISA science baseline in Tbilisi, but only one-third of students are in rural regions (see Figure 2).

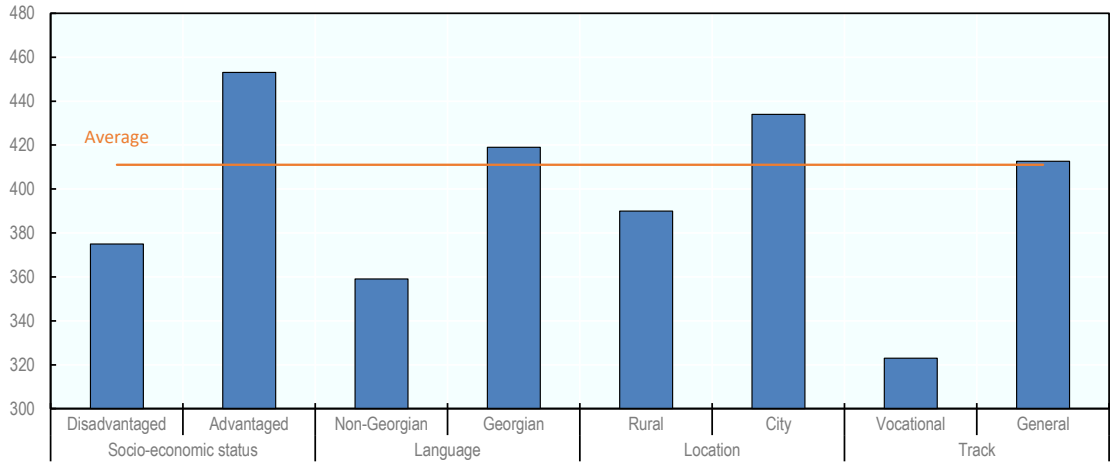
Figure 2. Percentage of Georgian students above PISA 2015 science baseline, by region



Source: Author's estimations based in PISA 2015 sampling data. OECD (2016[5]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019).

- **Mother tongue:** Students who speak Georgian at home scored 419 in science, whereas students who do not speak Georgian at home scored 359 (see Figure 3) (OECD, 2016[3]). Although roughly half the country's students were below baseline proficiency, almost 90% of Azerbaijani students were and no Azerbaijani students scored above Proficiency Level 3.
- **Educational track:** Vocational students performed nearly 90 score points lower than their peers in general education programmes, equivalent to roughly three years of schooling (Figure 3).

Figure 3. PISA 2015 science performance between different student groups

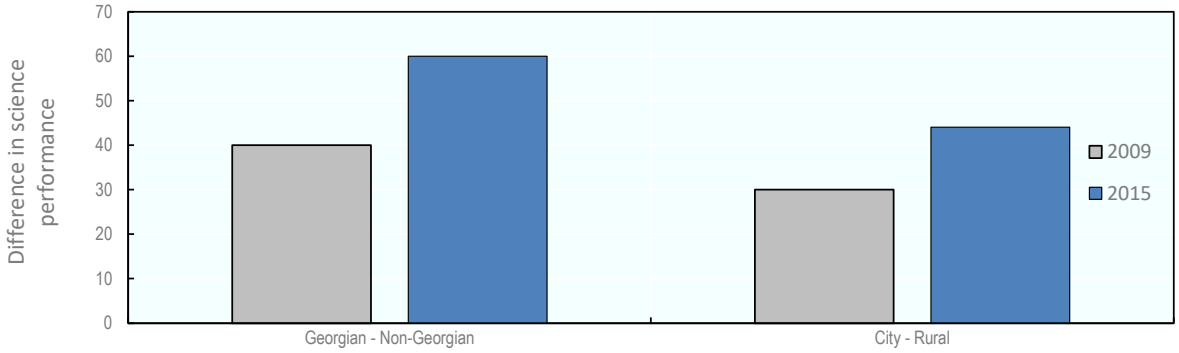


Source: OECD (2016[5]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019).

Inequity has worsened over time

Gaps in outcomes between student groups in Georgia in PISA 2015 have actually widened compared to the same gaps in PISA 2009. In 2009, students from cities scored 30 score points more than students from rural areas. By 2015, this gap increased to 44 points. The difference in science score between students who speak mainly Georgian at home and those who speak mainly another language at home has also widened from 40 score points to more than 60 points, equivalent to almost two years of schooling (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Difference in performance on PISA between student groups over time (2009 and 2015)

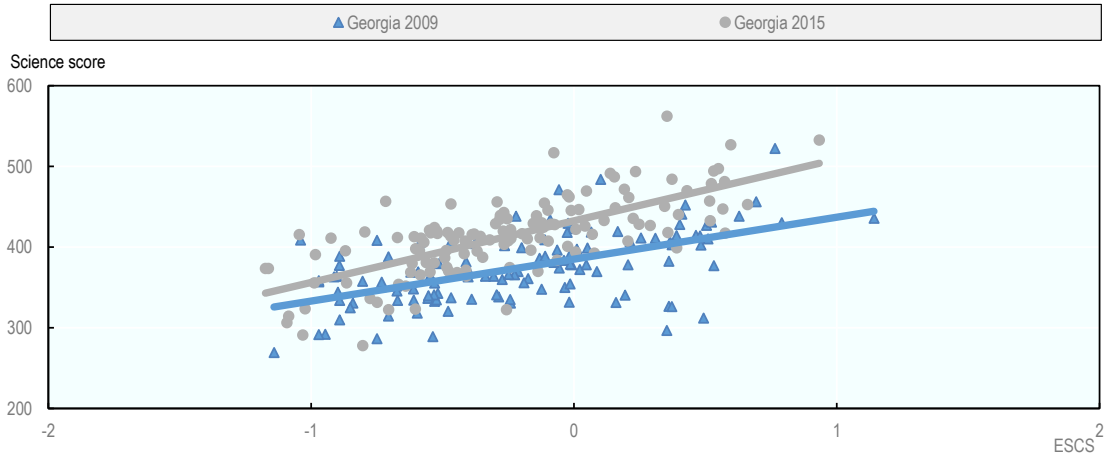


Sources: OECD (2016[5]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019);
OECD (2010[6]), *Data base PISA 2009*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/pisa2009database-downloadabledata.htm (accessed on 6 June 2019).

Worsening educational inequities can be further observed in Georgia at the school-level, where PISA data reveal that the disparity in science performance between Georgian schools has widened considerably. Figure 5 shows that, while the highest-performing schools in

2015 exhibit much higher performance than they did in 2009, the lowest-performing schools in 2009 and 2015 have nearly identical levels of performance (OECD, 2016[3]).

Figure 5. School-level science performance and ESCS in Georgia (2009 and 2015)



Note: Each marker represents one school that was sampled to participate in PISA.
Sources: OECD (2016[5]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019);
OECD (2010[6]), *PISA 2009 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/pisa2009database-downloadabledata.htm (accessed on 6 June 2019).

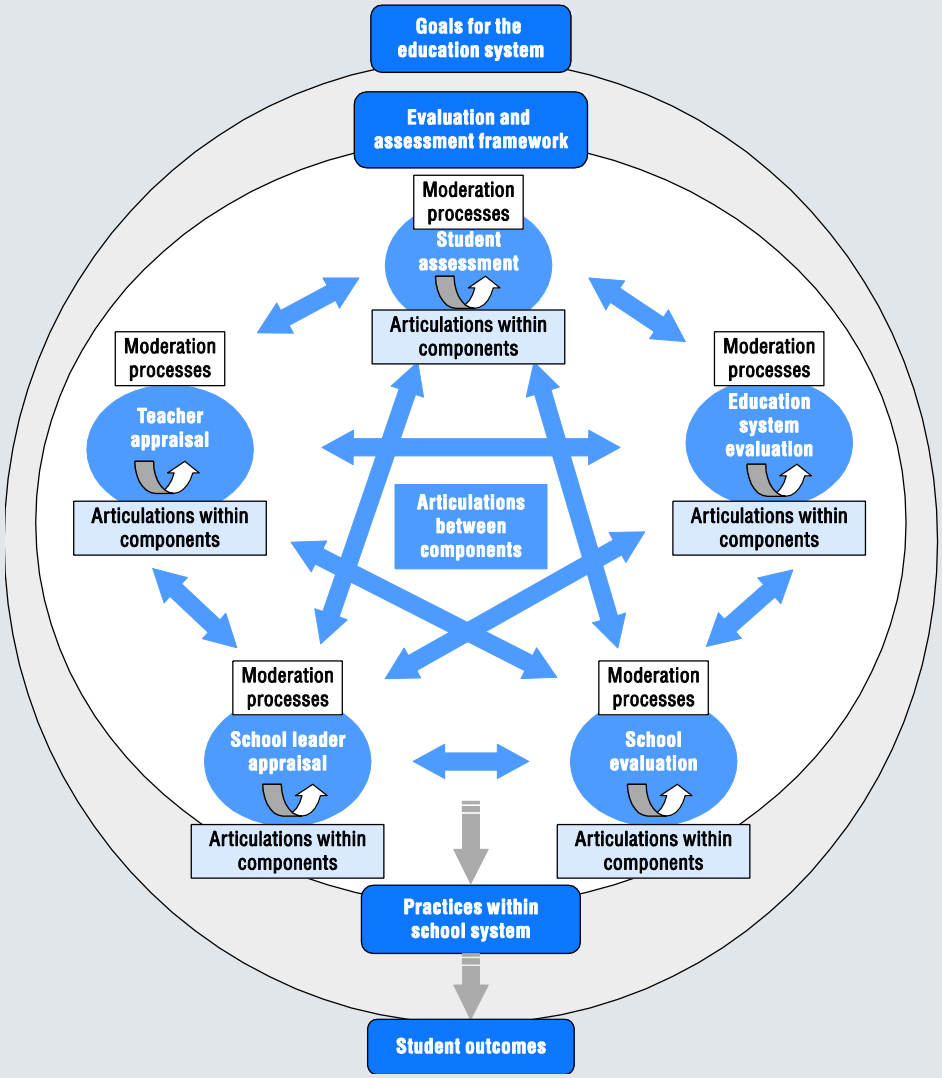
Evaluation and assessment in Georgia

This review analyses how policies for assessing student learning, appraising and supporting teachers, evaluating schools and evaluating the performance of the education system overall can be used to improve learning for all students. The review draws upon the OECD's analysis of policies and practices for evaluation and assessment in over 30 education systems to identify how they can best support student learning (see Box 1). In undertaking this review, the OECD team identified three interrelated, systemic issues that are important to address in order for evaluation and assessment to better support learning in Georgia.

Box 1. OECD reviews on evaluation and assessment

The OECD's reviews show how the components of evaluation and assessment – student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation, school leader appraisal and system evaluation – can be developed in synergy to enhance student achievement in primary and secondary education (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Interactions within the evaluation and assessment framework



This work has highlighted three hallmarks of a strong evaluation and assessment framework:

- Setting clear standards for what is expected nationally of students, teachers, schools and the system overall. Countries that achieve high levels of quality and equity set ambitious goals for all, but are also responsive to different needs and contexts.

- Collecting data and information on current learning and education performance. This is important for accountability – so that objectives are followed through – but also for improvement, so that students, teachers, schools and policy-makers receive the feedback they need to reflect critically on their own progress, and remain engaged and motivated to succeed.
- Achieving coherence across the evaluation and assessment system. This means, for example, that school evaluation values the types of teaching and assessment practices that effectively support student learning, and that teachers are appraised on the basis of the knowledge and skills that promote national education goals. This is critical to ensure that the whole education system is working in the same direction, and that resources are used effectively.

Source: OECD (2013[7]), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en.

Modernising and professionalising teaching

Developing students who are ready to compete in 21st century economies requires teachers who are knowledgeable, skilled and motivated to continue improving. Teachers in Georgia participate in professional development much less than teachers across OECD countries. Without continuous training, teachers are not introduced to the latest evidence-based instructional practices that are proven to help students learn. Georgian teachers are also the oldest among all the Teacher and Learning International Survey (TALIS) participating countries, with over one-quarter being above the age of 60. As a result, many teachers instruct students in a traditional manner that emphasises the memorisation of facts instead of the acquisition of skills and competencies. Students in Georgia then struggle to develop the competencies that they need to succeed in higher education and the labour market.

Several factors have contributed to this situation. Georgia has historically lacked career pathways for teachers, meaning that teachers had little formal incentive to improve themselves. Recently introduced pathways, though providing financial incentives, encouraged teachers to accumulate credits instead of demonstrate that they were helping students learn. Finally, previously low teacher salaries created political pressure to allow teachers to continue teaching past their retirement age, which largely explains the greater age of Georgian teachers.

This review makes several recommendations about how teaching in Georgia can be modernised and professionalised. Minimum standards for teachers should be set and enforced to ensure that all teachers have the basic skills needed to help students learn. The teacher professional development scheme should be revised to motivate teachers to develop in ways that helps students learn. Finally, older teachers should be supported to transition out of their positions, thus opening space for young, talented teachers to renew the profession.

Embedding the use of evidence into all levels of educational decision-making

A range of recently introduced reforms - such as the teacher professional development scheme, plans to expand school authorisation, the "New School Model" and the elimination of the Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE) - suggests that Georgia is eager to improve its education system. Nevertheless, it is important that policy decisions, especially

large scale ones, be made based upon a thorough review of the available evidence. Such a process helps to direct limited resources to where they can be most effectively used. Perhaps more importantly, basing policy decisions upon evidence establishes a rationale for the enacted reforms, which makes the reforms more likely to be supported across any changes in the political landscape.

While intended to positively impact the system, many of Georgia's recent reforms have not been made based upon a rigorous evaluation of long-term evidence. This not only results in potentially less effective policies, but also creates an unstable environment where policies are quickly created or eliminated. For example, the SGE was abruptly eliminated and the structure of the Unified Entrance Examination (UEE) revised based upon a short and limited review of data. The eventual decision was implemented immediately without piloting and studying the potential effects. There are also new plans to adjust the teacher salary scale, which had already been recently revised in accordance with the teacher career scheme. These plans, however, do not seem to take into consideration the evidence around why teacher salaries remain relatively low, which is not because of the salary scale itself, but because a large number of teachers are at the lowest paid level of the profession and a significant amount work part-time.

Part of the reason that data and evidence are not used more readily is that, while Georgia's data systems are very capable of collecting and storing information, there are not many tools available to help users analyse the information. At the central level, policy-makers need to know national performance trends to help inform their decision-making. At the school-level, principals and teachers would like to use evidence to improve their school learning environments and tailor their instruction to individual student needs.

This review proposes several measures to improve the use of evidence in education in Georgia. It suggests that a dedicated unit be created that is responsible for overseeing education research and evaluation and for convening policy meetings that are centred on reviewing the available evidence. It further recommends that Georgia's data systems be enhanced to include analytical tools that allow persons to easily process, manipulate and view data to inform high-level policy-making as well as classroom-level instruction.

Strengthening school oversight and support

Schools in Georgia operate with significant autonomy. They are largely responsible for hiring teachers, adapting national curricula and managing their financial resources. Giving schools autonomy can be an effective method of tailoring education to the needs of different communities. Nevertheless, without systematic oversight and accountability, schools that are struggling to provide adequate services do not receive the support they need to improve student learning.

International assessments suggest that the variance in student outcomes between Georgian schools is considerable and growing (see Figure 5). Schools in rural environments and those serving linguistic minority populations are falling behind others. Regarding financial management, there is evidence that, even among schools with the same number of students, some schools are requesting and receiving up to three times as much funding as others. These schools require support so they can help their students learn and use their resources more efficiently.

However, while schools in Georgia are in need of effective central supports, there are inadequate oversight mechanisms to systematically identify critical issues and provide support where it is most needed. This situation should be addressed immediately. Georgia

should continue with its plans to authorise all schools, but should prioritise supporting schools that are in most need of improvement. Georgia also needs to develop a comprehensive school evaluation framework that will systematically monitor schools and link their results with formative consequences. Regular national assessments should also be developed to provide more data for the evaluation framework to use, which would make school oversight more robust and relevant.

Improving learning outcomes and equity through student assessment

The primary purposes of student assessment are to determine what students know and are capable of doing, to help students advance in their learning, and to assist students in making an informed decision on the next step in their education. In Georgia, the ministry has launched many initiatives to make assessment more meaningful. However, despite these efforts, student assessment is still used mainly to grade students, not to help them improve their learning.

Several factors have prevented student assessment in Georgia from being more educationally valuable. First, despite several efforts to improve assessment literacy, teachers and the public still concentrate on the importance of numeric marks, even though those marks might not accurately represent what a student knows and can do. This understanding of assessment is reflected in teachers' classroom assessment practices. Teachers do not use a wide variety of assessment techniques and prefer to assess students mainly through multiple-choice tests that do not assess a broad range of skills.

Furthermore, Georgia's examinations system adds to the summative pressure that teachers and students feel. Until recently, students had to take 12 subject tests over two grades at the end of upper secondary education in order to graduate. A separate test, in many of the same subjects, needs to be taken in order to enrol in higher educational institutions. The intense attention paid to these examinations led students and teachers to focus narrowly on examinations preparation, often at the expense of students' individual learning needs.

Policy issue 2.1. Enhancing the educational value and use of teachers' classroom assessment

Effective classroom assessment, and formative assessment in particular, can positively affect students' attitudes towards learning and their engagement with school (Black and Wiliam, 1998[8]). Georgia has made considerable strides to embed formative assessment practices into classrooms, but the effect has been less than desired due to a lack of alignment between assessment and the curriculum and inadequate resourcing to support teachers in their reform efforts.

Additionally, assessment in Georgia exerts considerable pressure on teaching and learning processes. The attention paid to student marking (in some cases, teachers even give students one mark per each school day) can distract teachers and students from focusing on what can be done to improve individual student learning.

Lastly, most OECD countries provide teachers with guidance on how to report student results as a means to record student progress consistently. In Georgia, however, there is no national report card template, so schools document student progress in varying ways. Without a reliable record of student progress, teachers have difficulty understanding where their students are in their learning and cannot adapt their instruction accordingly. Students, especially students who change schools, are then at risk of falling behind.

Box 2. Recommended actions for enhancing teachers' classroom assessment

Recommendation 2.1.1. Make formative assessment a central focus of teacher practice. Georgia should use the new stage-based curriculum as a policy lever to embed its use. Curriculum materials should provide explicit direction on the use of formative approaches to assess students, including what tools teachers can use, how to provide feedback and how to use the results to individualise instruction. A particularly useful assessment tool to use in Georgia would be student portfolios, which are collections of student work that are compiled over time. Creating portfolios requires teachers to provide continuous feedback and compels students to reflect upon their own strengths and weaknesses when determining what items to add to their portfolios, two elements of assessment that are currently lacking in the Georgian educational landscape.

Recommendation 2.1.2. Reduce the pressure around summative marking and make it more educationally meaningful. Daily log grading should be discontinued. It is time consuming and does not provide rich information about how students are progressing in their learning. Teachers should be supported to make their summative marking more closely aligned with the standards embedded in the new curriculum so the marks convey meaning about student learning. To help support teachers in this regard, the ministry should allocate school-time for teachers to engage in school-based moderation, which allows teachers to convene to discuss how they mark student work and determine what students have learnt. Schools and teachers should also be given resources to help them interpret curriculum standards, such as examples of student work along with explanations about how to review the work vis-à-vis marking criteria.

Recommendation 2.1.3. Systematically record assessment results in order to track student progress and inform key decisions. The ministry should produce a common report card template and establishing national procedures around its dissemination. With a standardised report card, student records could also be more consistently entered into the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) databases, which would further help track students and their learning as they advance through the education system. This rich source of information could then be used for strategic purposes, such as to identify and support the most vulnerable students in Georgia.

National assessments should also be developed to complement the information generated through classroom assessments. Having external assessment results would help students understand their own progress with respect to national learning standards. An examination in grade 9 (or grade 10 if compulsory education is extended) could be introduced to help students decide whether to pursue a general educational or vocational programme of study in upper secondary education.

Policy issue 2.2. Building understanding that the goal of assessment is to improve student learning

Having a high level of assessment literacy (what stakeholders understand about education assessment) is an important aspect of contemporary education (Plake, 1993[9]; Fullan, 2000[10]). In Georgia, previous efforts to strengthen assessment practices did not achieve their desired outcomes in large part because stakeholders' assessment literacy was not sufficiently developed to support the reforms. They were asked to change but were not helped to understand why change was needed in the first place.

For most teachers in Georgia, re-orienting their assessment practices to promote student learning represents a radical departure from what they are used to. They will not be able to implement these practices without consistent support and reinforcement, which research shows is one of the primary factors associated with sustaining classroom-level reforms (Harrison, 2005[11]; Wilson, 2008[12]). Part of the challenge is initial teacher preparation, which currently lacks a graduate student standard as a reference point and does not provide teacher candidates with a strong foundation in student assessment. Another part of the challenge is relatively weak in-service training and collaboration around assessment for learning. In Georgia, over one-third of teachers never, or only once a year or less, engage in discussions with other teachers about the learning development of specific students.

Beyond teachers, the Georgian public also interprets student assessment as being critical and mainly about marking. In order for Georgia's student assessment reforms to succeed, efforts also need to be made to improve the public's assessment literacy so everyone understands the educational value of formative assessment, rich feedback and using assessment for learning. Without this shared conviction and willingness to improve, policy reform efforts will struggle to be successful.

Box 3. Recommended actions for building understanding of assessment

Recommendation 2.2.1. Provide teachers with assessment resources to improve student learning. A graduate teacher standard should be established and used as a reference point to strengthen what teacher candidates learn about student assessment during initial teacher education. Teachers in schools should be given time to observe each other and discuss how to assess students. Technology can be helpful in accomplishing this goal, especially for teachers who work in smaller schools with less in-house capacity. Finally, more assessment resources, such as sample tests and marking rubrics, should be created and provided via an online repository so all teachers can access them.

Recommendation 2.2.2. Communicate that the goal of student assessment is to improve learning. School leaders, such as principals and lead teachers, should be given prepared responses that explain the value of the new curriculum and assessment reforms. They can then use these responses to address the concerns of other teahers and parents. In addition, parents will need to be supported in understanding the new, common report card template. Schools, with guidance from the ministry, can hold school meetings and distribute materials for this purpose. These efforts should be part of a broader, national campaign that communicates that the purpose of assessment is not just to grade students, but to help them learn.

Policy issue 2.3. Reviewing the modes of examination for graduation and tertiary selection at the end of upper secondary education

Georgia's dual-examinations model was well regarded, but the limitations of the system also became apparent over time. The examinations did not assess higher-order skills and the number of subjects tested created significant pressure for teachers to "teach to the test" and for students to seek out private tutoring opportunities to improve their chances of success. The former issue prevented students from learning the full breadth of the curriculum, while the latter worsened educational equity.

The current absence of an upper secondary graduation examination presents an opportunity to establish a modern examination system that is in line with the country's curriculum and

overall vision for education. As this is occurring, certain vulnerabilities of the current system need to be addressed. In particular, certification from upper secondary education is awarded based only on students' school-level marks, which have historically not been an accurate measure of student learning. Moreover, the absence of an upper secondary examination increases the attention on the Unified Entrance Examination (UEE) as the only external signalling mechanism of student achievement in upper secondary school. However, not all the items from the UEE are aligned with the curriculum, which can distort the teaching and learning that occurs in Georgian classrooms.

Box 4. Recommended actions for reviewing the modes of examination

Recommendation 2.3.1. Prepare for a single examination model in which one test would certify completion of upper secondary education and select students for entry into higher education. The examination should have a small number of core subjects, which would also make it easier and more cost effective to administer. It should have different versions of different subjects, such as maths. Having different versions of certain subjects would allow the exam to assess basic minimum competency in some students, while selecting others for entrance into university. A flexible design would also allow the exam to be taken by all students, including those who attended an upper secondary vocational school, which would help remove the "dead ends" that are a noted concern about the vocational education sector.

Recommendation 2.3.2. Take steps in the immediate term to improve upper secondary certification and strengthen the UEE. First, planned school-level examinations need to be strengthened so that student certification from upper secondary school is trusted. The National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC) is well-positioned to support schools in this regard by providing examination content that is based with the curriculum. Second, the UEE's alignment with the curriculum should be strengthened to reduce the backwash effects that it creates. Adding in a final review of the UEE's items would help tighten the link between the questions on the exam and the expectations of the curriculum.

Creating a highly qualified and motivated teaching workforce

Teacher appraisal can be a strong lever for modernising and improving teaching and learning. By providing teachers with regular feedback and setting high standards for teaching quality, appraisal encourages teachers to continually adapt and improve their practice. To strengthen teacher appraisal processes, Georgia recently implemented a performance career scheme. The adoption of the scheme coincides with efforts to shift instruction towards a more student-centred approach that is focused on the development of complex competencies.

However, the current system has so far had little impact in terms of professionalising teaching or encouraging teachers to adopt newer, more effective teaching techniques. The lack of impact reflects the scheme's design, which makes moving up the career path contingent on form-filling and acquiring credits. These requirements do not necessarily recognise or reward effective teaching and distracts teachers from their central focus on student learning.

Other factors are also impeding the development of a highly qualified teaching force. Undergoing professional development is not mandatory in Georgia and many teachers have

gone years without receiving formal support to improve their teaching. Furthermore, entrance requirements into initial teacher education programmes have been low, which has affected the calibre of persons who become teachers. Finally, Georgia's teaching population is the oldest out of any country that participated in TALIS 2018 and some are less motivated to engage in activities that would improve their teaching. This partly explains why, several years after the implementation of the teacher career scheme, most teachers are still at the lowest level.

Policy issue 3.1. Applying minimum standards for teaching and encouraging the development of higher teaching competencies

Since 2004, Georgia has attempted to shift teaching towards competency development and a more student-focused approach. Many countries have implemented a similar change in recent years and have found that a major challenge is equipping teachers with the pedagogical skills needed to implement the new approach.

To prepare teachers to adopt more student-centred instruction, Georgia reformed the teacher development and advancement scheme in 2010 to motivate teachers to improve. However, nine years after the scheme was first introduced, it has had little impact on teaching quality, with the majority of teachers remaining at the entry level. This suggests that teachers need to be better supported to develop themselves and that the scheme itself needs to promote teachers based upon how well teachers teach.

Box 5. Recommended actions for applying teaching standards

Recommendation 3.1.1. Support all teachers to meet minimum standards. In many OECD countries, a teacher examination is administered to validate that teachers have acquired basic minimum competencies before they enter the profession. Georgia has developed teacher examinations as part of its career advancement scheme, but many teachers have never taken it. This requirement should be strictly enforced and the examinations improved to ensure that teachers who pass them are fit to teach. Schools play a vital part of this process, so principals should help their teachers develop themselves and become certified, senior teachers.

Recommendation 3.1.2. Re-focus the teacher professional development advancement scheme on demonstrating higher levels of teaching competencies. A central concern regarding the teacher career scheme is the requirement to accumulate credits for promotion, which encourages teachers to undertake activities that might contribute little to improving their teaching. The teacher standards themselves are also somewhat vague about the differences between different levels of teachers, which makes it difficult for teachers to be evaluated accordingly. The OECD recommends that the standards be clarified so they can be used as the central reference in teacher appraisal. Furthermore, the process of evaluation and promotion should focus on authentic evidence of teaching practice, not the accumulation of credits.

Policy issue 3.2. Supporting teachers to develop professionally throughout their career

In most OECD countries, an important lever to embed more student-centred teaching is providing feedback and guidance to teachers through regular appraisal. While Georgia does not have regular appraisal, the country has recently announced plans for its introduction.

For regular appraisal to be an effective driver of teacher professionalism, it must focus on to what extent teachers help their students learn. The feedback that teachers receive from their appraisals can be used to direct them towards professional development opportunities. In Georgia, such opportunities need to be created, but can be modelled after past successful programmes.

Box 6. Recommended actions for supporting teachers to develop

Recommendation 3.2.1. Focus the new regular appraisal on student learning and providing feedback for teachers' professional learning. Creating an effective, regular appraisal is difficult and takes considerable time. In Georgia, currently the primary appraisal process for teachers is for promotion. The process is high stakes and its evaluators have not developed the capacity to provide constructive, formative feedback. For regular appraisal to be effective, Georgia needs to make the process formative and focused on how well teachers help students learn. Evaluators should be qualified and independent and need to be trained on how to review teaching help teachers grow.

Recommendation 3.2.2. Give teachers access to high quality professional development. High quality, impactful professional development is one of the key factors in improving teaching and learning. Unlike most OECD countries, Georgia does not require its teachers to engage in professional development. Georgia should make this a requirement and connect its professional development offerings with teachers' regular appraisal. Furthermore, the development opportunities should build upon the Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) projects in order to expand the availability of training opportunities that are proven effective.

Policy issue 3.3. Setting high standards for entry to teaching and provide more structured support in the early years

Countries use a combination of different mechanisms to build a high quality teaching workforce. These include selecting candidates with strong academic skills, establishing high quality initial teacher education and requiring teacher candidates to pass a formal probation appraisal. Over the past decade, Georgia has introduced wide-ranging reforms to raise the bar for entry into teaching, such as developing certification examination, creating a one-year consecutive initial teacher education programme and, most recently, introducing a new master's degree in education.

These measures, however, have not produced the desired impact. A study of the initial preparation of mathematics teachers in 17 countries found that Georgia had among the least developed quality assurance systems for new entrants to the profession out of all the participating countries (Ingvarson et al., 2013[13]). One reason that teacher preparation continues to struggle in Georgia is that policy-makers have been hesitant to introduce additional quality controls for entry in order to avoid dis-incentivising an already small pool of candidates. This lack of quality controls risks that new teachers will continue to lack essential academic and teaching competencies. It also creates the perception that teaching is not a demanding profession for talented school graduates, thus perpetuating the cycle of low quality teaching and contributing to low learning outcomes nationally.

Box 7. Recommended actions for setting high entrance standards into teaching

Recommendation 3.3.1. Establish more rigorous standards for entry and completion of initial teacher education. Teachers need to have the necessary subject knowledge and pedagogical skills they need to build students' competencies. Given that beginner teachers in Georgia struggle to be effective (Ingvarson et al., 2013[13]), improving both the entrance requirements into initial teacher programmes and the rigour of licensing requirements should be a priority. Georgia should set a minimum threshold for entry into initial teacher preparation and set standards (i.e. a graduate teacher standard) for what teacher candidates should be expected to know and be able to do upon graduation. The graduate teacher standard should then inform the continuous improvement of teacher preparation programmes.

Recommendation 3.3.2. Introduce an induction period and probation appraisal for new teachers. Georgia introduced a one-year teacher induction programme in 2007, but it was never implemented partly to avoid creating another hurdle to enter the teaching profession. This review recommends that Georgia should reconsider introducing an induction period, during which new teachers should be mentored to help them improve. At the end of the induction period, a probationary appraisal should determine whether the teacher becomes fully confirmed in their post.

Policy issue 3.4. Attracting new teachers and motivating them to succeed

Several factors are currently hindering the development of a professional and qualified teaching workforce. These include a large number of older teachers who are less likely to be interested in developing themselves but continue to teach, the perception of teaching as a less prestigious career and financial incentive schemes that are misaligned with the actual causes of lower teacher earnings. These concerns will need to be addressed as part of overall strategic planning to improve the state of education in Georgia.

Box 8. Recommended actions for attracting new teachers

Recommendation 3.4.1. Encourage renewal of the teaching profession. The presence of a large share of older teachers who are not motivated to engage in career development is impeding the success of the educational reforms introduced by the ministry. By remaining in their positions, these teachers also reduce opportunities for talented young graduates to enter the profession. Georgia should implement a mandatory retirement age, which would facilitate the exiting of older teachers and thus open space for new teachers. Retiring teachers will need to be supported as they leave the profession. New teachers should be purposefully allocated to teach subjects and teach in schools that are difficult to staff.

Recommendation 3.4.2. Review planned adjustments to teacher salaries to make them impactful and educationally valuable. The introduction of career pathways and salary scale revisions have helped bring Georgian teacher pay scales in line with OECD norms. The reasons that, despite these changes, Georgian teachers' earnings are still considered low are because most teachers are at the lesser paid practitioner level, with the majority only working part-time. To use teacher salaries as a lever to improve teacher motivation, adjustments to the salary scale should only be made to the practitioner level. Moreover, the ministry should reduce the number of part-time teachers by giving effective part-time teachers leadership and mentoring responsibilities. These measures will help motivate teachers to improve and help them earn more income without distorting the overall financial structure of the profession.

Assuring quality schooling through external evaluation and school-led improvements

Compared to international benchmarks, schools in Georgia now have significant autonomy for assessment, curriculum, human resourcing and financial management (OECD, 2016[14]). The autonomy afforded to schools is supposed to be balanced by accountability and oversight from the school board and competition arising from parents exercising school choice. In practice, however, school boards lack the capacity and authority to provide robust oversight or accountability. Parental choice is also limited outside the biggest urban areas (Transparency International, n.d.[15]). Because Georgia lacks a robust school evaluation system, the country's schools operate with very limited oversight and accountability.

To help improve the quality of schooling, Georgia is planning to extend its authorisation model to all schools. While this will help ensure that schools are meeting basic standards, it will be difficult to accomplish because there is insufficient personnel to conduct visits to all schools in the short term. In the long term, Georgia's school authorisation can be further developed into a comprehensive school evaluation model. For this to occur successfully though, significant expertise will have to be built within the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) as it currently operates in a mainly administrative capacity and not in a school-improvement capacity. School self-evaluation could be an effective method of assuring school quality in the absence of established external mechanisms, especially in Georgia where all schools are already required to submit self-evaluation reports to NCEQE. Nevertheless, the process will have to be made more meaningful because most schools currently view self-evaluation as a compliance exercise rather than a way to improve themselves.

Policy issue 4.1. Reaching all schools for authorisation

Georgia is currently deliberating between several methods of assuring quality schooling, including authorising all public schools and creating composite indicators. The review team recommends that Georgia focus its attentions on authorising all public schools in the short term, which will help address the significant gap in school oversight that currently exists. While developing composite indices of school quality can help monitor schooling, the use of such measures is a complement to, not replacement for, regular school evaluation processes (OECD, 2013[7]). However, as the ministry has recognised, authorising all public schools by 2021 is not feasible. A graduated approach is needed to first identify and support those schools at greatest risk of not meeting the basic conditions needed to support the provision of quality education.

Box 9. Recommended actions for reaching all schools for authorisation

Recommendation 4.1.1. Develop a risk assessment model to guide the provisional authorisation of public schools. Georgia has strong systems for collecting basic school information. Because authorisation of public schools cannot be realistically completed in a short amount of time, Georgia should use the available information from EMIS and NAEC to develop a risk assessment model. Through this model, Georgia can identify schools that are most vulnerable and prioritise providing support to them. Schools determined by the model to be not at risk can be provisionally authorised in the short term and receive a fuller evaluation later. A critical part of developing this model will be selecting the indicators that will feed into it and what thresholds must be met in order for a school to be considered not at risk. The indicators should focus on several factors, such as material resources, financial management and student outcomes.

Recommendation 4.1.2. Focus Education Resource Centres on supporting schools. Relevant and responsive school-level support is a critical element in assuring school quality. In Georgia, Education Resource Centres (ERCs) are well-positioned to provide school-level support, but their current role is administrative and they will need guidance to become supportive. To this end, the ministry should significantly reduce ERCs' mandate for compliance checking, provide ERCs with staff who are qualified to support schools and rationalise the ERCs network to meet each municipality's needs. Once ERCs are equipped to support schools, the ministry will need to develop a model that governs how ERCs should support schools, such as directing resources towards the neediest schools and reinforcing the ERCs' role in financially auditing schools.

Policy issue 4.2. Developing an external school evaluation model over the medium to long term

School authorisation is a helpful, short-term method for instilling school accountability. In the long term, however, Georgia will need to develop a full school evaluation model. The country has already developed new draft standards for the authorisation of public schools, which go beyond the existing authorisation standards by focusing on school quality. These can be built upon to create standards that underpin a full-fledged evaluation system.

To support school evaluation, several materials and structures of the education system will need to be strengthened. The draft standards, while a significant improvement over their predecessor, can still focus more on school improvement and less on compliance.

Furthermore, Georgia currently lacks a cadre of qualified school evaluators. Identifying and developing these individuals will be vital to ensuring successful school evaluation.

Box 10. Recommended actions for developing an external school evaluation model

Recommendation 4.2.1. Develop a model of school evaluation that supports schools to improve teaching and learning. School evaluation is recognised in most OECD countries and many non-member states as being an essential lever to monitor school quality, encourage future improvement and provide school-level accountability (OECD, 2013[7]). In Georgia, decentralisation of management and comprehensive curriculum reform mean that introducing school evaluation will be particularly helpful in ensuring that schools meet basic minimum standards. To develop an effective model, Georgia should anchor school evaluation standards in a clear vision of a good school and then revise the standards to focus more on school quality. Georgia will then need to create accompanying materials and improve central capacity in order to support implementation of the school evaluation framework. As the evaluation model should have consequences, schools will also need to understand what the role of external evaluation is and how they can prepare for evaluation visits.

Recommendation 4.2.2. Develop capacity for external evaluations. Implementing a new evaluation model will require a significant strengthening of Georgia's school evaluation capacity, in terms of both numbers and expertise. Of particular importance will be identifying a pool of capable external evaluators (given their current functions and relationships with schools, ERCs staff cannot be expected to fill this role). Georgia's plan to contract external evaluators is positive and can be strengthened further by considering previous school principals. With an established group of external evaluators, the Council's role can be gradually changed. In the short term, it can review the quality and fairness of the authorisation process. In the long-term, the Council might not be needed and its expertise can form the basis of an independent inspectorate.

Policy issue 4.3. Creating the foundations for school-led improvement

Self-evaluation can be a powerful tool for driving school improvement, especially in Georgia where the vast majority of schools complete self-evaluations annually. However, there is broad acknowledgement nationally across policy-makers and school practitioners that self-evaluation is not yet supporting school improvement. At the heart of the issue is that schools have not yet appropriated self-evaluation as an internal tool, integrated into their management cycles, to support improvement.

This situation reflects the fact that school-level leadership and capacity has not received sufficient attention in Georgia. In contrast to international trends towards the development of principals as instructional leaders, the principal role in Georgia is not clearly defined. Teachers become principals without having the background or preparation to meet the requirements of the position. Schools also receive little support to undertake self-evaluation or to understand its purpose. In many schools, self-evaluation is frequently limited to a cut and paste exercise to meet external requirements.

Box 11. Recommendations for creating the foundations of school-led improvement

Recommendation 4.3.1. Support schools to use self-evaluation effectively. While schools in Georgia are familiar with performing self-evaluation, they receive very little support on how to undertake self-evaluation in a meaningful way. To make self-evaluation more useful, its purpose should be redefined around school improvement and schools should be supported in using their self-evaluation results to improve student learning. While school authorisation is occurring in the short term, the ministry should make self-evaluation support authorisation by aligning self-evaluation criteria with authorisation standards. Schools then need to be supported in exploiting the data that is referenced as part of authorisation, which can be done by ERCs or school coaches from the "New School Model". Finally, a comprehensive self-evaluation framework should be developed alongside the long-term school evaluation framework.

Recommendation 4.3.2. Build school leadership for improvement. One of the key challenges to developing school principals as instructional leaders in Georgia is the absence of incentives to keep strengthening their abilities. This absence of incentive to develop is matched by little available professional development opportunities for principals, which further discourages them from improving themselves. To develop the capacity of school principals, which would strengthen school-led improvement in general, Georgia should identify and support promising school principals through creating a process to select talented candidates from existing teachers and introducing mandatory preparation before they become principals. Principals should also be incentivised to develop themselves, either through adjustments to their salaries or by giving them more career options (e.g. becoming an external school evaluator). With more qualified principals and greater expectations, Georgia should introduce appraisal mechanisms for principals to hold them accountable for their performance. The role of the school board will also have to be revised to allow principals to assume greater leadership over teaching and learning at their schools.

Strengthening system processes to evaluate national education performance

System evaluation is central to improving education performance. Evaluating an education system holds the government and other stakeholders accountable for meeting national goals and provides the information needed to develop effective policies. In Georgia, system evaluation has seen significant development over recent years, especially in the areas of data collection and management.

Despite these advancements, however, some elements of system evaluation are still lacking. In particular, Georgia does not have a strong culture of using evidence to inform policy-making. Also, there are few tools that can help persons analyse the rich data that are centrally collected. As a result, decisions are sometimes made without being based on relevant evidence. Furthermore, though national assessments are administered, the funding that supports these activities is being phased out and, afterwards, Georgia will not have a regular, external measure of student outcomes. In a context where educational inequity is worsening, it is problematic that these processes, which would help to systematically identify and address equity gaps, are not in place.

Policy issue 5.1. Building a culture of research, evaluation and improvement of the education system

Reviews of education systems reveal common practices related to research and evaluation that contribute to successful system evaluation. These include:

- conducting an analysis of available information to produce a rich body of information about the system
- establishing procedures that position evidence review at the centre of policy-making
- evaluating policies to determine their effect and to inform future decision-making (OECD, 2013[7]).

In Georgia, many of the foundations upon which a culture of research evaluation can be developed are weak. There is no unit responsible for guiding the national-level evaluation and research agenda and, as a result, there is limited, analytical information produced about the education system as a whole. Without consistent reporting about the system, policies are created without reviewing key evidence that could inform their development, and resources are spent in support of unsubstantiated initiatives.

Box 12. Recommended actions for building a culture of research, evaluation and improvement

Recommendation 5.1.1. Establish a formal research and evaluation unit. In Georgia, research and evaluation responsibilities are loosely divided between NAEC and EMIS. This configuration has limitations, as both bodies mostly work with their own data and neither is responsible for the evaluation of the system as a whole. Georgia should create a research and evaluation unit at the centre of the ministry that is explicitly responsible for study of the entire system. The unit would report directly to the Minister of Education and work across a research agenda, which should include topics like manpower planning for teachers and the effects of planned adjustments to the teacher salary scale.

Recommendation 5.1.2. Encourage the dissemination and usage of research and evaluation activities. A core function of research and evaluation units in most OECD countries is the production of regular reports about the state of the system and periodic analytical reports about specific themes (OECD, 2013[7]). In Georgia, the Monitoring Report most closely approximates a report about the state of the system, but, at 135 pages, it is difficult to interpret and is more descriptive than analytical in nature. There is also no clear expectation within government that such reviews of reports and evidence takes place. Georgia should release an annual analytical report about the state of the education system, along with ad-hoc reports about thematic issues. Policy-makers should meet according to a regular schedule to share and discuss evidence. External entities, such as universities and non-profit organisations, can be engaged to lend further research capacity. In the future, a dedicated research and evaluation institute can be established to firmly embed the use of evidence in decision-making.

Recommendation 5.1.3. Use system evaluation to enhance the value of system planning. The introduction of a Unified Strategy is a positive development, but the plan is not widely known and understood. To make strategic planning more relevant and impactful, the Unified Strategy should explicitly communicate the key issues of the Georgian education system, in particular equity of outcomes. The goals in the strategy should also be balanced in that they think of the outcomes a system wants to achieve as well as the internal processes and capacity throughout that are needed to achieve those outcomes (Kaplan and Norton, 1992[16]).

Policy issue 5.2. Making information about the education system more accessible and usable

Georgia's information systems are modern, widely used and are highly trusted. EMIS collects data from all schools throughout the country and NAEC stores assessment and examination data for students and teachers. Both organisations identify individuals using their government identification number and simple demographic information is drawn directly from government sources instead of being re-entered.

Nevertheless, while education data are collected and managed effectively, accessing the information, particularly in an analytical manner, remains a challenge. User-friendly analytical tools have not been developed and individuals have neither the time nor the capacity to retrieve and analyse the data manually. As a result, educators and Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) officials do not systematically use data

to help guide students' education and inform strategic planning, which risks that systematic needs are not noticed and not addressed.

Box 13. Recommended actions for making information about accessible and usable

Recommendation 5.2.1. Introduce analytical and reporting functions for EMIS tools. It is important that data tools not only store data, but also provide an interface for users to easily retrieve and analyse data. In Georgia, the lack of such tools in the main data system discourages school staff from using data to inform their instruction, prevents MoESCS staff from using evidence to inform their decision-making and makes it difficult for the public to hold the government accountable. Georgia should introduce a reporting feature into EMIS's E-School that allows users to organise, process and display information generated using EMIS data. A separate web portal should be built that allows the public to view some data from EMIS, which would help hold the system accountable.

Recommendation 5.2.2. Create an easier-to-use monitoring system. At present, MoESCS's primary tool for monitoring the education system is the Monitoring Report, which is difficult to interpret and only contains information from when it was published. Georgia should complement the Monitoring Report by developing a digital performance dashboard that displays up-to-date information in real time. The dashboard should be accompanied by a tutorial that will help policy-makers understand how the dashboard should be used and for what purpose.

Policy issue 5.3. Developing and implementing a national assessment strategy that supports system goals

Research shows that having externally validated measures of student performance helps monitor performance and inform system-level policy-making (OECD, 2013[7]). In Georgia, there is no established system of monitoring of student learning outcomes before grade 12, and what instruments there are do not cover key outcomes (such as literacy) and are not administered to all students.

Importantly, MCC funding, which is largely supporting these assessments, is phasing out and there is no guarantee that such important work will continue. A recent proposal concerning a national assessment strategy suggests that diagnostic assessments be administered at the beginning of Grades 4, 6 and 10, but this strategy is not finalised.

Box 14. Recommended actions for developing and implementing a national assessment strategy

Recommendation 5.3.1. Define a concept for the national assessments. The OECD recommends that Georgia plan for the resources and capacity that will be necessary to continue the administration of its national assessments. Georgia should also take the opportunity to improve upon the assessments and determine how the assessments should be structured to best support national goals. A steering committee should be formed to lead the planning and development of the assessment. The OECD recommends that the steering committee make providing formative feedback the primary purpose of the new national assessment strategy.

Recommendation 5.3.2. Determine the design features of the national assessments. Georgia will need to decide upon several design components related to the national assessments. These include which subjects to test, whether to test all students or a sample and which grades should be tested. In general, it is recommended that Georgia make its decisions in order to support to formative purposes of the assessments and in consideration of the specific monitoring needs of the country.

Recommendation 5.3.3. Develop a reporting scheme that serves formative purposes and avoids punitive consequences. Georgia should consider carefully how to report the results of national assessments to students, teachers, schools and the public. Georgia should avoid any suspicion that the results would be used to punish school staff. Instead, results of the national assessment should be reported in a manner that informs instruction and guides decision-making. The reports should contain different benchmarks against which schools can compare themselves, such as results by municipality and from schools with similar student intakes. Different types of reports should also be generated to accommodate the needs of different stakeholders (e.g. for teachers, principals and policy-makers).

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Chapter 1. The education system in Georgia

Georgia has seen tremendous recent improvement in educational participation and outcomes. Nevertheless, educational progress has not been equitable across all population groups and many students in Georgia still struggle to master basic competencies. These issues reflect systemic challenges in modernising the teaching profession, using evidence in policy-making and strengthening school oversight. The country's evaluation and assessments systems need to be strengthened in order for education outcomes to be improved for all students.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Georgia has embarked upon significant educational reform. These reforms have included decentralising school governance and introducing new, competence-based curricula and developing a teacher professional development scheme. Efforts such as these have contributed to a significant improvement in key educational indicators, including achieving near universal enrolment in primary education and an increase in student performance on international surveys. Nevertheless, despite these improvements, a large share of Georgian students continue to leave school without mastering basic competencies for life and work. Equity is also a concern, as outcomes between regions and ethnic groups are large and growing.

This report builds upon Georgia's successes by focusing on what has most strongly contributed to educational progress and makes recommendations about how the progress can not only be continued, but also be made more equitable. In particular, the review makes recommendations about how Georgia's educational evaluation and assessment systems can be strengthened, which would help align policy reforms, assure educational quality and direct the education sector towards greater excellence and equity.

National context

Economic and political context

Georgia has strengthened democratic governance and reduced corruption

Since its independence in 1991, Georgia has established strong democratic governance (Freedom House, 2018[1]). There are simplified processes to improve transparency across the public sector (World Bank, 2012[2]) and, according to Transparency International, Georgia now has one of the lowest corruption levels in the region (Transparency International, n.d.[3]).

The progress that Georgia has made in reducing corruption is reflected in the education sector. A reform of entry procedures into tertiary education, including the introduction of an examination, was made to directly address historical bribery of university officials (Andguladze and Mindadze, 2018[4]). Considerable attention has also been given to reducing the prevalence of private tutoring, which affects the priorities of upper secondary teachers.

Georgia has experienced fast economic progress, but poverty and inequity remain challenges

Structural reforms to the public sector has opened Georgia to international trade and global financial markets, eased business development, helped improve competitiveness and established a market-oriented economy (Posadas et al., 2018[5]). Between 2005 and 2015, Georgia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew annually by almost 6%, on average, and productivity—measured by GDP per worker—more than tripled between 1996 and 2016 (Posadas et al., 2018[5]).

Georgia's economic development enabled it to reduce its poverty rate from 37% in 2000 to 16% in 2017, as measured as the percentage of the population living below the $5.50 / day (USD PPP, 2011) (World Bank, n.d.[6]). Nevertheless, this rate remains higher than in neighbouring Armenia (14%), Turkey (3% in 2015) (World Bank, n.d.[6]) and across OECD

countries (11%) (OECD, 2016[7]). Furthermore, economic inequity in Georgia is a significant problem. Georgia's income inequality, measured with a Gini coefficient of 0.36, is higher than Armenia's (0.32), Azerbaijan's (0.16 in 2005) and the OECD average (0.32) (OECD, 2015[8]).

In Georgia, economic development differs strongly according to geography. Remote and mountainous regions having higher rates of poverty than urban areas. In some regions, over half the population live below the poverty line, whereas less than 20% do in Tbilisi (World Bank, 2016[9]). This is particularly problematic in Georgia because nearly half the population lived in rural areas in 2014 (Posadas et al., 2018[5]). Inequities in Georgia extend to educational access and outcomes. Students in rural areas have less access to quality schooling and score lower on international assessments compared to students in Tbilisi and other urban areas. These inequities, and others, are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Employment is concentrated in low-productivity sectors, which negatively impacts young, academically oriented job-seekers

The current employment rate in Georgia (87% in 2016) (Posadas et al., 2018[5]) is higher than the rate across OECD countries (68%) (OECD, 2018[10]). However, the majority of this comparatively large workforce is still concentrated in low-productivity sectors, despite aforementioned efforts to modernise the economy. The agricultural sector, for example, employs nearly half of Georgia's workforce but only contributes to 7% of the country's GDP (Posadas et al., 2018[5]).

The employment situation negatively affects young, university educated job-seekers whose academic preparation is not aligned with the overall needs of the job market (there are also concerns about whether the academic preparation itself is effective). Though overall employment rates are high, as mentioned above, nearly 30% of young people in Georgia (15-25 year-olds) were unemployed in 2017 (ILO, 2019[11]), compared to 12% of 15-24 year-olds in OECD countries in 2018 (OECD Data, 2018[12]). Roughly 40% of unemployed Georgians have a tertiary degree (World Bank, 2013[13]), compared to 6% across OECD countries in 2017 (OECD, 2018[14]).

A rapid over expansion of tertiary education and under development of vocational education (both discussed later in this chapter) have contributed to the misalignment between labour market needs and the backgrounds of job-seekers. Data from the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that less than 2% of 15-year-olds were enrolled in vocational programmes in Georgia, compared to 14% in OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]). In response to this situation, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) has aimed to better meet the needs of the market with the skills of graduating students by expanding the coverage of vocational education and training (VET) institutions across the country and put forward communication campaigns to boost VET's popularity (MoESCS, n.d.[16]). The Ministry aims to increase the percentage of students enrolled in VET by 30% by 2023 (see chapter 2).

In addition to labour market misalignment, the high number of unemployed tertiary graduates reflects a concern that, despite their credentials, tertiary graduates do not possess strong, 21st century skills. These students enter the labour market poorly prepared for vocational or non-vocational jobs. Subsequent chapters discuss how this situation is related to Georgian teachers' pedagogical practices, which remain traditional and not well suited to helping students develop higher-order competencies.

Social context

Georgia is ethnically and linguistically diverse and minority populations encounter several challenges

Azerbaijanis and Armenians represent 6% and 5% of Georgia's population, respectively. These populations are concentrated in mountainous, isolated regions (Geostat, 2015[17]), with 80% of Azerbaijanis across the country living in rural areas (World Bank, 2017[18]). Large economic and political inequities can be found across ethnic minority groups, in part because of their limited knowledge of the Georgian language (less than 20% of Azerbaijanis report being proficient in Georgian) (World Bank, 2017[18]). For example, poverty levels are higher among the Azerbaijani community (46%) compared to Georgians (33%). Out of 150 seats in the National Parliament, only three are held by Armenians and two by Azerbaijanis (World Bank, 2017[18]). Educational access and outcomes also vary considerably for ethnic minority communities compared to Georgians. Students from ethnic minority populations enrol in tertiary education at lower rates and perform less well on international assessments than Georgian students. These inequities will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Georgian government has taken measures to reduce inequities between ethnic groups. It has adopted legislation that gives ethnic minority populations the right to equal opportunities and developed initiatives to protect the culture of minority populations (World Bank, 2017[18]). Nevertheless, key bureaucratic processes, such as parts of the teacher certification examinations, are only available in Georgian and exacerbate inequities based on ethnicity or linguistic background (see chapter 3).

The population is shrinking and urbanising, which makes providing education in rural areas increasingly inefficient

Georgia is facing a rapidly shrinking population because of low fertility rates and high rates of outmigration (World Bank, 2017[18]). Between 2000 and 2010, nearly 10% of the population emigrated to another country. This outmigration, however, has not been equally distributed throughout the country. The rate of population decrease in villages is three times larger than in cities (State Commission on Migration Issues, 2017[19]). This trend, combined with internal urban migration, means that 60% of Georgians are expected to live in cities by 2030 (Asian Development Bank, 2016[20]).

A rapidly decreasing, yet increasingly urban, population poses challenges for the education sector. Schools that are intended to serve rural areas find themselves with fewer students (see Structure of schooling in Georgia). However, despite diminishing enrolment in many schools, the government cannot easily remove teachers from these schools for political reasons. These circumstances make school funding inefficient, as sustaining operations in smaller schools prevents more funding from being allocated to larger and growing schools (see discussions about funding later in this chapter and also in chapter 3).

Governance and funding of the education system in Georgia

Governance of the education system

The Unified Strategy establishes the goals of the system, but is not regarded as a common point of reference

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) developed the "Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021" to direct the country's education system to provide high quality education for all (see Box 1.1). The main priorities of the Unified Strategy include incorporating student-oriented teaching strategies, investing in the teaching workforce and creating a safe school environment. An action plan accompanied the Unified Strategy and sets out expected outcomes, responsible entities and the implementation period for each proposed activity (MoESCS, 2017[21]).

Box 1.1. Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021

In Georgia's "Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-21", relevant actions concerning evaluation and assessment and improving education quality include:

- developing professional standards for teachers and caretakers in early childhood education
- updating the national curriculum for primary and secondary education
- improving and diversifying educational resources, including the approval of school textbooks, developing digital resources and providing learning infrastructure
- modernising teachers' professional development standards and improving career advancement schemes
- establishing mechanisms for the selection, training and retention of school leaders
- establishing effective mechanisms to ensure that national and international assessment results are used as in policy-making (e.g. curriculum development process).

Source: MoESCS (2017[21]), *Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021*.

Despite being the highest-level strategic document of the education sector, the Unified Strategy is not regarded by stakeholders as a definitive point of reference. Many teachers and principals have not seen it or even heard about it. High-level initiatives are frequently introduced, sometimes at odds with the Unified Strategy and often without sufficient documentation, but are considered more important strategically (see chapter 5).

A new initiative, the "New School Model", seeks to create more modern learning environments and is steering educational reform

In autumn 2018, the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport introduced the "New School Model". This initiative establishes a vision of schooling that advocates for modern approaches that aim to develop the whole child. For instance, the "New School Model" encourages teachers to use active pedagogical techniques in order to teach students how to think critically, solve problems and be creative.

To achieve this vision, the ministry is identifying individuals with expertise in information and communications technologies, school leadership and the curriculum. These individuals will be sent to schools to coach school staff in adopting practices that are aligned with the model's vision of schooling. This approach is being piloted in one school in Tbilisi and plans have been made to increase the number of pilot schools to 50 (see chapter 4).

Curriculum reform has focused greatly on developing student competencies and is moving towards stage-based instruction and assessment

In 2005, Georgia introduced the first national curriculum, which established desired learning outcomes and the distribution of instruction hours for all subjects and grades (MoESCS, 2018[22]). Changes implemented in the 2011 and 2018 versions of the curriculum emphasised a more holistic approach to learning, focusing on developing student competences and social and emotional skills rather than on memorising facts (MoES, 2016[23]). In addition, 2018 reforms introduced a stage-based approach, whereby learning outcomes for students are organised around learning stages, rather than grades. While such changes offer teachers greater flexibility to adapt instruction to different levels of student learning, they also raise questions about whether teachers are prepared to use such an advanced curriculum (see chapter 2).

Agencies affiliated to the Ministry provide technical expertise

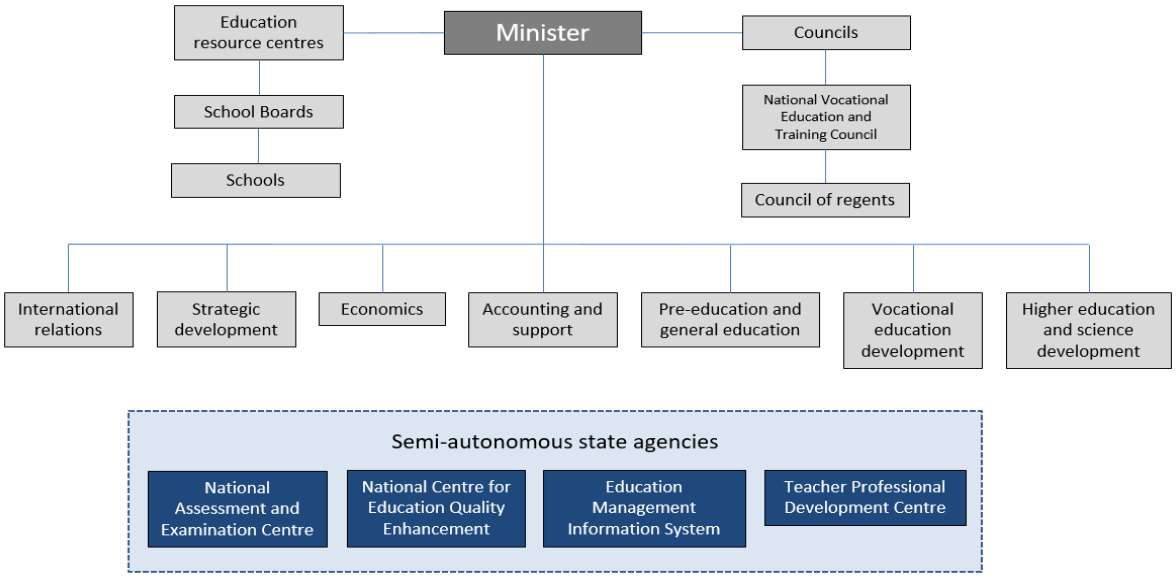
Several specialised bodies at arm's length from MoESCS (see Figure 1.1) assist in the implementation of education policy (MoESCS, 2018[22]). Establishing these bodies is a tremendous accomplishment as their independence and technical competence lend credibility to educational reforms and help legitimise the education system in general. These agencies are listed below.

- The National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC) is responsible for overseeing all centralised assessments and examinations for students, teachers and other public servants. NAEC conducts the Unified Entry Examination (UEE) and was responsible for conducting the Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE) (see chapter 2). In addition, the Centre oversees regular, sample-based student assessments for maths and sciences in grade 9 and a census-based assessment for Georgian as a second language in non-Georgian schools in grade 9 (see chapter 5). Over 200 professionals work in NAEC, including testing experts, subject area specialists and computer scientists.
- The Education Management Information System (EMIS), established in 2012, is responsible for collecting and managing statistical data from schools. These data include student demographics and attendance, teacher demographics and school finances. EMIS does not hold examinations data, which is held by NAEC. Principals and teachers submit and view information through EMIS's E-School portal, and communication is facilitated through the E-Flow platform. Analysing data held in EMIS is done by EMIS statisticians who field and fulfil requests from across the country. The volume of requests can be overwhelming and EMIS staff are not always able to accommodate them in a timely manner (see chapter 5). EMIS is also responsible for the provision and management of information and communication technology to schools.
- The Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC), established in 2009, provides professional development to teachers through regional training centres. It

also administers the Teacher Pre-service, Professional Development and Career Advancement Scheme, which outlines different professional levels of teachers and what is required for teachers to reach each level (chapter 3). Furthermore, TPDC oversees the development of professional standards for teachers and school leaders. Reports from national stakeholders suggest that training provided by TPDC is insufficient and can be strengthened. In addition, trainings on offer are not necessarily developed based on specific gaps and needs as demonstrated by evidence.

- The National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) was originally established to accredit programmes in vocational and higher education institutes. Its responsibilities have expanded and it now oversees school authorisation. The capacity of NCEQE is a concern. School authorisation currently applies only to private schools and plans to authorise and evaluate public schools are limited by NCEQE's inability to review over 2 000 schools in a limited time.

Figure 1.1. Structure of education governance in Georgia



Education management has become increasingly decentralised and local Education Resource Centres help oversee the system

MoESCS establishes the overall strategy of the education system and creating policies that govern its entirety (World Bank, 2014[24]). Key tasks for which it is responsible include developing curriculum, determining school standards, approving textbooks and allocating financial resources. Similar to many OECD countries, Georgia has recently decentralised education management and given schools and local school authorities greater autonomy to respond more directly to stakeholders' needs (Burns, Köster and Fuster, 2016[25]). In 2005, the Law on General Education was passed, which made local governments responsible for supporting schools in the implementation of their activities, providing social and medical services as well as coordinating transportation to students (Transparency International, n.d.[26]; World Bank, 2014[24]). The following bodies operate at local levels:

- Education Resource Centres (ERCs): Each municipality has an ERC, staffed by a team of four-five individuals, which is responsible for administering schools and coordinating between them and the ministry. ERCs also visit schools to check that schools are complying with regulations and report the results of their visits to the ministry (MoESCS, 2018[22]).
- School boards are tasked with the hiring of teachers and principals, agreeing on the school curriculum, approving teaching materials (e.g. textbooks), approving the school budget and deciding how funding is spent (Transparency International, n.d.[26]).

PISA 2015 data confirm that Georgian schools have high levels of autonomy compared to OECD countries. Georgian principals report having considerable responsibility over disciplinary and admission policies. Teachers, on the other hand, have prerogative over assessment practices and course content (OECD, 2016[27]).

Increased decentralisation and autonomy raises questions about the extent of local capacity and the effectiveness of accountability measures

Increased decentralisation has offered local authorities a greater degree of freedom to respond to diverse and local demands. However, it has raised questions regarding school actors' capacity to be effective in undertaking their new responsibilities. This is compounded by Georgia's lack of strong accountability mechanisms that ensure quality control and effective steering of decentralised systems. For example, the amount of funding that is disbursed to schools is inconsistent and how it is spent is unclear, but there are few mechanisms in place to ensure that resource allocation and usage are transparent.

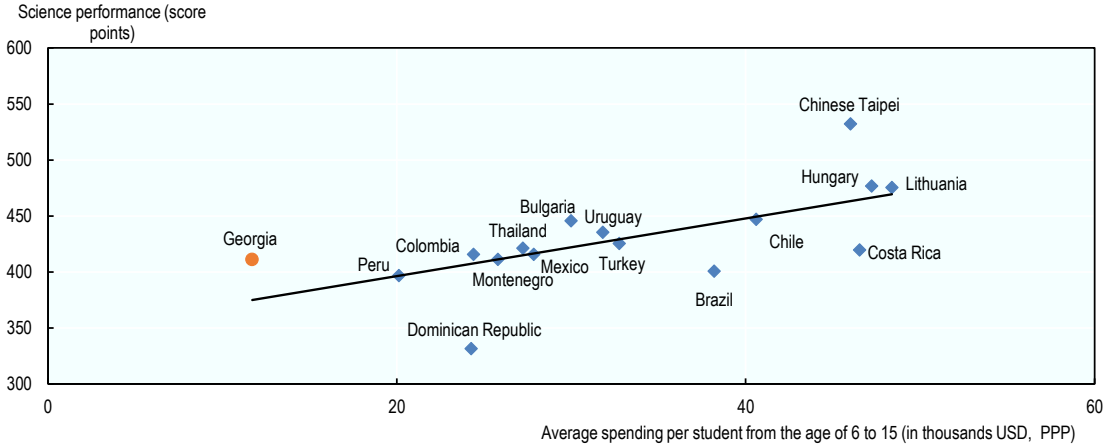
Funding of the education system

Overall expenditure on education is low, but returns are promising

Georgia's expenditure on education is low compared to international benchmarks. Among PISA 2015 participants, Georgia's cumulative expenditure per student from the age of 6 to 15 (11 704 USD, PPP) is one of the lowest and significantly below those of Bulgaria (29 980) and Turkey (32 752). Spending on education as a percentage of total government expenditure has nearly doubled from under 7% in 2012 to 13% in 2017 (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[28]). Nevertheless, it is still below the United Nations Muscat Agreement target of 15-20% (UNESCO, 2014[29]). This target is relevant for Georgia because it considers the context of economically developing countries, for whom greater investment in education infrastructure is often needed.

While the overall level of expenditure is important, how efficiently and equitably these resources are used also affects outcomes. In PISA 2015, Georgia performed at similar or higher levels than Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Montenegro and Peru, even though these countries have higher cumulative per student expenditures (Figure 1.2). The Georgian government is currently planning to increase expenditure in the coming years, although how the greater funding will be allocated is still in discussion (MoESCS, 2017[21]). Efficiently and equitably spending the funds will be critical to continuing Georgia's educational success, and this review discusses in-depth what the trade-offs of various allocation strategies might be.

Figure 1.2. Spending per student from the age of 6 to 15 and science performance for countries and economies with low spending on education (< 50 000 USD, PPP)



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown.
Source: OECD (2016[15]), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.

Higher education receives more per student funding, which poses concerns about equity

In 2012, around 65% of government expenditure in education was allocated to primary and secondary education, 20% to higher education and 15% to pre-primary education (UNESCO-UIS, 2019[30]). In per capita terms, however, spending on higher education is much greater in higher education (World Bank, 2014[31]). Initial government funding (in constant USD, PPP) in higher education was 1 243 per student in 2012, compared to 770 in primary and 667 in lower secondary education (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[32]). Internationally, per capita spending also tends to be greater in higher education (OECD, 2018[14]) and this distribution risks being regressive and further widening social and economic gaps, given that fewer disadvantaged students access higher levels of education. This situation is particularly true in Georgia, where differences in participation and outcomes vary tremendously according to student demographics (see Main trends section).

Vouchers are schools' main source of funding, though the amount is inadequate to cover costs in most small schools, which receive variable amounts directly from the ministry

Georgia introduced universal voucher funding to schools in 2005 in an effort to enhance transparency in education funding and increase school autonomy (Janashia, 2017[33]). Under this system, parents are free to choose the public or private school they wish their child to attend. As of 2009-10, a voucher of roughly GEL 380 per student (or GEL 505 for rural schools and GEL 635 for schools in mountainous areas) is allocated directly from MoESCS to the school to cover the costs of their attendance. However, at GEL 380, the voucher represents less than 30% of the fee of private schools and parents must supplement the voucher with their own funds (Tabatadze and Gorgadze, 2017[34]). This limitation considerably restricts disadvantaged parents' ability to enrol their children in a private school.

Vouchers represent schools' main source of income and are used for current expenses such as teacher salaries and maintenance costs (World Bank, 2014[31]; MoESCS, 2018[22]). Nevertheless, because school sizes vary considerably in Georgia, funding from vouchers alone is not enough to sustain operations at small, rural schools, which do not have enough students to cover their fixed costs. Therefore, schools with fewer than 169 students, which represent over 60% of all schools in Georgia, are allowed to determine and request their own budget amounts directly from MoESCS (Tabatadze and Gorgadze, 2017[34]).

The lack of set procedures to calculate the lump sum amounts that schools request and receive means that there are large disparities in funding among schools of the same size. Research shows that, even between schools with the same number of students, the amount of funding that is requested and awarded varies by as much as 300% (Tabatadze and Gorgadze, 2017[34]). These discrepancies raise concerns about the transparency and oversight of the system.

Most funding is spent on teacher salaries

Around 90% of the funding for primary and secondary education in 2017 was allocated to current expenditures (as opposed to capital investments such as new construction), of which salaries represented around 75% (World Bank, 2014[31]). While this allocation is similar to that across OECD countries (OECD, 2018[14]), a key difference is that, in Georgia, teacher salaries are supporting an ageing teaching workforce whose distribution does not match that of a declining student population (see discussion below). Not only is this allocation of resources somewhat ineffective, as many teachers are struggling to improve because of lack of support, but it also leaves little space for other expenditures that could have a greater impact on educational improvement, such as infrastructure or developing the necessary teacher support systems (World Bank, 2014[31]).

Structure of schooling in Georgia

Compulsory education is expected to expand

Compulsory education in Georgia currently lasts 9 years, covering primary and lower secondary education (early childhood education is not compulsory). This duration is similar to that found in OECD countries, where compulsory primary education is roughly nine years (six years of primary and three years of lower secondary). Some OECD countries have also made participation in upper secondary education compulsory, where students have the choice of undertaking academic or vocational pathways, as well as integrated studies. Recently, MoESCS announced plans to expand compulsory education to ten years in order to strengthen the linkage between general education, VET and tertiary education (discussed further below) (see Table 1.1). It has not been confirmed when this expansion will occur.

Table 1.1. Georgian education system

<table>
<tr><th>ISCED level</th><th>Starting age</th><th>Grade</th><th colspan="3">Education programme</th></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>24/25</td><td rowspan="6"></td><td colspan="3">Higher Education - Doctoral studies (Doktorantura - დოქტორანტურა)</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>22/23</td><td colspan="3">Higher Education - Master's programmes (Magistratura - მაგისტრატურა)</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>18</td><td colspan="3">Higher Education - Bachelor degree (Bakalavriati - ბაკალავრიატი)</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>18</td><td colspan="2">Post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>18</td><td colspan="2">Post-secondary vocational education</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">3</td><td rowspan="4">15</td><td>13</td><td rowspan="4">Upper secondary education - general education (Zogadi ganatleba - ზოგადი განათლება)</td><td rowspan="4">Upper secondary General and Vocational Education (integrated)</td><td rowspan="4">Upper secondary education - Vocational education - (Profesiuli ganatleba - პროფესიული განათლება)</td></tr>
<tr><td>12</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">2</td><td rowspan="3">12</td><td>9</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">Lower secondary education (Sabazo ganatleba - საბაზო განათლება))</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">1</td><td rowspan="3">9</td><td>6</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="6">Primary education - (Dackebiti ganatleba - დაწყებითი განათლება)</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">1</td><td rowspan="3">6</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">0</td><td rowspan="2">0</td><td></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">Pre-primary education - (Skolamdeli ganatleba - სკოლამდელი განათლება)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
</table>

Education is offered in Georgian and minority languages, which creates challenges for resource provision and quality assurance

Primary and secondary schools in Georgia offer instruction in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian, while pre-primary education is offered only in Georgian and Azerbaijani. In most cases, schools instruct only in one of these languages. However, there are 77 Georgian schools in which instruction is delivered in Georgian and a minority language (Livny, Abramishvili and Manukyan, 2017[35]).

Georgia's efforts to accommodate the needs of linguistic minorities are positive, but require substantial financial and human resources. Textbooks and teacher professional development materials have to be translated into different languages. Moreover, the ministry must hire multi-lingual staff to cover key functions, such as school inspectors and teacher trainers.

Early childhood education

Most Georgian students do not attend early childhood education

Early childhood education is not compulsory in Georgia, which is similar to in other countries in the Caucasus region. Nevertheless, the government wishes to expand early childhood services, in particular for children who are five to six years old, and has enacted policies to achieve this goal. These include abolishing entry fees in 2013, which has helped increase net enrolment rate from 28% in 2001-2002 (World Bank, 2014[24]) to 70% in 2018 (UNICEF, 2018[36]). This figure is slightly lower than those in the neighbouring Russian Federation and Ukraine, which have enrolment rates above 70% (World Bank, 2014[24]).

Access to and the quality of early childhood education can be improved

There is strong evidence that exposing children to stimulating cognitive environments can help establish the foundations for success in school and life (OECD, 2001[37]). Disadvantaged children, who are more likely to face poorer home learning environments, thus stand to gain the most from access to quality early childhood education services.

In Georgia, however, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely than their advantaged peers to attend early childhood education. Only 33% of ethnic minority students and 47% of students living in rural areas enrol in early childhood education, significantly lower than the national average (70%) (UNICEF, 2018[36]). These disparities in access arise from uneven geographical coverage of the pre-primary network, with urban areas being more likely to have pre-primary institutions than rural ones, where more ethnic minority families live. Among the reasons for not enrolling their children in early childhood education services, 67% of Azerbaijani parents and 48% of parents in rural areas mentioned that there were no institutions near their home, compared to only 25% Georgian parents and 2% of parents in urban areas (World Bank, 2014[24]).

There are also concerns regarding the quality of education that is provided through Georgia's early childhood network. A school readiness study conducted in 2011 observed that only a third of children who attended early childhood education and care had satisfactory levels of cognitive, social and emotional skills. (World Bank, 2014[24]).This can be partly explained by the fact that, prior to 2016, pre-primary institutions only provided childcare services (MoESCS, 2017[21]).

Primary and secondary education

Georgia has a large number of small schools and low student-teacher ratios

As mentioned previously, a shrinking population, especially in rural areas, has resulted in a large number of small schools (65% of all schools enrol less than 25% of the student population) (MoESCS, 2018[22]). Urbanisation, on the other hand, has led to 15% of the country's schools enrolling roughly half of all students (MoESCS, 2018[22]).

Such disparity in school sizes means that the ratio of students to teachers also varies greatly throughout the country. Although the national ratio (8:1 in 2013-14) is much lower (World Bank, 2014[24]) than across OECD countries (15 in primary and 12 in secondary education, 2016) (OECD, 2018[14]), in rural areas in Georgia, the ratio can be as low as 2:1 and in urban areas as high as 15:1 (World Bank, 2014[38]). Sustaining several small schools raises important efficiency concerns as providing a wide range of learning opportunities for students and hiring high quality staff is more difficult to accomplish under such circumstances (World Bank, 2014[38]).

Most Georgian schools teach students from Grades 1 through 12

Almost three-fourths of Georgian schools (72%) provide comprehensive schooling for all grade levels (MoESCS, 2018[22]), which reflects the fact that many Georgian schools are located in small communities that cannot sustain separate schools for different grade levels. While the country's context necessitates the high number of such schools, their presence also heightens the need for school-level accountability. Many students will not change schools unless their families move, which means that they will have difficulty finding better educational environments if their current schools are in need of improvement.

Teachers are in oversupply and modernising the profession through the Teacher Professional Development Scheme has resulted in mixed success

While student numbers have declined by around 21% over the past decade, teacher numbers have fallen by less than 1% (World Bank, n.d.[39]). One reason that teacher numbers have not fallen in line with the decline in students is a political decision to keep open many small schools in rural areas. Another reason is that, in the absence of an enforced retirement age for teachers, many teachers in Georgia continue to teach long after they start to receive their pension. Around one in four of Georgia's teachers are over 60, compared with around one in twenty across TALIS-participating countries (OECD, 2019[40]). The high share of older teachers limits the availability of full-time teaching posts, reducing teachers' real salaries. It also means that there are fewer teaching posts available for new entrants. Finally, there are concerns that some older teachers are less motivated to engage with professional development or upgrade their skills, making modernising teaching difficult (World Bank, n.d.[39]).

To address these issues, Georgia has implemented successive changes to teacher policy since 2007. These have included increasing the qualification requirements to become a teacher and introducing a merit-based career structure. However, in many cases the impact of these measures has been diminished by subsequent policy reversals and a lack of follow-through. For example, the requirement that new teachers complete a one-year induction has not been implemented. Similarly, the requirement that all teachers reach senior status according to the career scheme by 2014 was never enforced.

At age 15, Georgian students choose between an academic and a vocational track

Following Georgia's independence from the Soviet Union, the VET system virtually collapsed with many institutions having to close down. Currently, VET and general educational tracks are split and not provided in the same schools (MoESCS, 2018[22]). Across the country, VET is still offered only in 34 public schools – some of which require students to take an admission test due to lack of space – and 90 private institutions in 2016. Collectively, VET institutions enrol less than 2% of upper secondary students in 2017, compared to 14% in Russia and 26% in Turkey (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[41]).

Part of the unpopularity of VET is that completion of the track does not allow students to enter general tertiary education. Since 2005, students in VET no longer receive a secondary education diploma, without which they cannot apply to general higher education institutions. This situation is commonly often referred to as a "dead end" (Livny et al., 2018[42]). Therefore, Georgian students often prefer to follow an academic path in upper secondary education (Livny et al., 2018[42]), which confers greater prestige and is considered more professionally flexible.

Georgia is making efforts to upgrade its VET sector

An aforementioned mismatch between Georgian students' skills and the needs of the labour market is compelling MoESCS to consider how to expand and strengthen the VET sector. Since 2007, the government has been making important efforts to rebuild the sector by establishing new institutions, particularly in rural areas, developing a comprehensive national qualifications framework and a National VET Council (Livny et al., 2018[42]).

The government is now aiming to increase the number of students by 40 000 by 2023 (MoES, 2018[43]). These efforts will have to be supported by greater expenditure in VET, as current spending has decreased from 4% of total education expenditure in 2007 to 1% in 2012 (World Bank, 2014[24]). From a policy perspective, MoESCS is considering how to better integrate VET education with general education to eliminate the "dead end" currently associated with VET and increase its attractiveness (see chapter 2).

An exit examination at the end of upper secondary school was recently abolished because of the negative backwash effects it created

Until 2019, all students in Grades 11 and 12 took the Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE), which, along with student marks, certified completion of upper secondary school. The examination was introduced in 2011 as part of a government effort to address student absenteeism and improve school accountability. Students in Grade 11 took tests in scientific fields (chemistry, biology, physics and geography) and in Grade 12 they took tests in Georgian or their native language, math, a foreign language and history (MoESCS, 2018[22]). The SGE was administered in a computer adaptive format in which students' answers on previous questions determined the level of difficulty of the questions they subsequently saw.

Several concerns were raised that the SGE created unintended consequences for students and teachers. For instance, a culture of high-stakes testing encouraged students to prioritise preparing for the SGE over focusing on schoolwork, which sometimes decreased attendance (one of the original goals of the SGE was to increase it). Students would also seek out private tutoring to help them prepare, which exacerbated equity concerns.

From the perspective of teachers, pressure to help students succeed on the SGE made teachers use classroom time for test preparation, even if it meant straying from the curriculum. Furthermore, many teachers, particularly part-time teachers (see chapter 3), would offer private-tutoring services out-of-school in order to augment their incomes. This put them in a situation in which they may have been incentivised to prioritise their tutoring enterprises over their classroom instruction.

In 2019, after internal research by NAEC verified these concerns, MoESCS abolished the SGE. Presently, a student's marks in upper secondary school is the only criteria used to determine if they graduate. Although some discussion about introducing a new examination system has occurred, no firm plans have been made.

Selection into tertiary education is determined by an entrance examination at the end of upper secondary school, which has also been modified recently to create fewer backwash effects

The Unified Entry Examination (UEE) was introduced in 2005 as an entry exam for upper secondary graduates who wished to enrol in higher education. State grants are also awarded according to students' performance on the test (MoESCS, 2018[22]). The introduction of the UEE is widely acknowledged for its key role in increasing transparency and addressing the long-standing corruption that defined university admissions in Georgia (Orkodashvili, 2012[44]).

Previously, the UEE required students to take three compulsory subjects–Georgian language, a foreign language and a general ability test–along with an elective subject. In 2019, internal research by NAEC revealed that the UEE was also causing unintended backwash effects. As a result, MoESCS changed the required subjects of the UEE to Georgian language, a foreign language and either mathematics or history, along with an elective subject. Some university programmes may also require additional tests in sciences, history of Georgia, social sciences and literature.

To improve access to higher education, students from linguistic minority schools are required to take only the UEE's general ability test, which is offered in all minority languages (all other subject tests are only offered in Georgian). Linguistic minority students who pass the general ability test receive one year of training in Georgian language, after which they can proceed to a general four-year undergraduate programme taught in Georgian (with the exception of the Abkhazian region where Abkhazian is the language of instruction) (Government of Georgia, 2004[45]). In addition, MoESCS has introduced quotas for linguistic minorities in higher education institutions.

Tertiary education

Access to higher education has expanded, but there are concerns about the quality of education being provided

Tertiary education in Georgia has undergone a rapid expansion. The gross tertiary enrolment rate increased from 38% in 2000 to 57% in 2017, which is higher than in neighbouring Armenia (52%) and Azerbaijan (27%) (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[46]). Almost 42% of 25-29 year-olds hold a tertiary degree in Georgia, compared to only 27% among those between 60 and 64 years of age (Posadas et al., 2018[5]).

The rate at which Georgia's tertiary sector has grown has raised questions about the quality of education that is being provided. While higher education spending per student is proportionately greater than primary or secondary education spending, absolute amounts of public funding are still low by international standards (around USD 442 PPP in 2016, compared to over 105 000 USD PPP across OECD countries in 2014) (UNESCO-UIS, n.d.[47]). Given the limited public funding, higher education institutions are financially dependent on student tuition fees, which creates pressure for them to overlook academic readiness and enrol large number of students (Andguladze and Mindadze, 2018[4]). These quality concerns, along with the aforementioned misalignment between the focus of education vis-à-vis the employment landscape of the country, might be contributing to the high degree of unemployment for young, educated Georgians.

Few students from disadvantaged backgrounds and minority groups progress to higher education

Despite efforts to ensure access to all students, enrolment in tertiary education varies considerably across population groups. For example, enrolment from the poorest quintile of students is nearly eight times lower than from the wealthiest quintile. Ethnic Azerbaijanis are three times less likely to enrol in higher than ethnic Georgians (World Bank, 2014[24]). Moreover, evidence indicates the participation rates of these vulnerable groups are stagnant, if not reversing (World Bank, 2014[24]). For example, the net enrolment of students from the poorest quintile declined from 13% in 2009 to 8% in 2012.

Several factors contribute to the disparate enrolment rates. Because higher education is almost entirely financed by student tuition, disadvantaged students are less able to pay the fees necessary to enrol (World Bank, 2014[24]). Perhaps more importantly, the general education that disadvantaged, rural and ethnic minority students receive tends to be of lower quality, which often makes them less qualified to continue into tertiary education. These disparities in outcomes will be examined in detail in the Main trends section.

Main trends in participation, learning and equity in primary and secondary education

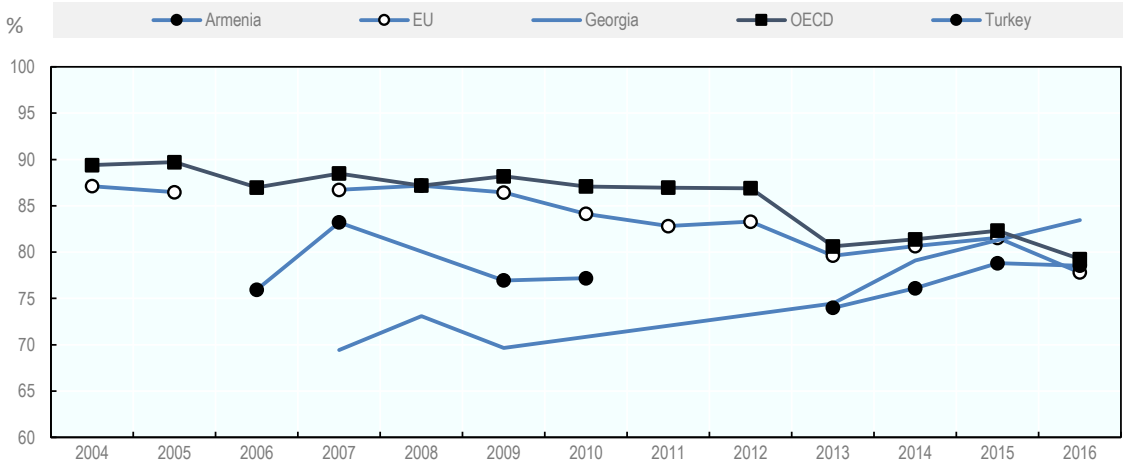
Georgia has seen significant improvement in enrolment across all levels of education and in outcomes, as measured by international assessments. Nevertheless, despite this progress, a large share of students still leave the education system without mastering basic skills. Inequities are also large and disparities in access and outcomes can vary considerably across different student populations. Georgia will need to improve its evaluation and assessment systems in order to identify and address weaknesses in student learning and so low outcomes do not become entrenched and disparities are not widened.

Participation

Participation in compulsory education has increased, but many students drop out between lower and upper secondary education

Georgia has achieved near universal participation in primary education, having increased its net enrolment to 98% in 2016 (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[41]). The share of students in secondary education also increased significantly and is comparable to international benchmarks. Participation in lower secondary education increased from 76% in 2007 to 94% in 2016, which is slightly higher than Armenia (89%) and Azerbaijan (90%) (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[41]). Enrolment in upper secondary education increased from 70% in 2007 to 83% in 2016, slightly greater than Armenia (77%), Turkey (78%) and the OECD average (79%) (Figure 1.3) (UNESCO-UIS, 2018[41]).

Figure 1.3. Net enrolment rate in upper secondary education (2004-2016)



Source: UNESCO-UIS (2018[41]), *Education: Net enrolment rate by level of education*, http://data.uis.unesco.org/# (accessed on 15 April 2019).

While participation has increased overall, a large number of students drop out of school after grade 9, which is the end of compulsory education. In 2017, while fewer than 500 students dropped out between Grades 7 and 9, over 8 000 did between Grades 10 and 12. This increase was partly a result of a previous policy that whereby principals were evaluated according to their schools' performance in school-leaving exams, which created an incentive for principals to encourage low-performing students to leave school. Although the number of students who drop out has decreased following elimination of the policy (over 16 000 dropped out between Grades 10 and 12 in 2014), it remains an issue for the country. As vocational education is underdeveloped, students who drop out do not have an opportunity to develop important competencies later and enter the labour market without formal qualifications (Janashia, 2017[33]).

Enrolment in private schools is increasing, though it's unclear if the education offered by private schools is higher quality

The vast majority of Georgian schools (90%) are public (MoESCS, 2018[22]), though the share of students attending private schools has been rising. In primary education, it increased from 3% in 2005 to 10% in 2015, higher than in neighbouring Armenia (2% in 2017) and Azerbaijan (1% in 2017) (UNESCO-UIS, n.d.[48]). As most Georgian schools offer both primary and secondary education, a similar increase is seen in the share of enrolment in private schools for secondary education.

These increases may be motivated by the perception that private schools provide better education. This perception, however, is not grounded in evidence. While private students' performance in international assessments, such as TIMSS and PISA, is indeed higher, the difference disappears once socio-economic characteristics are taken into account (Livny, Abramishvili and Manukyan, 2017[35]). This suggests that the higher performance observed in private school students might result from positive self-selection, an interpretation that is supported by PISA data. In 2015, a larger proportion of disadvantaged students (99%) are enrolled in public schools compared to advantaged students (75%) (OECD, 2016[15]).

Learning outcomes and environment

Learning outcomes have improved and are high relative to Georgia's level of educational expenditure

Georgia does not have a comprehensive, national assessment system. Some students are tested in some subjects in Grades 7 and 9, but there is no continuous, repeated and representative assessment of student learning in all key subjects (see chapter 5). Without valid national measures of student performance, this report looks to international surveys to understand student learning in Georgia.

In PISA, Georgia increased in science performance by 38 score points (equivalent to over one year of schooling) between 2009 and 2015. Similar improvements were observed in reading (27 score points) and mathematics (25 score points). Georgia's improvement mostly resulted from a reduction in low-performers (students performing below PISA Proficiency Level 2) of nearly 15 percentage points in science, 11 percentage points in reading and 12 percentage points in mathematics (OECD, 2016[15]).

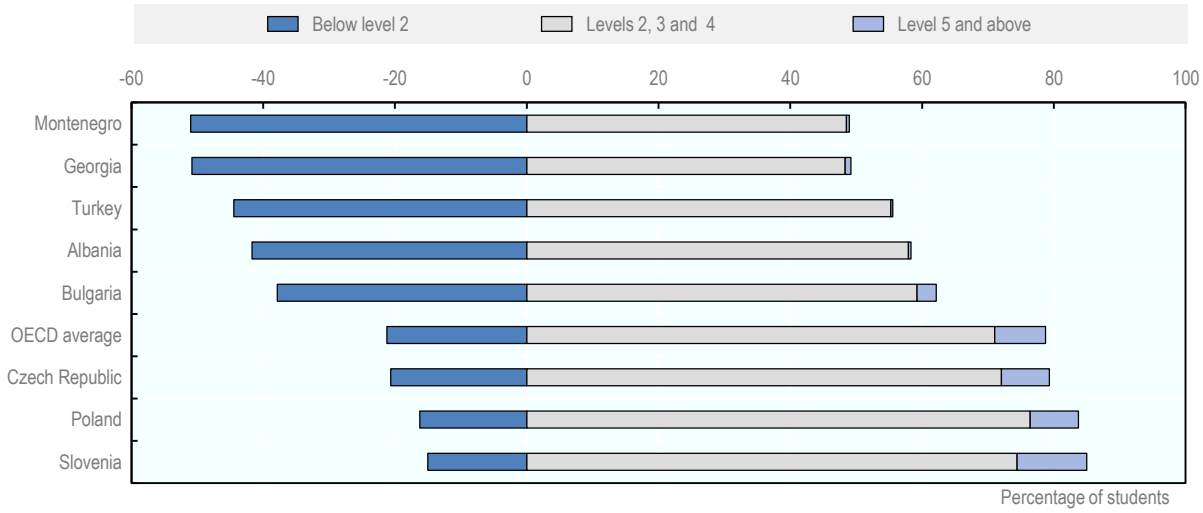
Progress was also observed in Georgia's performance in TIMSS from 2007 to 2015. In Grade 4, learning outcomes improved by 25 score points in mathematics and 33 score points in science. In Grade 8, there was a 43 score points increase in mathematics and 22 score points increase in science (IEA, 2015[49]).

A third of Georgians still lack basic skills in reading, science and mathematics

Despite these improvements in student learning, overall learning outcomes remain low compared to neighbouring and European countries (OECD, 2016[15]). In PISA 2015, Georgian students scored over 80 score points less than the OECD average in science, equivalent to over two years of schooling. In TIMSS, Georgia ranks among the lowest-performing participating countries in grades 4 and 8 (IEA, 2015[49]).

Georgia's share of low achievers in science (51%), while decreasing, is still one of the highest among PISA participating economies and is much larger than the OECD average (21%). In addition, less than one percent of students were considered top-performing students, meaning they perform at Level 5 or above. These students can draw on and use information from multiple and indirect sources to solve complex problems, and can integrate knowledge from across different areas. Across OECD countries, 8% of students are considered top-performing (OECD, 2016[15]). These results suggest that, while recent progress has been made, there is considerable room for improvement and that it will be important to make evidence-informed decisions to sustain Georgia's educational improvements.

Figure 1.4. Percentage of students at each proficiency level in science (PISA 2015)



Source: OECD (2016[15]), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.

Georgia benefits from some supportive school environments and teacher practices

Research indicates that a school that provides an orderly, supportive and positive environment is more likely to help students learn (Jennings and Greenber, 2009[50]). Overall, students in Georgia report that behaviour is less likely to hinder learning, that students are less likely to skip classes than students across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[27]). Moreover, Georgian students who reported a better disciplinary climate in their science lessons performed better in science, even after accounting for the socio-economic status of students and schools.

According to PISA 2015 data, 21% of students reported that teachers tell them how to improve their performance at every lesson, compared to 9% across OECD countries. More than half of Georgian students reported that their teacher continues teaching until the students understand, compared to 38% of students in OECD countries. While these country comparisons need to be interpreted with caution owing to social and cultural differences, the findings point to some positive interactions between teachers and students in Georgian schools.

Nevertheless, PISA results, while an important source, only capture data from 15-year-old students. Internal research about teacher practices is not widely available to supplement gaps in understanding. Thus, a non-representative survey was administered to principals and teachers as part of this review and the results will be referenced in this report.

Equity

Enrolment in education is not equitable and more can be done to increase the demand for education from underrepresented populations

Although Georgia has achieved virtually universal access to primary and lower secondary education, data from UNICEF's global Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) shows that enrolment in primary and secondary education varies considerably across different

student population groups. For example, net enrolment in secondary education was 72% for Azerbaijani students, compared to 90% for ethnic Georgians (UNICEF, 2008[51]).

The Ministry has recently introduced various initiatives to address inequitable access to education. In 2013, school textbooks were provided free of charge to all students in public schools and disadvantaged students in private schools. Additionally, MoESCS provides free public transportation to remote schools and has made the SGE free for students to take (Makarova, 2016[52]).

These initiatives, however, are primarily intended to facilitate the provision of education to students who are already enrolled. There are fewer initiatives that target students who were never enrolled in the first place. For instance, there are no conditional cash transfer schemes or other mechanisms to incentivise families to enrol their children who might otherwise be employed in a family business. In short, Georgia has improved access to the supply of education, but not necessarily increased the demand for education among more reluctant populations.

Learning outcomes vary greatly according to several dimensions

PISA results show that students in Georgia demonstrate varying performance according to several demographic dimensions. One of these dimensions is PISA's index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS), which estimates students' socio-economic background based on several variables, including parents' education, parents' occupations and household possessions. Students are classified as socio-economically disadvantaged if their ESCS is among the bottom 25% within their country or economy and advantaged if their ESCS is among the top 25%. In 2015, disadvantaged students in Georgia scored 78 points less than advantaged students, an equivalent of roughly 2.5 years of schooling. This gap is smaller than the OECD average (88 score points difference), but larger than in Russia (58 score points difference) and Turkey (59 score points difference) (OECD, 2016[15]).

An important measure of equity of outcomes in PISA is resilience, which is the percentage of disadvantaged students in a country or economy whose performance is in the top quartile of students around the world, after accounting for socio-economic status. Across the OECD, 29% of disadvantaged students are considered resilient, meaning they achieve better performance in their socio-economic status would predict. Russia and Turkey have similar shares at 26% and 22%, respectively. In Georgia, however, only 8% of disadvantaged students perform in the top quartile of science (OECD, 2016[15]), indicating that the most vulnerable students in Georgia find great difficulty in overcoming their circumstances and succeeding academically.

Other dimensions according to which student outcomes in Georgia vary include:

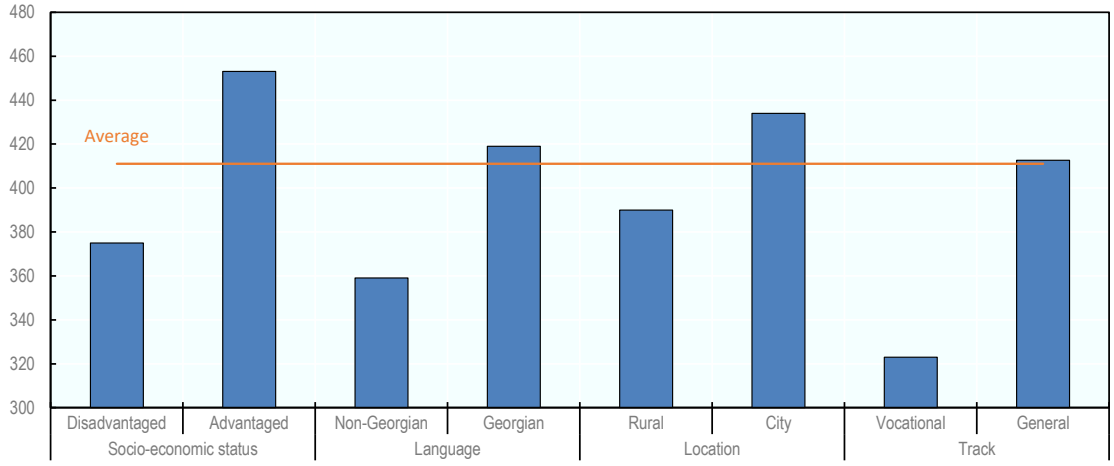
- **Geographic location:** Students from rural areas scored 44 score points behind their peers in cities, equivalent to nearly 1.5 years of schooling (see Figure 1.6). This difference can be seen at a regional level, where almost two-thirds of students are above the PISA science baseline in Tbilisi, but only one-third of students are in rural regions (see Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5. Percentage of Georgian students above PISA science baseline, by region

Source: Authors' calculations based on PISA 2015 sampling data in OECD (2016[15]), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.

- **Mother tongue:** Students who speak Georgian at home scored 419 in science, whereas students who do not speak Georgian at home scored 359 (see Figure 1.6) (OECD, 2016[15]). Although roughly half the country's students were below baseline proficiency, almost 90% of Azerbaijani students were and no Azerbaijani students scored above Proficiency Level 3.
- **Educational track:** While virtually all upper secondary students are enrolled in general education, the Georgian government is trying to expand the vocational sector and make it compatible with expectations from higher education institutions. In 2015, however, vocational students performed nearly 90 score points lower than their peers in general education programmes (Figure 1.6). Across OECD countries, the gap is much lower (39 score points) (OECD, 2016[15]).

Figure 1.6. PISA 2015 science performance between different student groups

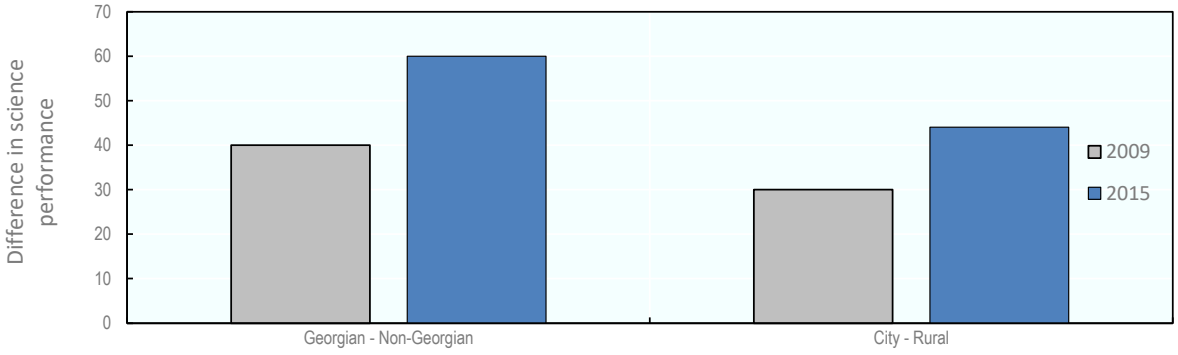


Source: OECD (2016[53]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019).

Inequity has worsened over time

Gaps in outcomes between students groups in Georgia in PISA 2015 have actually widened compared to the same gaps in PISA 2009. In 2009, students from cities scored 30 score points more than students from rural areas. By 2015, this gap increased to 44 points. The difference in science score between students who speak mainly Georgian at home and those who speak mainly another language at home has also widened from 40 score points to 60 points, equivalent to almost two years of schooling (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7. Difference in science performance on PISA between students groups over time (2009 and 2015)



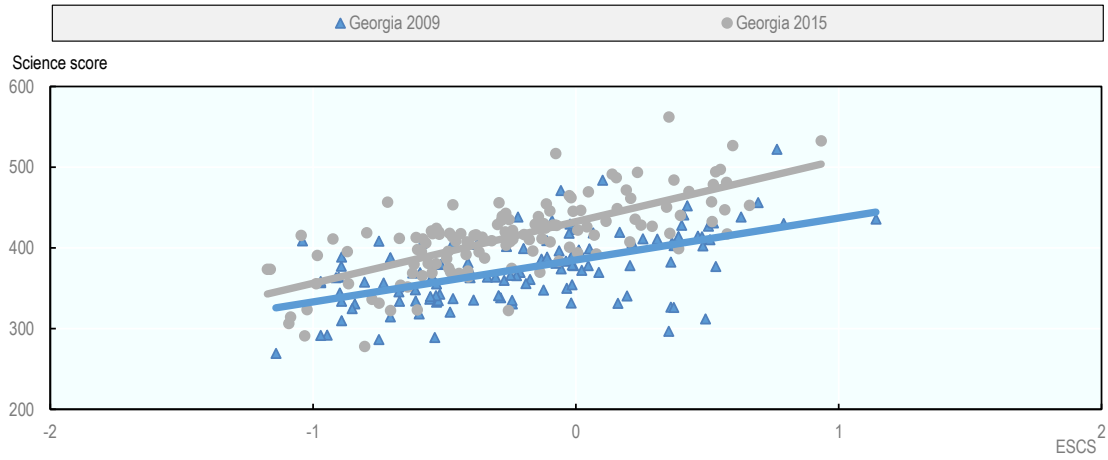
Sources: OECD (2016[53]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019);
OECD (2010[54]), *Data base PISA 2009*,www.oecd.org/pisa/data/pisa2009database-downloadabledata.htm (accessed on 6 June 2019).

Worsening educational inequities can be further observed in Georgia at the school-level, where PISA data reveal that the disparity in science performance between Georgian schools has widened considerably. Figure 1.8 shows that, while the highest-performing schools in

2015 exhibit much higher performance than they did in 2009, the lowest-performing schools in 2009 and 2015 have nearly identical levels of performance, (OECD, 2016[15]).

Not only is there greater variation in overall performance between schools, but the variation is more closely correlated with the socio-economic status of the students who attend those schools. According to authors' analyses of PISA data, in 2009 socio-economic status explained 34% of the variation in performance between schools, whereas in 2015 it explained 51%. Furthermore, in 2009, a one-unit difference in socio-economic status between two schools was associated with around a 52 score point change. In 2015, it was associated with around a 76 score point change.

Figure 1.8. School-level science performance and ESCS in Georgia (2009 and 2015)



Note: Each marker represents one school that was sampled to participate in PISA.
Sources: OECD (2016[53]), *PISA 2015 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/ (accessed on 6 June 2019);
OECD (2010[54]), *PISA 2009 Database*, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/pisa2009database-downloadabledata.htm (accessed on 6 June 2019).

These findings again suggest that the education system in Georgia, particularly evaluation and assessment structures, are not identifying the neediest schools and providing those schools with the resources they need to improve. PISA evidence supports this notion. School principals in disadvantaged schools in Georgia are more likely to report that their capacity to provide instruction is hindered by a lack or inadequacy of educational material and physical infrastructure than principals in advantaged schools. This gap between principals from advantaged and disadvantaged schools in Georgia is much larger than across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[27]). Moreover, PISA 2015 data also shows that disadvantaged schools are less likely to have certified (21%) and full-time teachers (61%) than the most advantaged schools (40% and 76%, respectively). These gaps are also larger than those across OECD countries.

Conclusion

While Georgia has implemented several initiatives in recent years to expand access and improve learning outcomes, a large share of students still does not master basic skills. Furthermore, the participation and learning outcomes of the most vulnerable student communities are very low and, in some cases, worsening. Georgia needs to develop a system that properly identifies where individual students are in the learning (chapter 2) and

how different groups of students are performing across the country (chapter 5). These measures need to be accompanied by training teachers to educate students using modern pedagogies (chapter 3) and providing schools, especially the neediest ones, with the support they need to help all students learn (chapter 4). This report looks at how developing coherent evaluation and assessment systems within a long-term reform strategy could help to improve educational excellence and equity across the country (Box 1.2).

Box 1.2. OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education

OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment look at how evaluation and assessment policy can be used to improve student outcomes. They examine countries' evaluation and assessment policies and practices for school education, and draw on insights from international practices, to provide actionable recommendations.

The reviews focus on four key components:

- **Student assessment** monitors and provides feedback on individual student progress and certifies the achievement of learning goals.
- **Teacher appraisal** assesses the performance of teachers in providing quality learning for their students.
- **School evaluation** looks at the effectiveness of schools in providing quality education.
- **System evaluation** uses educational information to monitor and evaluate the education system against national goals.

The reviews draw on existing OECD work on evaluation and assessment, which included reviews of 18 countries' evaluation and assessment policies and practices. Each country review is based on national information provided by the country to the OECD, background research and country visits. During the country visits, a team of OECD staff and international experts meet with key actors across the education system to identify policy strengths and challenges, and discuss the challenges of evaluation and assessment with national actors. The OECD prepares a report for the country, which analyses national practices and policies, and provides policy recommendations to strengthen evaluation and assessment linked to national goals and priorities.

Key indicators

#	List of key indicators	Georgia	OECD
Background information			
Economy			
1	GDP per head PPP, constant 2011 international $, 2016 (World Bank)	9 256	39 043
2	GDP annual growth rate, 2016 (World Bank)	2.8	1.7
Society			
3	Population annual growth rate, 2016 (World Bank)	0.1	0.6
4	Population aged 14 years or less (%), 2016 (World Bank)	19	18
5	Fertility rate (births per woman), 2016 (World Bank)	2.0	1.7
6	Rural population (percentage of total population), 2016 (World Bank)	42	20
7	Unemployment rates, modelled ILO estimate (World Bank)		
	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24 years old), 2016	32.8	13.9
	Total unemployment rate, 2016	14	6.3
8	Literacy rates, 2014 (UNESCO-UIS)		
	Literacy rate, 25 to 64 years old	99.7	97.2
	Literacy rate, 15 to 24 years old	99.7	99.4
Education indicators			
System			
9	Official entrance age of pre-primary education, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)	3	3.1
10	Starting age of compulsory education, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)	6	5.6
11	Duration of compulsory education (years), 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)	9	10.6
Students			
12	Net enrolment rates, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)		
	Pre-primary education (3 to 4 year-olds)	m	84.6
	Primary education (5 to 14 year-olds)	99.6	96.6
	Secondary education (15 to 19 year-olds)	95.5	92.2
13	Tertiary education attainment rate (25 years old and above), 2012 (UNESCO-UIS)	30.2	21.1
14	Share of students enrolled in vocational programmes in upper secondary level, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)	8.8	42.0
15	Enrolment rate in private schools, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)		
	Share of primary students enrolled in private schools	10.4	13.7
	Share of secondary students enrolled in private schools	10.1	17.0
Teachers			
16	Ratio of students to teaching staff, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)		
	Primary education	8.8	15.5
	Lower secondary education	7.4	14.3
	Upper secondary education	7.5	13.4
17	Share of female teachers, 2016 (UNESCO-UIS)		
	Pre-primary education	m	96.3
	Primary education	90.6	83.9
	Lower Secondary education	81.6	68.7
	Upper Secondary education	78.2	58.7

Finance			
18	Total government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, all levels, 2012 (UNESCO-UIS)	2.0	5.5
19	Total public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total government expenditure, 2012 (UNESCO-UIS)	2.3	3.5
20	Total public expenditure on secondary education as a percentage of total government expenditure, 2012 (UNESCO-UIS)	2.2	4.7
21	Average expenditure per student in USD PPP, 2012 (UNESCO-UIS)		
	Primary education	298	7594
	Lower secondary education	258	8620
	Upper secondary education	m	9145
	Tertiary education	481	9215
Learning outcomes			
22	Mean students' performance in science (PISA 2015)	411	493
23	Percentage of students below PISA Proficiency Level 2 in science (PISA 2015)	50.8	21.2
24	Percentage of variance in science performance explained by student's socio-economic background (PISA 2015)	11.1	12.9

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Chapter 2. Improving learning outcomes and equity through student assessment

This chapter looks at how student assessment in Georgia contributes to student learning. In Georgia, the concept of assessment is understood as giving summative marks to students in order to judge their performance. Using classroom assessment to improve student learning is not widely practiced by teachers. This understanding and approach to assessment is also reflected in the country's recently reformed high-stakes examinations system, which previously tested students in over a dozen subjects across two examinations spanning two grades. This environment motivated students and teachers to become focused on achieving high marks rather than on acquiring key skills. This chapter suggests that Georgia should re-focus student assessment so it is designed to help students learn. For this to occur, teachers and the community will need to be supported to fundamentally change their understanding of assessment and the examinations system will have to be reconfigured to reflect a more formative approach towards student assessment.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Introduction

The primary purposes of student assessment are to determine what students know and are capable of doing, to help students advance in their learning, and to assist students in making an informed decision on the next step in their education. In Georgia, a range of factors has prevented assessment from being used in this way. Not only do teachers lack a strong grasp of different assessment approaches, but both teachers and the public associate assessment primarily with grading and have little understanding of its educational value. Despite several efforts to improve assessment literacy, students and teachers still focus on the importance of numeric marks, even though those marks might not accurately represent what a student can do.

Adding to the summative pressure that students and teachers feel is Georgia's examinations system, which, until recently, has required students to take 12 subject tests over two grades at the end of upper secondary education in order to graduate. A separate test, in many of the same subjects, needs to be taken in order to enrol in higher educational institutions. The intense attention paid to these examinations leads students and teachers to focus narrowly on examinations preparation, often at the expense of students' individual learning needs.

This chapter discusses how Georgia can strengthen its student assessment system to provide greater educational value. It recommends that formative assessment be practiced more readily in classrooms so assessment is more strongly integrated into teachers' instruction and used to support student learning. It also recommends that the examinations system be reviewed to create a more positive backwash on learning and more accurately assess students in the most important academic areas. Finally, the assessment literacy of students, parents and teachers needs to be developed to help embed reforms and improve national understanding that assessment if not just *of* learning, but *for* learning.

Key features of an effective student assessment system

Student assessment refers to the processes and instruments that are used to evaluate student learning (see Figure 2.1). These include assessment by teachers, as part of school-based, classroom activities like daily observations and periodic quizzes, and though standardised examinations and assessments that are designed and graded outside schools.

Overall objectives and policy framework

At the centre of an effective policy framework for student assessment is the expectation that assessment supports student learning (OECD, 2013[1]). This expectation requires that national learning objectives be clear and widely understood. Regulations concerning assessment must orient teachers, schools and assessment developers on how to use assessment to support learning goals.

To these ends, effective assessment policy frameworks encourage a balanced use of summative and formative assessments, as well as a variety of assessment types (e.g. teacher observations, written classroom tests and standardised instruments). These measures help to monitor a range of student competencies and provide an appropriate balance of support, feedback and recognition to students to encourage them in improve their learning. Finally, effective assessment frameworks also include assurance mechanisms to regulate the quality of assessment instruments, in particular central, standardised assessments.

The curriculum and learning standards communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do

It is important to have common expected learning outcomes against which students are assessed to determine their level of learning and how improvement can be made (OECD, 2013[1]). Expectations for student learning can be documented and explained in several ways. Many countries define them as part of national learning standards. Others integrate them into their national curriculum frameworks (OECD, 2013[1]).

While most reference standards are organised according to student grade level, some countries are beginning to organise them according to competency levels (e.g. beginner and advanced), each of which can span several grades (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007[2]). This configuration allows for more individualised student instruction, but requires more training for teachers to properly understand and use the standards when assessing students.

Types and purposes of assessment

Assessments can generally be categorised into classroom assessments, national examinations and national assessments. Assessment has traditionally held a summative purpose, which aims to explain and document learning that has already occurred. Many countries are now also emphasising the importance of formative assessment, which aims to understand learning as it occurs in order to inform and improve subsequent instruction and learning (see Box 2.1) (OECD, 2013[1]). Formative assessment is now recognised to be a key part of the teaching and learning process and has been shown to have one of the most significant positive impacts on student achievement among all educational policy interventions (Black and Wiliam, 1998[3]).

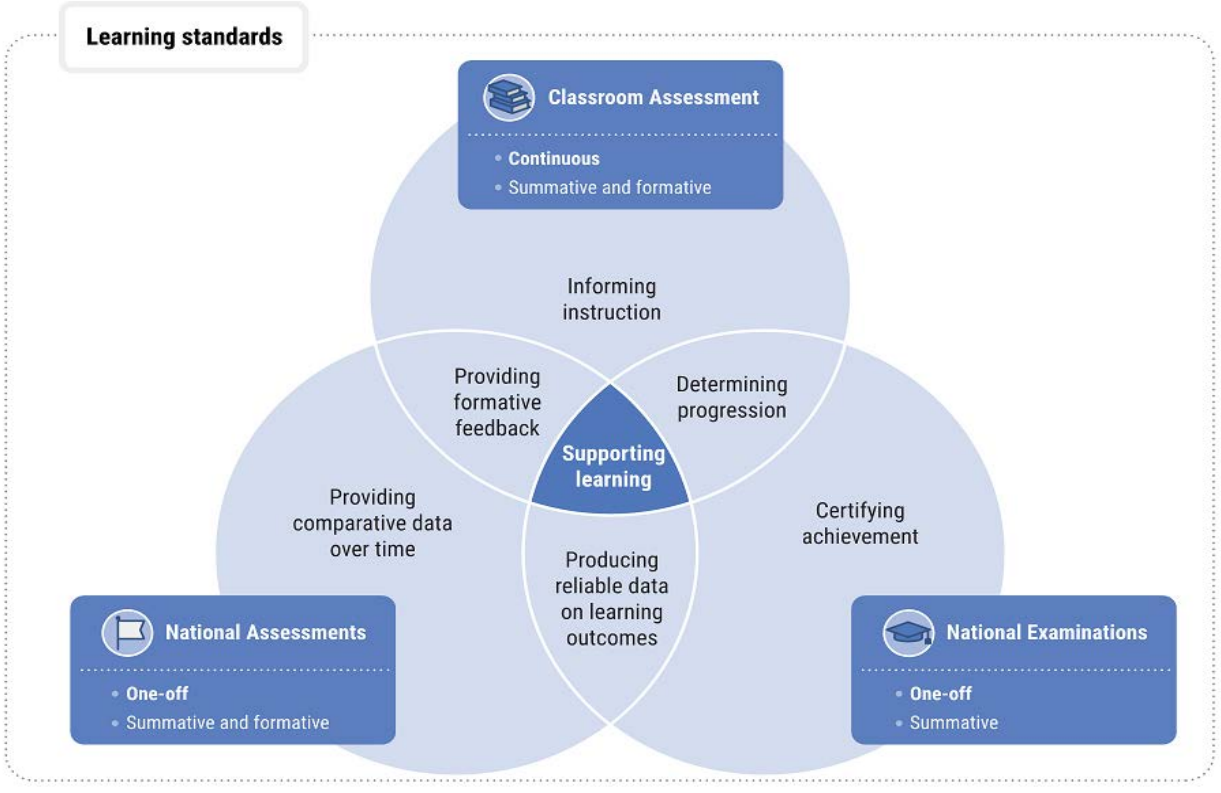
Box 2.1. Purposes of assessment

- **Summative assessment** – assessment *of* learning, summarises learning that has taken place, in order to record, mark or certify achievements.
- **Formative assessment** – assessment *for* learning, identifies aspects of learning as they are still developing in order to shape instruction and improve subsequent learning. Formative assessment frequently takes place in the absence of marking.

For example, a teacher might ask students questions at the end of lesson to collect information on how far students have understood the content, and use the information to plan future teaching.

Source: (OECD, 2013[1]), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en.

Figure 2.1. Student assessment and learning



Classroom assessment

Among all types of assessment, classroom assessment has the greatest impact on student learning (Absolum et al., 2009[4]). Classroom assessment supports learning by regularly monitoring learning and progress; providing teachers with information to understand

students' learning needs and guide instruction; and helping students understand the next steps in their learning through the feedback their teachers provide.

Classroom assessments are administered by teachers in classrooms and can have both summative and formative purposes. Classroom assessments can be delivered through various formats, including closed multiple-choice questions, semi-constructed short answer questions and open-ended responses like essays or projects. Different assessment formats are needed for assessing different types of skills and subjects. In general, however, assessing complex competencies and higher-order skills requires the usage of more open-ended assessment tasks.

In recent decades, as most OECD countries have adopted more competency-based curricula, there has been a growing interest in performance-based assessments like experiments or projects. These types of assessments require students to mobilise a wider range of skills and knowledge and demonstrate more complex competencies like critical thinking and problem solving (OECD, 2013[1]). Encouraging and developing effective, reliable performance-based assessment can be challenging. OECD countries that have tried to promote this kind of assessment have found that teachers have required far more support than initially envisaged.

Effective classroom assessment requires the development of teachers' assessment literacy

Assessment is now seen as an essential pedagogical skill. In order to use classroom assessment effectively, teachers need to understand how national learning expectations can be assessed – as well as the students' trajectory towards reaching them – through a variety of assessments. Teachers need to know what makes for a quality assessment – validity, reliability, fairness – and how to judge if an assessment meets these standards (see Box 2.2). Feedback is important for students' future achievement, and teachers need to be skilled in providing constructive and precise feedback.

Box 2.2. Key assessment terms

- **Validity** – focuses on how appropriate an assessment is in relation to its objectives. A valid assessment measures what students are expected to know and learn as set out in the national curriculum.
- **Reliability** – focuses on how consistent the assessment is measuring student learning. A reliable assessment produces similar results despite the context in which it is conducted, for example, across different classrooms or schools. Reliable assessments provide comparable results.

Source: (OECD, 2013[1]), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en.

Many OECD countries are investing increasingly in the development of teachers' assessment literacy, beginning in initial teacher education. In the past, teachers' initial preparation in assessment was primarily theoretical, but countries are now trying to make it more practical, for example, by emphasising opportunities for hands-on learning where teachers can develop and use different assessments. Countries encourage initial teacher education providers to make this shift by incorporating standards on assessment in

programme accreditation requirements and in the expectations for new teachers in national teacher standards.

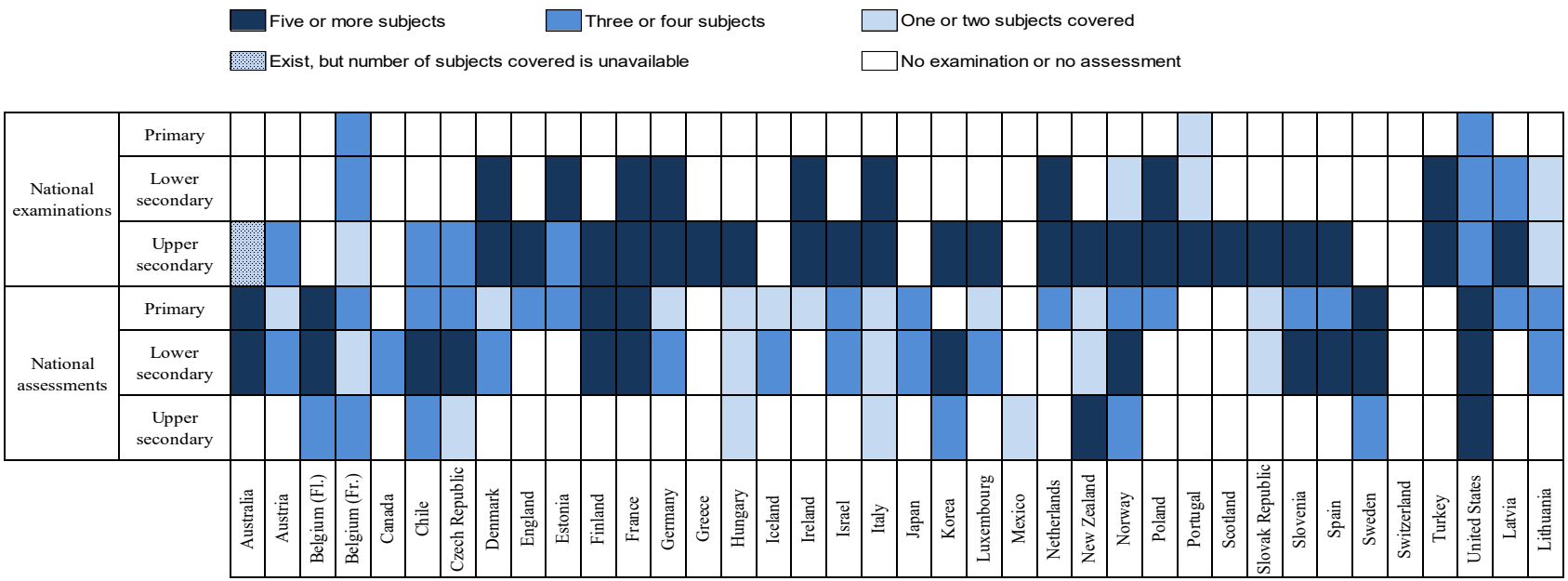
It is essential that teachers' initial preparation on assessment be strengthened through on-going, in-school development. Changing the culture of assessment in schools – especially introducing more formative approaches and performance-based assessments, and using summative assessments more effectively – requires significant and sustained support for teachers. Continuous professional development such as training on assessment and more collaborative opportunities when teachers can share effective assessment approaches provides vital encouragement. Pedagogical school leaders also play an essential role in establishing a collaborative culture of professional enquiry and learning on assessment.

Finally, countries need to invest significantly in practical resources to ensure that learning expectations defined in national documents become a central assessment reference for teachers and students in the classroom. These resources include rubrics that set out assessment criteria, assessment examples aligned to national standards and marked examples of student work. Increasingly, countries make these resources available on line through interactive platforms that enable teachers to engage in the development of standards, which facilitates a greater feeling of ownership over the resources and makes it more likely that they will be used.

National examinations

National examinations are standardised assessments developed at the national or state level with formal consequences for students. The vast majority of OECD countries (31) now have exit examinations at the end of upper secondary to certify student achievement and/or for selection into tertiary education, reflecting rising expectations in terms of student attainment as well as the importance of transparent systems for determining access to limited further education opportunities (see Figure 2.2). National examinations are becoming less common at other transition points, as countries seek to remove barriers to progression and reduce early tracking. Among those OECD countries (approximately half) who continue to use national examinations to inform programme and/or school choice for entrants to upper secondary education, few rely solely or even primarily on the results of examinations to determine a student's next steps.

Figure 2.2. National examinations and assessments in public school in OECD countries



Notes: Number of subjects covered in the assessment framework (subjects may be tested on a rotation basis).
Sources: Data for the national examinations and assessments in Lithuania are drawn from authors' calculations based on OECD (2017[5]), *Education in Lithuania*, Reviews of National Policies for Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281486-en;
OECD (2015[6]), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en.

While classroom assessment is the most important assessment for learning, evidence shows that the pace of learning slows down without external benchmarks like examinations. National examinations signal student achievement and in many countries carry high stakes for students' future education and career options, which can help to motivate students to apply themselves (Bishop, 1999[7]). They are also more reliable than classroom assessment and less susceptible to bias and other subjective pressures, making them a more objective and arguably fairer basis for taking decisions when opportunities are constrained, such as access to university or high-demand schools.

However, there are limitations related to the use of examinations. For instance, they can only provide a limited snapshot of student learning based on performance in one-off, time-pressured exercises. To address this concern, most OECD countries complement examination data with classroom assessment information, teachers' views, student personal statements, interviews and extracurricular activities to determine educational pathways into upper secondary and tertiary education.

Another concern is that the high stakes of examinations can distort teaching and learning. If examinations are not aligned with the curriculum, teachers might feel compelled to dedicate excessive classroom time to examination preparation instead of following the curriculum. Similarly, students can spend significant time outside the classroom preparing for examinations through private tutoring. To avoid this situation, it is important that items on examinations are a valid assessment of the curriculum's learning expectations and encourage high quality learning across a range of competencies.

Most OECD countries are taking measures to address the negative impact that the pressure of examinations can have on student well-being, attitudes and approaches to learning. For example, Korea has introduced a test-free semester system in lower secondary education, with activities like career development and physical education to develop students' life skills and reduce stress (OECD, 2016[8]).

National assessments

National assessments provide reliable information on student learning, without any consequences for student progression. Across the OECD, the vast majority of countries (30) have national assessments to provide reliable data on student learning outcomes that is comparative across different groups of students and over time (see Figure 2.2). The main purpose of a national assessment is system monitoring and, for this reason, national assessments provide essential information for system evaluation (see chapter 5).

Countries might also use national assessments for more explicit improvement purposes, such as to ensure that students are meeting national achievement standards and identify learning gaps in need of further support. In these cases, providing detailed feedback to teachers and schools on common problems and effective responses is critical.

Many OECD countries also use national assessments for school accountability purposes, though there is considerable variation in how much weight is given to the data. This is because student learning is influenced by a wide range of factors beyond a school or teacher's influence – such as their prior learning, motivation, ability and family background (OECD, 2013[1]).

National assessment agencies

Developing high quality national examinations and assessments requires a range of assessment expertise in fields such as psychometrics and statistics. Many OECD countries

have created government agencies for examinations and assessments where this expertise is concentrated. Creating a separate organisation with stable funding and adequate resources also helps to ensure independence and integrity, which is especially important for high-stakes national examinations.

Student assessment in Georgia

Traditionally, the Georgian education system has understood assessment of students as judgements of their performance represented by a numeric grade. However, as demonstrated in national curriculum reforms and in the Unified Strategy for Education and Science 2017-21 (Unified Strategy), Georgia recognises the need to develop more strongly the educational value of assessment and strengthen the capacity of teachers to use assessment more effectively to support student learning.

Nevertheless, evidence suggests that there is considerable divergence between the intent of Georgia's vision of assessment and what occurs in practice. Classroom assessment is still primarily used to make summative judgements about students, rather than to help them develop. While national examinations are widely regarded as trustworthy, the high stakes consequences associated with them create pressure for students to attend private tutoring and, similarly, encourage teachers to adapt their instruction to meet exam demands. In addition, examinations do not provide students with reliable feedback on their learning. Most students passed the upper secondary exit examination, although international assessments show that the majority are not mastering basic competencies (OECD, 2016[9]).

Types of assessment practices

Table 2.1 illustrates the different types of assessment practices found in Georgia. These practices will be discussed throughout this section.

Table 2.1. Student assessment in Georgia

Reference standards	Types of assessment	Body responsible	Process	National guideline documents	Frequency	Use
Curriculum Student learning standards (expressed within the curriculum)	National assessment	National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC)	Mathematics (9th grade) Biology, Physics and Chemistry (9th grade) Georgian as a second language (7th grade)	-	Specific grade levels	Monitor student progress at the system level
	National examination	NAEC	Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE) (discontinued) Unified Entry Examination (UEE)	Law on the Development of Quality of Education	Once per year	Certification of completion from upper secondary school Selection into tertiary institutions
	Classroom assessment	Teachers	Grades 1-5, descriptive grading Numeric grading (scale 0-10) starting in grade 5 (overlap with descriptive grading)	National curriculum Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd) formative assessment materials (optional) Millennium Challenge Corporation First pilot Improving summative assessment in STEM fields (optional)	Regularly, minimum number determined by the national curriculum	Monitor student progress and inform classroom instruction
	International assessment	International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)	-	Five years and four years	NAEC develops and disseminates analytical reports to inform policy and help educators make sense of and use the data more effectively
		OECD	Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA): mathematics, science and reading	-	Three years	NAEC develops and disseminates analytical reports to inform policy and help educators make sense of and use the data more effectively

Sources: MoESCS (2018[10]), *Georgia Country Background Report*, Ministry of Education and Science, Tbilisi; Janashia (2017[11]), *General Education in Georgia: Policy Problems and Solutions*, ISET Policy Institute; MoESCS (2016[12]), *Order №40/n, On Approval of the National Curriculum*; MoESCS (2010[13]), *Law of Georgia On Development of Quality of Education*.

Overall objectives and policy framework

Georgia has a well-established national curriculum that has undergone several revisions

In 2005, Georgia introduced the first national curriculum since independence, which determined academic content, established desired learning outcomes and distributed teaching hours across the week for all subjects and grades (MoESCS, 2018[10]). A revised curriculum was introduced in 2011 and another in 2018-19. Changes introduced by the third generation curriculum currently apply only to primary education (Grades 1-6). They will be applied to basic education (Grades 7-9) in 2019-2020.

Changes implemented in the 2011 and 2018-19 versions of the curriculum emphasise a more holistic approach to learning (MoESCS, 2016[12]). Education is seen not only as academic in nature, but also as a means to build student's social and emotional skills and to develop critical, creative and responsible citizens (MoESCS, n.d.[14]). For example, curriculum goals for general education include that students sustain healthy lifestyle habits, understand and appreciate cultural diversity and are able to make independent decisions.

Georgia's learning standards emphasise competences

Georgia has developed learning standards as part of the national curriculum. Similar to many OECD countries' (Peterson et al., 2018[15]), Georgia's learning standards emphasise the development of cognitive and non-cognitive competencies in real-life contexts (e.g. expressing spatial information using different resources) rather than acquiring factual knowledge (e.g. memorising the capitol of a country). The standards are organised according to subject and student grade level (recently changed to student stages).

Georgia is moving towards a stage-based curriculum, but understanding of this change varies

Unlike previous versions, the 2018-19 curriculum is organised around stages, meaning that there is one set of expected learning outcomes for Grades 1-6 and another for 7-9 (MoESCS, 2018[10]). This significant and innovative development recognises that students in the same grade might differ in acquired competences and allows teachers and schools to exercise greater flexibility in adapting the curriculum to students' individual needs, which can lead to improved student outcomes (Dumont, Istance and Benavides, 2010[16]).

However, in countries that have transitioned to similarly structured curricula, such as New Zealand and Australia, teachers have generally had a very strong understanding of student progression and assessment. They have also been provided with immense support to implement the new curricula. In Georgia, there is concern that the rationale behind this kind of curriculum reform might not be well understood by all stakeholders. Interviews conducted by the OECD review team revealed that teachers and principals found that proposed changes to the curriculum were unclear and that many were not sure what a stage-based learning outcome was. Some were completely unaware that the reform was occurring.

Classroom assessment

Formative assessment practices are encouraged by policy but are not widely used

Like many OECD countries, Georgia has made efforts to integrate more formative assessment practices into its classrooms. The national curriculum, for example, mandates that teachers provide only oral or written feedback and not summative marks until grade 5 (MoESCS, 2016[12]). The government has also undertaken projects in partnership with international donors to develop the capacity of teachers to employ more formative assessment methods. This includes the development of 13 formative assessment tools, such as the E-Assess, an online diagnostic assessment software, under the Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd). Teachers and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) staff reported to the OECD review team that they considered E-Assess to be very useful and customisable, helping them to better adapt instruction to student needs (USAID, 2018[17]).

Despite these significant efforts, formative assessment is not widely understood or practiced in Georgian classrooms. OECD interviews suggest that teachers tend to interpret formative assessment as simply providing a description of student progress instead of a numeric mark, as opposed to using assessment information for improving student learning. As part of a survey administered for this review, 43% of teachers indicated that they "never or almost never" or only "a few times" provide written feedback on student work, further suggesting that key formative assessment activities are not being practiced.

Teachers are not effectively prepared to assess students

Teachers in Georgia are not always trained in how to properly assess students. Internationally, 13% of teachers across 31 jurisdictions surveyed in the Teacher and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 indicated that they have a high developmental need in student evaluation and assessment practices. In Georgia, over 25% of teachers indicated a need in this area (OECD, 2019[18]). A large reason that this need exists in Georgia is the lack of training that teachers receive in assessment during initial teacher preparation (ITP) programmes. Many of these programmes have low entrance requirements and are not regarded as particularly rigorous. In fact, because of the age of the Georgian teacher population, almost one-third did not receive any ITP as they entered the profession before formal preparation was introduced (see chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of ITP).

Student marks are still the focus of classroom assessment but are not reliable

In grades 1 through 4, and partially in grade 5, students only receive descriptive feedback about their achievements. Starting in grade 5, students receive summative marks on a scale of one (lowest) to 10 (highest). Marks of one through four are considered unsatisfactory while all others are passing marks. Students who receive an unsatisfactory mark must repeat that grade, but in practice this occurs very rarely. According to PISA 2015, only 2% of 15 year-old students in the country have ever repeated a grade, compared to 12% on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[19]).

In Georgia, students' summative marks represent the focal point of classroom assessment and the emphasis on using marks to label students distracts from focusing on student learning. A G-PriEd report found that teachers were reticent to use assessment methods that did not produce numeric grades and did not see the value of checking a student's level of understanding (USAID, 2018[17]). Conversations with university faculty confirmed that

classroom instruction is often oriented towards achieving certain marks and understanding the curriculum is not a primary concern of teachers. These persons suggested that being assessed in this manner inhibits students from embracing the types of autonomous learning approaches that are critical to success at higher levels of education.

Despite being the focus of classroom assessment, the marks that teachers provide are not reliable measures of student achievement. Almost all students receive passing marks, though national results on PISA indicate that many students actually struggle to reach baseline levels of competency. One reason for the lack of reliable marking is that teachers lack resources that can help them gauge student achievement with respect to the national learning standards. Another is that societal focus on grades and ranking puts pressure on teachers to provide high marks, even if students do not demonstrate a minimum level of performance.

Reporting of classroom assessment is inconsistent

How student marks are reported in Georgia is not always consistent. Schools are required to issue a report card to document student progress, but Georgia does not have a national report card template that schools should follow. As a result, report cards are not standardised across schools and contain different information. This is unfair for students, who receive different amounts and types of information about their own learning. It can also create difficulties when students change schools as a student's teachers might not be able to interpret the student's previous report cards and understand where the student is in their learning. Georgia also lacks national guidelines around how students' performance should be communicated to parents, creating a situation in which some parents rarely see evidence of their students' performance (MoESCS, 2018[10]).

National assessments

Several national assessments are conducted by NAEC using external funding

Since 2015, the National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC) has conducted regular sample-based student assessments for maths and sciences in grade 9 and a census-based assessment for Georgian as a second language in non-Georgian speaking schools in grade 7 (MoESCS, 2018[10]). The three assessments include multiple-choice items and open-ended questions. The results of these are not publicly disclosed and are only made accessible to NAEC staff for the purposes of informing policy-making (MoESCS, 2018[10]).

Georgia's national assessments have been largely funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) under an initiative to improve education in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. MCC's funding is phasing out starting in 2019. Georgia has started developing a long-term strategy to continue administering national assessments (see chapter 5) and is considering developing standardised diagnostic assessments in primary and secondary school. These latter assessments would not focus on system monitoring, but on helping teachers identify their students' strengths and weaknesses so they can better tailor their instruction.

National examinations

Georgia administers two national examinations, one of which, the Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE), was recently eliminated in 2019. The SGE certified students at the end of upper secondary education, while the Unified Entry Examination (UEE) selects students for entrance into tertiary education. These examinations are outlined in Table 2.2.

From 2011 to 2019 graduation from upper secondary education was based on results in a computer adaptive test

The SGE was introduced in 2011 to improve student attendance (absenteeism in upper secondary education was previously a concern) and increase school accountability (Bakker, 2014[20]). Given the large number of subjects assessed (eight), the SGE was taken by students over the course of two years. At the end of grade 11, students were tested in geography, biology, chemistry and physics. In grade 12, they took tests in their mother tongue, history, mathematics and a foreign language.

The SGE was administered using computer adaptive testing (CAT) (Bakker, 2014[20]). Through an item response theory model, students were presented with questions that varied in difficulty depending upon their previous responses. Students continued with the test until a student's level of achievement could be determined at a specified level of statistical certainty, meaning that different students did not answer the same questions, nor did they spend the same amount of time taking each test. All questions were multiple-choice.

Passing the SGE in all subjects was necessary to graduate from upper secondary school. Roughly eight out of ten test-takers were successful, although passing rates varied significantly across the country (World Bank, 2014[21]), from over 90% in Tbilisi to 44% in Marneuli (Kvemo Kartli).

The SGE was considered trustworthy, but did not adequately certify student achievement in relation to the curriculum

The CAT format of the SGE helped instil trust in the examination. Because results were returned to students immediately, there was no concern about the integrity of the results and the exam did help to improve student attendance because attending class to prepare for the exam served as significant incentive. From an international perspective, however, using the CAT format for an upper secondary exit examination is unusual. The format does not guarantee that students must demonstrate knowledge and skills across the breadth of the curriculum because it classifies all questions from the same subject along a single continuum of difficulty, regardless of competence area. This was problematic because it meant that students were certified without necessarily showing that they have acquired basic understanding knowledge of the entire curriculum.

Since 2005 selection into higher education has been based on a standardised examination

The UEE, established in 2005, is a standardised examination used for selection into higher education institutions and scholarship allocation (NAEC, n.d.[22]). After a recent change in 2019, students must take three compulsory subjects at the end of grade 12 - Georgian language, a foreign language and either mathematics or history - along with an elective subject. This elective subject is selected according to the requirements of university programs to which the students wish to apply.

Starting in 2016, the UEE questions were presented to students electronically, though students still complete their answers on paper. Questions include multiple-choice and open-ended items. The tests are not strictly based on the curriculum. The UEE is only offered in Georgian, with the exception of the elective general aptitude test, which is offered in ethnic minority languages. Students from ethnic minority schools who take the UEE only take this test and, if successful, then enrol in a university preparation program. Upon completing the preparation program, they begin university studies.

To create items for the UEE, NAEC first sends an examination programme to MoESCS for review. Part of the approval process is determining the extent to which it is aligned with the curriculum. Previously, this part of the review was performed by the curriculum department, which was recently eliminated. It is unclear who performs this review now. After approval is granted by MoESCS, NAEC convenes subject matter groups to begin writing items. Despite this review process, interviews with Ministry officials, university faculty and teachers all suggested that the final items for UEE are not always closely aligned with the curriculum.

Table 2.2. Georgia's national examinations

	Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE) (discontinued)	The Unified Entry Examination (UEE)
Components	Grade 11 - Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Geography Grade 12 – Mother tongue, Math, Foreign language, History	Compulsory: • Georgian language and literature • Foreign language (English, German, French, or Russian) • Mathematics or history Optional (according to programme): • Mathematics or history (whichever is not chosen as a compulsory subject) • Sciences • Social Sciences • Literature • General aptitude test (required for ethnic minority students)
Eligibility	Compulsory for students in grades 11 and 12	Optional Upper secondary school graduates who wish to enrol in higher education
Item development	NAEC	NAEC
Question format	Multiple-choice	Multiple-choice and open-ended questions as well as items in other formats (e.g. listening)
Grading	Pass/fail on a scale of 5 – 10 (5.5 is typical passing score) Students must pass the eight subjects. The certification is awarded to students whose minimum score is 5.2 in three subjects and 5.5 in the remaining five subjects Note: Since 2018, students only received a pass/fail and their numeric score was not disclosed.	Scaled scores centred around 150 with 15 representing one standard deviation
Marking	NAEC	NAEC
Purpose	Upper secondary education certification	A student who passes has the right to attend a higher education institution and be awarded scholarships on a competitive basis
Reporting	Accessible online with student ID and password.	Accessible online with student ID and password. The final ranking is made available online on NAEC's official website

Sources: MoESCS (2018[10]), *Georgia Country Background Report*, Ministry of Education and Science, Tbilisi; Bakker (2014[20]), *The Introduction of Large-scale Computer Adaptive Testing in Georgia Political context, capacity building, implementation, and lessons learned*, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTREAD/Resources/Bakker_Introduction_to_CAT_Georgia_for_READ.pdf (accessed on 26 October 2018).

The UEE strengthened integrity in higher education admission

In the 1990s and early 2000s, university entrance requirements were not standardised across Georgian higher education institutions. This created space for practices such as bribing officials in order to influence student selection, which hindered equity of access and the capacity of universities to meet expected academic standards (Orkodashvili, 2012[23]).

In 2005, amidst government reform to tackle corruption, Georgia introduced the UEE. The examination was applied to all public institutions and measures were put in place to prevent cheating (test-takers' names were coded for anonymity and administrations were under camera surveillance). Stakeholders acknowledged that this examination had a key role in

increasing transparency and fighting corruption in university admission in Georgia in the following decade. Moreover, it is seen to have improved the participation of ethnic minorities in higher education and fostered greater social cohesion (Orkodashvili, 2012[23]).

Numerous high-stakes examinations had unintended negative effects

High-stakes examinations can have the consequence of creating a backwash effect, which pressures teachers to "teach to the test", as opposed to focusing on individual student learning, and pressures students to focus primarily on preparing for the exams by seeking tutoring opportunities (OECD, 2013[1]). These effects are particularly pronounced in Georgia. Research shows that 60% of Georgian students enrolled in grade 12 in 2014 registered for private tutoring (World Bank, 2014[21]) and 39% of households with a school-age child in 2016 had a private tutor (Bregvadze, 2012[24]). Georgia's large private-tutoring sector is also an equity-related concern. Nearly nine in ten advantaged students attend private tutoring, compared to only 36% of their disadvantaged peers (World Bank, 2014[21]).

Several factors contribute to these backwash effects. The large number of subjects tested by the SGE created significant pressure and students who wished to attend university had to take two examinations. Furthermore, because final UEE items are not always strictly aligned with the curriculum, students are unable to prepare for it through regular classroom instruction, which further motivates them to seek private tutoring.

Major changes to examinations were announced in 2019

In 2019, MoESCS announced that significant changes would be made to Georgia's examinations. In particular, the SGE would be eliminated due to the backwash effects it was exerting on students, teachers and schools. The implementation of this policy was immediate, with graduating students in 2019 being the last cohort to take the SGE. The UEE was maintained but, as mentioned previously, its required subjects were changed to make it more flexible. While discussions have occurred regarding what should replace the SGE, no decisions have been made. In the meantime, certification from upper secondary education will be based on student grades and, depending upon school-level decision-making, internal examinations. There have been preliminary discussions about NAEC strongly supporting schools in developing these internal examinations.

VET upper secondary schools use an examination to select students

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in Georgia enrols less than 2% of upper secondary students (OECD, 2016[9]). A particular concern with the sector is what has been termed "dead ends," in which students who complete VET upper secondary education are unable to enrol in general education tertiary programmes.

While underdeveloped, there is still demand for VET education and demand often exceeds the very limited supply. In response, NAEC began administering a VET admissions examination in 2013 to select students into in public institutions (passing an examination is not necessary for private VET schools, unless required by individual institutions). The exam assesses Georgian language and literature, mathematics and general aptitude. Students who achieve a 25% of the exam have their student fees fully paid for by the government (Livny, Eric; Stern, Paul, Maridashvili, Tamta; Tandilashvili, 2018[25]).

National student assessment agencies

NAEC oversees examinations and assessments in Georgia

The National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC), established in 2002, was responsible for developing and administering the SGE and currently administers the UEE, VET examination and the national assessments in grades 7 and 9. NAEC also facilitates Georgia's participation in international assessments, such as PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA.

NAEC is known for its strong technical capacity. Its team of over 200 people (as of early 2018) includes experts in statistics, psychometrics and information technology. Interviews with national stakeholders show that NAEC is recognised in Georgia as a trusted and competent institution, given the credibility of the administration of the examinations as well as the timeliness with which SGE results were released (Bakker, 2014[20]). Reports suggest that the success of the SGE's introduction was partly due to its association with NAEC and the credibility of the institution (Bakker, 2014[20]). In 2018, changes in NAEC's leadership led to some staff turnover and, as a result, some technical capacity is being rebuilt.

Teacher Professional Development Centre supports teachers' assessment literacy

The Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC) is a body at arms-length from the Ministry and is responsible for developing teachers in Georgia. Included in its remit is developing teachers' assessment capacity. To this end, it has provided a professional development module on learning and assessment strategies for over 7 000 teachers between 2016 and 2018 and works closely with programmes such as G-PriEd to further develop teachers (TPDC, 2018[26]).

Policy issues

Georgia has made efforts to strengthen the use of assessment to improve student learning, though the results of these efforts have been mixed. This review recommends several initiatives to achieve greater progress in this area. First, MoESCS should link teachers' use of formative assessment to the curriculum in order to encourage teachers to assess students for the purposes of improvement. The OECD also suggests that Georgia move towards a one-examination system that will both certify completion from upper secondary education and select students to enter universities. This would help reduce the negative backwash effects that Georgia has experienced in the past while introducing a flexible examinations structure that can assess students from vocational and general education tracks. Finally, the assessment literacy of educators and the public should be improved through the development of digital resources so all stakeholders are aware of and embrace the goals of the reforms that Georgia is enacting.

Policy issue 2.1. Enhancing the educational value and use of teachers' classroom assessment

In addition to improving student outcomes, effective classroom assessment, in particular formative, can positively affect students' attitudes towards learning and their engagement with school. Georgia has made considerable strides to embed formative assessment practices into classrooms, but the impact has been less than hoped for due to a lack of alignment between assessment and the curriculum, and inadequate resourcing to support

teachers in their efforts. In order for classroom assessment to better support learning, it is imperative that efforts to embed formative assessment receive more support.

Additionally, assessment in Georgia should exert less pressure on teaching and learning process. This can be accomplished through reviewing the country's marking system so it is less frequent, but more accurate and reliable. Lastly, there is a need to give students and their teachers more information about the progress that students are making so their instruction can be tailored specifically for their needs. This can be achieved by creating tools and procedures that systematically document what students are able to do as they advance through different levels of the education system.

Recommendation 2.1.1. Make formative assessment a central focus of teacher practice

Embedding formative assessment practices is challenging and attempted interventions in most countries have yielded varying results (Black and Wiliam, 1998[27]; Assessment Reform Group, 1999[28]). Obstacles that countries have encountered, and that Georgia is encountering, include a lack of alignment between the curriculum and assessment practice and a lack of support for teachers who are trying to implement changes in their classroom.

On the other hand, successfully embedding formative assessment practices requires that its practice be explicitly encouraged in high-level materials, such as the curriculum, which helps communicate its importance and hold teachers accountable for their use of it. Teachers must also be asked to perform tasks that make using formative assessment seem feasible and valuable, such as introducing student portfolios, and be provided with the necessary guidance to help them do so.

Use the new curriculum as a policy lever to encourage the use of formative assessment

The recent introduction of a new curriculum represents an opportunity to engage teachers in new pedagogical methods, especially those related to formative assessment. Teachers need motivation to change their practices and confidence to believe that they can do it. A demanding and modern curriculum can help make the case for formative assessment and act as a catalyst to support teachers in changing their practices.

Introducing a new curriculum necessitates addressing several aspects of instruction, such as how to help students develop different skills and how to assess if students have acquired those skills. It is important that these instructional aspects be integrated into the curriculum, in relation to its content and expected outcomes, as opposed to being add-ons. This type of integration weaves an assessment structure throughout the curriculum and reinforces the idea that formative assessment is inextricably tied to student learning and that its practice is mandatory. Box 2.3 explains how Norway explicitly integrates formative assessment into its national curriculum.

Georgia can similarly build in formative assessment into the curriculum by, for example, specifying what types of feedback teachers should provide (see Table 2.3). This information could be adapted and expressed in curricula for different domains, units of study and stages of education (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2007[29]). Importantly, the curriculum and accompanying materials then need to be made available to all teachers. An online portal would be an ideal solution so teachers can access the curriculum and related instructional resources in one place (Recommendation 2.2.1).

Table 2.3. Types of feedback

Feedback type	Examples
Identifying errors	Underline or circle words | "?"
Explaining misunderstandings	This data is out of date | Don't forget | Recent data shows
Demonstrating correct practice	Inserting corrections | New sentence
Engaging students in thinking	Why? | Is this logical? | Does this follow? | Is there an alternative interpretation?
Suggesting further study	"See…for information" | "Try reading… to develop your thinking further."
Justifying marks	"I could not award a higher mark because of xxx" | "This analysis made a strong contribution to your grade".
Suggesting approaches to future work	"In future assignments I recommend…" | "Try to develop your…"
Aligning progress from previous attainment	"I can see how you have developed this". | "You have made progress here".

Source: Adapted from Orsmond and Merry (2011[30]), "Feedback alignment: effective and ineffective links between tutors' and students' understanding of coursework feedback", *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, Vol. 36/2, pp. 125-136, https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602930903201651.

Box 2.3. Seeding formative assessment practices alongside the curriculum in Norway

In Norway, the curriculum for general upper secondary education is underpinned by an explicit assessment structure. The text of the curriculum specifies that:

- Students shall be given six-month evaluations for each subject and for order and conduct. These might be exams, written tasks and practical assessment depending on the subject.
- Continuous classroom assessment and feedback be given to the student using a range of formative assessments including observations, peer assessment and weekly reviews.
- Student self-assessment is a part of regular formative assessment. The regulations require the student to actively participate in the assessment of his or her own work, abilities and academic development.
- Follow-up of results from different types of tests occur through discussion with the teacher and parents.

These specifications, contained within the curriculum itself, help to embed the practices into classrooms, as teachers who are using the curriculum must also use these activities.

Source: Eurydice (n.d.[31]), *Assessment in General Upper Secondary Education*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-39_en (accessed on 3 January 2019).

Consider the introduction of portfolio assessment in the curriculum to anchor more formative assessment practices in the classroom

As well as establishing an assessment structure as part of the curriculum, it is important to give teachers guided tasks that they can use in their classrooms to embed key formative assessment practices. There are several ways this can be done, but a particularly effective method is the use of student portfolios, which are collections of a student's selected work that demonstrates evidence of the student's progress and learning (Dysthe and Engelsen, 2004[32]; Messick, 1994[33]; Paulson, Paulson and Meyeter, 1991[34]). Using student

portfolios is appropriate in Georgia's educational context because the country wishes to focus student assessment on providing feedback to individual students in order to improve their learning. Using student portfolios requires that teachers continuously provide feedback to students and that students and teachers reflect upon the portfolios to determine what the student's strengths and weaknesses are.

Introducing student portfolios in Georgia will require strong support to teachers so they understand not only on how to use them, but also why they matter. As part of the survey conducted for this review, teachers were asked to what extent they believe certain methods accurately assess the performance of their students. Student portfolios were considered to be less accurate than question-and-answer, oral presentations and open-ended test questions. These data suggest that teachers in Georgia are not aware of how different methods of assessment can help students learn. They will need to gain this awareness in order to successfully use new practices.

There are several steps that Georgia can take to embed the use of student portfolios. An essential starting point would be to include examples of age and subject-appropriate portfolios as part of the new curriculum. These materials should be made available online so all teachers can access them (see Recommendation 2.2.1). They should also be accompanied with expectations as to when they might be undertaken and submitted, such as at the end of a grading period. Requiring that the portfolio be submitted at this point would help to ground summative judgements in a wider range of evidence and ensure that teachers and students take the portfolio exercise seriously. During regular reviews of portfolio materials, however, teachers should focus on an individual student's strengths and challenges in relation to standards, rather than making a judgement of their performance.

Georgia will also need to build teachers' confidence that they can successfully use student portfolios in their own classrooms. In-school support can help accomplish this. As part of the regular, school-based appraisal processes that this review recommends in chapter 3, teachers should be provided with feedback on their use of student portfolios. The feedback would not only help them improve their portfolio-related practices, but also help ensure that all make an effort to use those practices in the first place.

While portfolios can be used at all levels of education, in Georgia they would be particularly helpful in grades 8 and 9 as they could act as evidence to help inform a student's decision about entering a general or vocational programme (see also Recommendation 2.1.3). If, for example, a student selects material for his/her portfolio that demonstrates an inclination towards a certain vocational field, a teacher can discuss with the student if that would be an appropriate path.

An example of this kind of practice exists in Finland, where students receive on-going, formal feedback about their performance throughout their schooling, which then feeds into the decisions that they make regarding future choices. Students might, based on the feedback they receive, enter a vocational stream, the workforce or higher education (Eurydice, n.d.[35]; Finnish National Agency for Education, n.d.[36]).

Recommendation 2.1.2. Reduce the pressure around summative marking and make it more educationally meaningful

Summative assessment is an important part of classroom assessment. However, in Georgia, it weighs too heavily on students and teachers. This not only displaces formative practices, which have a greater proven impact on learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998[3]), but can also

distort approaches to teaching and learning. Specifically, a heavy focus on summative assessment can:

- lead teachers to disregard the subtle and explicit changes that happen as students learn
- compel teachers to label students as being of a particular level of capacity
- make students believe that their capabilities are fixed and erode their motivation to learn (OECD, 2013[1]).

In order to orient teachers and students to focus on student learning and not student marks, Georgia will have to lessen the frequency with which some teachers are conferring marks. Furthermore, students should also receive information about their learning from external assessment sources, such as standardised assessments. This would give students a broader indication about their progress and give teachers a reliable reference point with which to evaluate their own marking.

Discontinue the practice of continuous log grading

In Georgia, teachers are assigning class work, homework and a range of other tests and recording the grades continually. Though not mandatory, some teachers even report a numeric grade for every child for every lesson, which requires a large investment of time. These grades provide a snapshot summary of student activities at one point in time but do not help teachers understand how their students are learning. Furthermore, these grades do not help the students establish where they are in their learning and, crucially, where they need to go (Stobart, 2008[37]). Discontinuing the practice of daily grading would give teachers more time to dedicate to other activities and reduce the pressure that students feel around receiving a judgement every day.

Help teachers align their summative marking with the new curriculum

The introduction of the new curriculum presents opportunities for embedding formative assessment, but also challenges for determining students' summative marks. Teachers must understand not only how to discern accurately student learning according to the curriculum, but also how grades correspond to students' levels of learning.

A substantial amount of training and resources (see Recommendation 2.2.1) will need to be provided for teachers to assess students properly against the curriculum. It will be important that this training engage teachers in the definition of grading criteria so they are not simply told what the criteria are, but are involved in their development. This is important because involving teachers in education reforms increases their "buy in" and the likelihood that the reforms are sustained (Barber, 2009[38]; Persson, 2016[39]).

Moreover, teachers' judgements will need consistent calibration with respect to their grading. However, the review team was told that teachers rarely meet systematically to talk about examples of marked student work or how each teacher awards grades. Georgia should thus give more support to schools to introduce school-based moderation, which provides time for teachers to convene to discuss how they mark student work and determine student learning (OECD, 2013[1]). Chapter 3 of this review mentions that there is excess time in teachers' schedules – MoESCS can require schools to use this time to conduct moderation. During these meetings, teachers should come together to learn from each other's practices, such as using student portfolios.

Providing adequate resources to teachers will be critical to help them align their marking and understand student progress with respect to the standards. Countries that wish to reform their teachers' assessment practices have invested heavily in resourcing. Box 2.4 describes how the state of Rhode Island in the United States created an assessment toolkit to help its teachers decide on grading criteria and moderate their scoring of student work. Georgia, through TPDC, should consider producing similar materials (e.g. examples of student portfolios) to assist teachers with their marking.

Box 2.4. The assessment toolkit in Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Education has created a comprehensive assessment toolkit (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012[40]) to assist teachers in assessing students against the expected student learning outcomes. The toolkit contains the following materials:

- Guidance on developing and selecting quality assessments – This document explains different types and purposes of assessments and the advantages and challenges of different assessments (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012[41]).
- Using baseline data – This guide clarifies how baseline data can be collected with respect to the expected student learning outcomes and also includes a worksheet that teachers can use when analysing baseline data (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012[42]).
- Assessment review tool – This tool provides a framework to teachers that can be used to evaluate different assessments. It asks educators to consider assessment type, alignment, scoring, administration and bias. This tool is intended to be used by a team of teachers, perhaps organised according to grade or subject (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012[43]).
- Student work analysis protocol – This tool helps teachers examine student work in order to understand what students know and are can do according to the student learning outcomes. With this information, the protocol then helps teachers make instructional decisions to improve student learning (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012[44]).
- Calibration protocol for scoring student work – This document is intended for teams of teachers and is designed to be used by each member to arrive at similar conclusions. It is accompanied by several samples of student work from different subjects (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012[45]).

Recommendation 2.1.3. Systematically record assessment results in order to track student progress and inform key decisions

Recording student progress is an important component of assessment. The Department of Education in the United Kingdom defines student records as information about pupils that are processed by the state education sector, including academic work, extracurricular pursuits, records of specific needs and records of behaviour and attendance (Department of Education, 2015[46]). Accurate records provide a global view of student performance and help educators and parents make decisions about how individual students should be

educated, particularly when students transfer between schools (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.[47]).

In Georgia, records about student learning, particularly descriptive feedback, are not kept in a standardised manner. Schools are not issued a national report card template to follow nor are they given instructions on how to disseminate the report cards to parents. As records of student learning are not uniform across schools, they cannot be easily entered into a central data system. These circumstances can lead to students, particularly those from vulnerable populations, being left behind without teachers and parents being aware.

Create a common report card template and procedures around dissemination

Internationally, student record-keeping tends to be explicitly prescribed. In the United Kingdom, legal regulations require that student progress be reported annually and that specific information about their children be included in the information that parents receive (Department of Education, 2015[48]). The Finnish National Agency for Education requires that students receive progress reports at least once a year based on the results of continuous assessments that are administered by teachers (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2017[49]).

Creating a common report card template, specifying what should be included in them and requiring that the report cards be disseminated would ensure that Georgian schools are recording the most vital information about student learning and that parents are made aware of their students' progress. Importantly, the report card template should make space for, and require, descriptive, formative feedback, especially in grades 1 through 4 (and partially in grade 5), during which students only receive descriptive feedback. This information can help students and parents understand where a student is in their learning more effectively than stand-alone, numeric grades.

Integrate the standardised report card template into the EMIS E-Journal

EMIS has developed an E-Journal in which students' grades are recorded and can be viewed online by themselves, their parents and their teachers. E-Journal has the advantage of transferability. As the grades are stored in the EMIS database, they can be retrieved when students switch schools and/or teachers. Currently, E-Journal is used by private schools in Georgia and its delivery is being planned for public schools.

With a standardised report card template, student data in E-Journal could then reflect what appears on their report cards, including the descriptive, formative feedback. This information would then be accessible to, and could be used by, a student's teachers in each school that the student attends. In time, the E-Journal could replace the need for physical report cards, which would allow students and parents to more easily and quickly monitor student progress over their academic career.

Use student assessment information to support vulnerable students

Accurate and complete student records can be helpful in making learning risks more visible. Without consistent record-keeping, struggling students might not be identified as such and are vulnerable to becoming "lost," especially as they change teachers and/or schools (OECD, 2012[50]). Such information would be particularly useful to principals, who need an efficient way of identifying students who need assistance. For example, a principal might not know what is happening in every classroom every day, but they can review

student records to identify at-risk students, bring together teachers around the student's report cards and together identify a strategy to help the student.

Internationally, several countries rely on student records to feed into early warnings systems, which analyse information about students' attendance, learning progress and other factors to identify students who might be at risk of dropping out or under-performing (European Commission, 2013[51]; Borgonovi, Ferrara and Maghnouj, 2018[52]). With consistent student record keeping, Georgia can begin implementing such systems, which would help identify at-risk students and address equity gaps in student outcomes.

Develop and record external measures of student performance at key moments to inform decision-making

At present, most students in Georgia complete primary and secondary education without any external measure of their performance except for the UEE in grade 12. This configuration carries many risks. For example, students do not receive reliable indicators on their learning; teacher bias has an outsized effect on student assessment with no moderating measure; and school marks might make students think they have mastered a domain when, in fact, there is still much they can learn (OECD, 2013[1]). These concerns are heightened in Georgia because many students remain in the same school and are assessed by a limited number of teachers.

Over time, improving the quality of teacher's assessment judgements will help to mitigate some of these risks. Nevertheless, it is equally important to introduce external measures at key points in order to help moderate teachers' judgements. Many OECD countries regularly administer national assessments, which help improve the reliability of teacher judgements in relation to national standards (OECD, 2015[6]). As Georgia has developed national assessment capacity through its current national examinations system and through partnership with MCC, the OECD recommends that Georgia administer standardised, full-cohort assessments at key stages in a student's education to help assess student performance (see chapter 5 for more details about the national assessment).

Consider making the external assessment in grade 9 (or grade 10 if compulsory education is extended) a certification examination

Though testing in early years would not be associated with stakes, this review suggests that Georgia consider administering an examination at the end of grade nine (or grade 10, if compulsory education is extended) that would, alongside teachers' continuous assessment, help inform student choice with respect to the programme of study in upper secondary education. Internationally, there is considerable variety, related to the structure of national school systems, in how countries examine students at the end of lower secondary education. However, considering the structure of schooling in Georgia and the country's goals to further develop VET, the review team suggests introducing an examination that would help select students into upper secondary pathways. Box 2.5 describes such an examination from Ireland, a country that also requires education through the second cycle of education, after which students can continue in general education or move to a more vocationally oriented track. Ireland's examination also relies on a wide range of assessment practices, such as a project, which help the examination serve formative as well as summative purposes.

Georgia would be well-positioned to develop such an exam, as it could be based on the existing VET examination. Having such an examination for all students would better inform student choice and support Georgia's national goal of strengthening the VET sector in upper secondary education. Administering an examination later in a student's education

(as opposed to during primary grades) helps to mitigate the risk of labelling young students while generating positive effects, such as incentivising students to apply themselves and helping students identify their interests. Some teachers told the OECD review team that they would welcome a national examination at this stage to alleviate the pressure of determining student pathways solely via their marks.

Box 2.5. Lower secondary examination in Ireland

In 2015, Ireland introduced a new framework for the Junior Cycle of education (lower secondary level, three years in total). An assessment model called the Junior Cycle Profiles of Achievement is included in the framework. According to this reform, students will be assessed continuously throughout junior cycle and at the end by an external examination.

As part of continuous assessment, students must take two classroom-based assessments, one in their second year and one in their third year. These assessments might include oral presentations, written work, practical activities, artistic performances and scientific experiments. Related to the second classroom-based assessment is a written assessment task, which requires that students demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and skills covered in the second classroom-based assessment. This task is completed in class but marked centrally.

At the end of their third year, students take external examinations in most subjects. All exams are created, administered and marked centrally. Most subjects have only one common level of difficulty, though English, Mathematics and Irish have two levels (ordinary and higher).

As education in Ireland is compulsory up to age 16, or three years of secondary education, students who receive their junior cycle certification must choose whether to continue with schooling or pursue other training opportunities. Their assessment results in junior cycle – continuous, classroom-based and external – act as key pieces of information that help them make this important decision.

Sources: Ireland Department of Education and Skills (2015[53]), *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, www.education.ie (accessed on 3 January 2019);
Eurydice (n.d.[54]), *Assessment in Lower Secondary Education – Ireland*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-lower-secondary-education_en (accessed on 3 January 2019).

Policy issue 2.2. Building understanding that the goal of assessment is to improve student learning

Having a high-level of assessment literacy, defined as what stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) understand about education assessment, is an important aspect of contemporary education (Plake, 1993[55]; Fullan, 2000[56]). In Georgia, improving teacher assessment literacy is a critical need. This review has proposed specific reforms that MoESCS should consider introducing in order to orient teachers towards using formative assessment and enhance the educational value of summative classroom assessment and examinations. However, changing assessment practices in classrooms, schools and even the system will not achieve the desired outcomes unless a collective understanding of the achievability and value of those reforms is reached (Fullan, 2006[57]; Fullan, 1992[58]). This is particularly important in Georgia, where efforts to strengthen assessment practices have

lacked sufficient explanation for the rationale of the change and many stakeholders remain unclear about why change is needed. Without understanding why the proposed changes are valuable, students, teachers and parents will simply comply with the new requirements without fully embracing the intent of the reforms.

Recommendation 2.2.1. Provide teachers with assessment resources to improve student learning

For most teachers in Georgia, re-orienting their assessment practices to promote student learning represents a radical departure from what they are used to. They will not be able to understand the value of, much less implement, these practices without consistent support and reinforcement, which research shows is one of the primary factors associated with sustaining the use of effective assessment practices in the classroom (Harrison, 2005[59]; Wilson, 2008[60]). In Georgia, what teachers learn about assessment during ITP can be improved, but an immediate challenge is to develop the assessment literacy of in-service teachers. As mentioned previously, regular, in-school support is an effective method of building confidence and capacity for new approaches, especially when teachers are also encouraged to work together and are given access to a range of high quality assessment resources.

Strengthen the emphasis on improving assessment practices during initial teacher education

Teachers who complete ITP should be expected to have a minimum level of competence in the area of student assessment. In Georgia, ITP programmes struggle to provide teacher candidates with a strong basis in student assessment. There are no standards for graduated teachers in general, and none on assessment in particular. These standards would specify the types of skills graduated teachers would be expected to acquire and demonstrate. Georgia should develop these standards and use them to help guide the design of ITP programmes and the pedagogy examination recommended in chapter 3 of this review.

The planned introduction of a new consecutive ITP programme and the review of the extant one-year programme that this review recommends provide an opportunity to improve how teachers are trained to assess their students. Georgia should integrate into these programmes practices that have been internationally recognised to be effective in developing teachers' assessment literacy. In Finland, which is recognised for having strong ITP programmes, teacher candidates are trained to assess students using a range of approaches. These might include group tasks, individual presentations, quizzes, practical assessments and performances and, crucially, the focus is on involving students in their own assessment (Niemi, 2015[61]; Kumpulainen and Lankinen, 2012[62]). Box 2.6 further identifies research about effective initial teacher education practices related to student assessment. They include mentorship and exposure to several types of assessment during teacher practicums.

Box 2.6. Research about effective initial teacher education practices in the area of student assessment

A university in Victoria, Australia has established the Assessment Mentoring Program (AMP) as part of its initial teacher education. Through AMP, fourth year physical education teacher candidates were assigned to mentor second year physical education teacher candidates. The mentors helped mentees throughout their student teaching and developed, tested, implemented and moderated an assessment tool for the mentees with the assistance of program lecturers. A study of the program focused on the mentors and found that they believed they developed valuable assessment experiences that would be transferrable to their work in schools (Jenkinson and Benson, 2016[63]).

Research into teacher candidates in Spain focused on the use of formative assessment practices in initial teacher education. Results show that, despite being encouraged to employ formative assessment when they become teachers, teachers are infrequently taught using formative assessment techniques during their ITP training. When such methods are used, they are valued by teacher candidates and some graduates have implemented the practices themselves after being exposed to them during their training. This suggests that incorporating formative assessment practices into teachers' own education might be advisable (Hamodi, López-Pastor and López-Pastor, 2017[64]).

In the United States, researchers studied teacher candidates who enrolled in a semester-long, senior-level course specifically about assessment. The focus of the course was on learning about measurement theory and developing and interpreting student assessment information. Results showed that teacher candidates who enrolled in the course changed their perspective from assessment being about testing to assessment being about a formative process that can be achieved through different types of tools. Course participants also expressed greater confidence in employing formative approaches in their teaching. This research indicates that explicitly emphasising student assessment during initial teacher education might lead to teachers' employing more sophisticated assessment techniques in their own practice (DeLuca, Chavez and Cao, 2013[65]).

Sources: Jenkinson and Benson (2016[63]), "Designing Higher Education Curriculum to Increase Graduate Outcomes and Work Readiness: The Assessment and Mentoring Program (AMP)", *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, Vol. 24/5, pp. 456-470, https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2016.1270900;
Hamodi, López-Pastor and López-Pastor (2017[64]), "If I experience formative assessment while studying at university, will I put it into practice later as a teacher? Formative and shared assessment in Initial Teacher Education (ITE)", *European Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 40/2, pp. 171-190, https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1281909;
DeLuca, Chavez and Cao (2013[65]), "Establishing a foundation for valid teacher judgement on student learning: the role of pre-service assessment education", *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, Vol. 20/1, pp. 107-126, https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2012.668870.

Orient school-level professional development towards improving student assessment

Providing effective school-level supports can help teachers adopt new educational practices. With respect to student assessment, teachers can improve their own understanding and methods by observing each other, discussing how to design assessment and reviewing student work and reaching consensus around how to mark it (Harrison, 2005[59]; Tang et al., 2010[66]).

An important ingredient in supporting teachers in schools is allocating time for teachers to develop themselves. In Georgia, teachers currently have a surplus of non-instructional time in school and chapter 3 of this review recommends that this be used more effectively. This time could be used to help teachers collectively understand the curriculum's assessment requirements and to organise the aforementioned moderation activities.

In addition to allocating time for the purpose, having strong school leadership that recognises the value of supporting teachers is highly important for helping teachers develop. Georgian principals are not accustomed to fulfilling this type of instructional leadership role and will need some guidance in how to best support their teachers. For this reason, the review team recommends that the several MCC sponsored programmes that are dedicated to improving assessment be continued and expanded. These programmes will provide principals with an established structure to follow in support of their teachers until they feel comfortable enough to determine independently how to best help their teachers develop.

Facilitate the development of teacher networks about assessment to support teachers, especially those in smaller and more rural schools

Along with support organised by schools, research shows that peer-to-peer collaboration can help teachers feel confident in appropriating new pedagogical methods (Wilson, 2008[60]). In Georgia, peer-to-peer activities do not occur frequently. In the survey administered as part of this review, 35% of teachers indicated that never, or only once a year or less, do they engage in discussions about the learning development of specific students. When asked if they work with other teachers to ensure common standards for assessing students, 21% said that they never do, or do so once a year or less.

Teacher collaboration in Georgia should be expanded, especially between experienced and less experienced teachers. Although schools have a responsibility to facilitate this collaboration, teachers themselves should also be encouraged to work with each other. While mentor and lead teachers would be suitable candidates to lead collaborative efforts and share their expertise, there are few teachers at these levels and most are concentrated in certain areas of the country (see chapter 3). Georgia also has a large number of small schools with few teachers. These circumstances limit the extent to which constructive collaboration can occur within Georgian schools.

One way of addressing these challenges is to use technology to expand the pool of potential teachers with whom teachers can collaborate. In Georgia, all school communications is already facilitated through EMIS E-Flow, which allows users to see the school and other information about message senders and recipients. While it is designed for sending and receiving messages, E-Flow can be given expanded functions to ease formal collaboration between teachers around topics such as assessment. For example, groups can be formed comprised of a lead teacher and several practitioner teachers from different schools with the expressed purpose of discussing assessment. E-Flow's link to EMIS data can be harnessed to identify teachers in similar contexts, thus increasing the relevance of their collaboration.

Create an online repository of assessment resources

The OECD review team was told that Georgian teachers are using a limited repertoire of assessment types, such as multiple-choice quizzes, that mostly assess student' ability to memorise and recall facts. Teachers have expressed a desire to use different types of

assessments, such as more complex quizzes and ideas for class projects, but do not know where to access these resources.

An online repository represents an effective way of providing resources to schools, particularly rural ones who might not be able to access universities or even the nearest ERC. Many OECD countries have developed such repositories. For example, Ireland makes available online thousands of assessment resources that are explicitly linked to the national curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019[67]). The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership has created a website to house a comprehensive collection of teaching resources (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d.[68]). These include lesson plans, guidance on providing feedback and video examples of how to use different methods to assess students.

Georgia has already begun to create an online repository of teaching materials (www.el.ge). Presently, however, this website only contains teaching stimuli, such as books, articles, and videos. It does not include pedagogical materials, such as tests, worksheets, lesson plans or student portfolios examples. It also does not include key strategic documents, such as the curriculum. Adding all such materials to this website would provide teachers with more resources and enable them to relate those resources to learning outcomes, which would increase the likelihood that the resources are used. Enhancing the online portal would also help improve equity as teachers in rural areas would be able to access the same resources as teachers in urban areas.

Recommendation 2.2.2. Communicate that the goal of student assessment is to improve learning

The assessment practices that teachers use, and students and parents expect to see, are based on a deep-rooted societal view of education formed around teachers' and parents' own experiences in school. These views characterise assessment as critical and intended to grade and rank students. It is important to change these views and for the public to understand that assessment is a tool *for* learning. In turn, teachers and parents should understand that reforms around assessment are valuable and that they can be implemented successfully in Georgian schools. Without this shared conviction and willingness to improve, policy reform efforts, even with strong support, might be regarded with scepticism and struggle to be successful.

Engage school leadership to improve assessment literacy in schools

School principals, lead teachers and mentor teachers play a vital role in communicating the usefulness of new methods of assessment and reporting. Given how they were educated, many parents will be understandably sceptical of by the government's desire to implement new assessment practices and might consider them to be lacking rigour and too lenient on students. It will be the responsibility of school leadership to explain the principles driving the reforms and thus allow teachers to continue implementing them without being concerned with public resistance.

MoESCS should provide school leadership with prepared responses that explain the value of the new curriculum and assessment reforms. When parents ask why their students are not receiving as many summative marks and instead are receiving more descriptive feedback, school staff can respond using MoESCS's prepared arguments, which would help them feel supported and less exposed in their implementation of the reforms. Through these efforts, the schools would help build assessment literacy in the general population, which would facilitate teachers' usage of new assessment practices in their classrooms.

Support students and families in understanding the new report card template

In Georgia, some parents have rarely seen a report card from their students' schools, and others might have seen just a list of numeric marks alongside students' classes. The new report card template (see Recommendation 2.1.3) will not only include summative marks, but also descriptive feedback and both would be aligned with the newly introduced curriculum (see Recommendation 2.1.2). However, students and parents will not be familiar with the information on the report card and might not know how to interpret what they see.

It will be the responsibility of the schools, with substantial guidance from MoESCS, to help families comprehend the new report card. Internationally, New Zealand recently changed its reporting system and gave schools more responsibility over how student results will be reported (Ministry of Education, n.d.[69]). To help schools communicate their systems to parents, the Ministry of Education created a "practical guide to assessment and reporting," which provides direction on how to explain key concepts, materials to be used while meeting with parents and case studies from schools (Ministry of Education, n.d.[70]). MoESCS can provide similar guidance, complementary materials and relevant school examples to help principals and teachers clarify the new report card template to parents and students.

Build a communications campaign around the purpose of assessment

To support school-level efforts to reform student assessment, MoESCS should prepare a national communications campaign to help improve the assessment literacy of the general public. International experience shows that reforms, such as re-orienting the purpose of assessment, are frequently met with suspicion by individuals whose views about the subject are already entrenched (Burgess, Robertson and Patterson, 2010[71]). Therefore, the justification for change needs to be carefully considered and effectively communicated in addition to the content of the change (Njeng'ere Kabita and Ji, 2017[72]).

MoESCS has experience with conducting such campaigns. Its outreach around introducing the SGEs in 2011 was very successful, even though the concept was new and specific components, such as CAT, are difficult to understand. Communications strategies that were effective in 2011, such as an announcement by an important government leader and using ERCs to visit every school in the country, can be adapted to communicate the concept and value of assessment for learning.

It is also important to show the public what exactly assessment for learning looks like. To this end, Shanghai education leaders produced videos of what is considered model practice with one camera focused on the teacher and another focused on students. The videos were then disseminated to other teachers around the city (OECD, 2011[73]). At the school-level, Colombia has created a Day of Educational Excellence (now called "E Day") to celebrate schools that demonstrate what the government considers to be outstanding practices (Colombian Ministry of Education, 2010[74]). These strategies can be utilised in Georgia but adapted to show Georgian teachers and students. In this way, the public can not only visualise what assessment for learning is, but also understand that it is realisable in their country (Fullan, 2006[57]; Fullan, 2004[75]).

Policy issue 2.3. Reviewing the modes of examination for graduation and tertiary selection at the end of upper secondary education

The absence of an upper secondary examination presents several opportunities and challenges. By reviewing the old examinations model, MoESCS can create a new system that builds upon the old model's strengths and addresses challenges that were identified. Such a process would allow Georgia to align the examinations system with emerging priorities, such as strengthening the VET education pathway. In the meantime, measures will have to be taken to properly certify students who complete upper secondary school and to improve the influence the UEE exerts on student learning in school.

Recommendation 2.3.1. Prepare for a single examination model in which one test would certify completion of upper secondary education and select students for entry into higher education

Georgia's dual-examinations model was well regarded, but the limitations of the system, in particular its backwash effects, also became apparent over time. If the limitations are not addressed by a new examinations model, they are likely to hold back progress towards important national goals, such as improved completion of upper secondary education, higher and more equitable transition to tertiary education and students who are better equipped to be productive in the 21st century.

Eliminating the SGE has created pressure to accelerate Georgia's examinations reform and create a fair and effective system. Despite the pressure to develop a replacement quickly, the OECD recommends that Georgia proceed carefully in order to establish an examination system that will help achieve national education goals for years to come.

Set, as a medium-term objective (next five to ten years), the introduction of a single examination at the end of upper secondary education

When the SGE was initially conceptualised in 2011, there was discussion about combining it with the UEE to create a single national examination that would serve as an exit examination from upper secondary school and an entrance examination into higher education institutions (Bakker, 2014[20]). Ultimately, the exams were kept separate because of the resources required (e.g. testing time) and because the exams were intended to serve different purposes.

Today, research and analysis of the examinations data suggests that the initial concerns around a single examination model are less relevant (described in detail below) and that such a model could be very beneficial in the Georgian context. Therefore, the OECD suggests that MoESCS should aim to develop a single examination model to replace the current UEE and define a reasonable timeframe for its development and introduction.

There would be sufficient resources to administer a single examination because the examination would be smaller

Georgian policy-makers originally concluded that a single examination would require too many resources to administer. However, this assumed that the size of the single examination would be the same as that of two separate examinations and that the extra resources required would be related to how long students would need to take all the subject tests in a consecutive sitting. As noted, though, students and teachers felt overburdened by the size of the dual-examinations model, which partly led to the abolition of the SGE. This

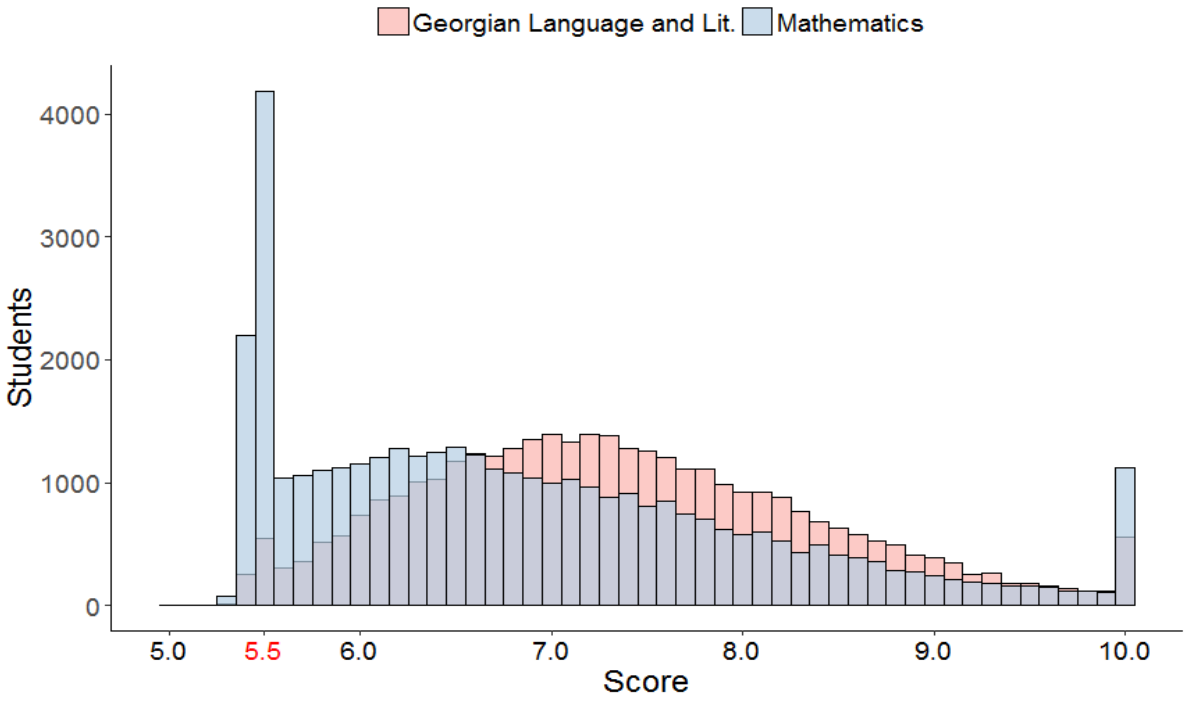
suggests that future examinations systems in Georgia should have fewer subjects tested over fewer grades than what existed previously. With lighter examinations, administering a single examination would no longer require unreasonable resources because the test itself would be smaller and shorter (see Recommendation 2.3.2).

Creating different versions of subject tests ensures that a single examination can both ensure basic minimum competency and select for entrance into university

Stakeholders were also concerned that a single examination could not fulfil the dual functions of certification from upper secondary education and selection for higher education. This concern, however, is not supported by empirical analysis of the examinations data (see Figure 2.3). On the Georgian language and literature test of the SGE, for example, student results produced a normal distribution, indicating that most students were able to meet minimum standards and that high-performing students could still be discriminated for selection into higher education. There was no need to re-test these students in this subject again (though it occurred through the UEE) as that only added to students' testing burden.

Nevertheless, not all subjects produced such a distribution. In SGE mathematics, the distribution was bi-modal, with a large number of students receiving a perfect score and an even larger number clustered around the cut-off passing score (see Figure 2.3). This distribution raises two concerns. First, it indicates that too many students barely met minimum standards and it is difficult to say with certainty if these students mastered basic numeracy. Second, it also suggests that another group of students found the test too easy and their perfect results were not able to be discriminated for selection into higher education.

Figure 2.3. Results from the Georgian language and mathematics tests on the SGE 2018



Source: Data provided to the OECD from NAEC.

The previous solution to this problem was to re-test the high-achieving students by encouraging them to take the mathematics test of the UEE. Despite requiring even more testing time, this method still did not address the issue of the SGE mathematics examination not being able to accurately determine basic numeracy in a large number of students. Instead, the problem can be addressed in the single examination model by developing two mathematics tests of different difficulty levels. Students would take only one version of the test, depending upon their interests and university requirements. This procedure is common in several countries, including England, the Netherlands and Norway (Ofqual, 2012[76]) (see Recommendation 2.3.2).

Determine who should take the single examination in accordance with national goals concerning VET schools

There is clear recognition of the need to address "dead ends" associated with the VET track. Essential components of this reform would include introducing general academic content into the VET curriculum and allowing VET upper secondary students to enter directly into bachelors' programmes.

Given this situation, a key question that Georgia will need to address is whether the new, single examination should be taken by all students, or whether it would be taken only by general upper secondary students, with potentially a separate mode of examination for students in VET schools. To align the examination with the government's goals, the review team suggests that the new examination be accessible to *all* students who complete upper secondary education. Having two versions of a subject test, such as mathematics, would be particularly suitable in this context in order to accommodate the different levels of

mathematics that students would need with respect to their future pathways and career aspirations. This type of flexible design also creates space for specific VET competencies to be certified as elective subjects on the exam.

Determine the design features of the examination

Several aspects of the design of the examination will need to be considered in light of the strengths and challenges of the previous examinations structure and the goals of the education system. For example, Georgia needs to consider which subjects are compulsory and which are voluntary, and whether some subjects, in particular mathematics as mentioned, have different versions that students can select.

The decision as to whether the examination should be accessible to all upper secondary students will also influence its design features. If the exam is to be accessible to VET students, as suggested by the OECD, then this might require a limited number of core subjects and a significant elective component, with differentiation of test versions in some subjects. Elective subjects might also include VET fields and NAEC would be responsible for the quality assurance and standardisation of these tests (e.g. checking that administration conditions are equitable). The development and actual administration of the VET tests, however, could be led, as it is in other countries, by industry representatives, such as unions and trade associations (OECD, 2014[77]). Box 2.7 provides an example a single examination model from the Republic of North Macedonia and explains how the model operates in consideration of general and vocational education tracks.

Box 2.7. Single examinations model in the Republic of North Macedonia (North Macedonia)

In North Macedonia, the State *Matura* examination certifies students as having completed upper secondary school and selects them for entrance into universities. Students must take their native language, mathematics or a foreign language and must choose from a list of electives for the remaining subjects. The State *Matura* also includes a project assignment, which allows students to demonstrate a broader range of competencies than they could via a written examination. The State *Matura* can be taken by students from both gymnasium (general education) schools and vocational schools. The table below lists the design features of the State *Matura*.

Table 2.4. State *Matura* from the Republic of North Macedonia

Components	Four subject tests, three of which can be chosen by the student Compulsory subject: mother tongue language 1st elective: mathematics or a foreign language 2nd elective: choice from list of general subjects 3rd elective: • Gymnasium students: choice from list of general subjects. • Vocational students: a vocational subject in line with a students' vocational track. Students must also complete an in-school project assignment, which might be research or an applied task in a specific field.
Eligibility	All students completing gymnasium and four-year vocational education schools
Item development	Bureau for Development of Education develops specifications for general education subjects Vocational Education and Training Centre develops specifications for vocational education subjects Item development is led by state subject committees, composed of professors and practitioners Individual schools develop items for school-assessed subjects
Question format	Multiple-choice, closed-format short answers and open-ended questions Pen and paper
Marking	Compulsory examination, 1st and 2nd electives marked centrally. Multiple-choice and closed-format questions are marked electronically; open-ended questions marked by human assessors. 3rd electives and project assignments are marked at the school-level
Reporting	Individual student results are accessible through an online portal on the National Examination Centre's website 30 days after the examination Results are not reported at the school or municipal level. NEC prepares a technical, internal report on the State *matura* results.

Source: National Examinations Centre (n.d.[78]), *State matura*, http://dic.edu.mk/%D0%B4%D1%80%D0%B6%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B0/?lang=en (accessed on 21 January 2019).

Examine implementation requirements

NAEC has demonstrated the capacity to develop new testing methods and has gained the public's trust when doing so. It is well-positioned to introduce a medium-term reform agenda of Georgia's examinations system. Importantly, its previous innovations should continue to be used for some parts of the examination, such as including some computer adaptive items. In this manner, public trust owing to this mode of testing would be sustained, which would make implementation easier.

Georgia is experienced with successfully introducing new examinations, in particular when it introduced the SGE in 2011. The implementation of the new single examination model can follow some of the established guidelines around communications and training, such as an announcement by the head of NAEC and communicating with schools through education resource centres. Additional questions to consider include the timeframe of implementation, which should be several years, the cost to do so and the need for a piloting phase, similar to what occurred before the SGE was implemented.

Recommendation 2.3.2. Take steps in the immediate term to improve upper secondary certification and strengthen the UEE

The primary purposes of having examinations at the end of upper secondary education are to certify that a student has acquired the basic minimum competencies required for graduation and to select students for entrance into tertiary education (OECD, 2013[1]). Among OECD countries, 24 require that students take an examination at the end of upper secondary education in order to graduate and 27 require students to take one to enter university. In some cases, these are the same examination (OECD, 2015[6]).

In Georgia, without the SGE, students graduate from upper secondary school solely based upon the grades they receive. This situation is problematic because, as mentioned in Recommendation 2.1.2, the marks that teachers confer to students are not necessarily aligned with national learning standards. Relying on the marks to confer certification, therefore, is not a reliable method of ensuring that students are graduating with basic minimum competencies. For these reasons, school-based student assessment methods tend to have less signalling value beyond the individual school, and less of a positive backwash effect in terms of ensuring rigour and motivating students (Bishop, 2006[79]).

With respect to the UEE, university staff told the review team that student performance on the UEE is not a reliable predictor of their success in higher education. Analysis by the NAEC confirms this, in particular with respect the general aptitude test, which has now been discontinued as a compulsory requirement. There is also some concern that the examination, despite the presence of several measures, is not fully in alignment with the school curriculum, which creates a negative backwash effect in schools. The UEE is an important test, but students cannot necessarily prepare for it by learning the curriculum. Therefore, some students might miss classes in order to study for the exams, while some teachers engage in private tutoring to help prepare students, which can conflict with their in-school teaching responsibilities.

While the single examination model is being developed, Georgia should take measures to improve this current situation. Specifically, MoESCS needs to ensure that students who graduate from upper secondary school gain reliable and valid recognition for their achievement and that the UEE enhances the educational environment instead of distorting it.

Strengthen school-level examinations in upper secondary education

Without the SGE, only upper secondary graduates who wish to attend university have their skills assessed and recognised in an external manner. Students who graduate from upper secondary education but who do not wish to attend university do not receive external certification of their achievements. This negatively affects their prospects in the labour market because employers do not have assurance that these students have acquired the basic minimum competencies to be productive in the workplace.

The OECD understands that some schools in Georgia will now administer examinations to their students to assess their readiness to graduate. It will be imperative that these tests are high quality so that graduation represents a signal of achievement that is trusted by the community. The OECD supports the idea that NAEC should help strengthen schools' examinations by providing clear specifications about test content to ensure that the examinations assess the curriculum at appropriate levels of breadth and depth. NAEC can also develop marking guidelines so all schools evaluate student responses against national curriculum goals and in a consistent manner.

Finally, relying on school-level examinations to certify student achievement represents an opportunity to strengthen assessment literacy (see Recommendation 2.2.1). Teachers are now in a pivotal position and will want to know what they can do to evaluate student learning more accurately. For instance, they might wish to use a variety of item types on the examinations, as they have expressed concern previously about the SGE only using multiple-choice items. NAEC can assist teachers in this regard by providing guidance about how to develop more sophisticated question types and include more of these types of items in the sample examinations that are already being developed.

Better align the UEE with the national curriculum in order to reduce its backwash effects

To coordinate what students learn in school with what they are assessed against centrally, classroom instruction and national assessments and examinations must be based on common reference standards (OECD, 2013[1]). To this end, the majority of OECD countries, including France, Ireland and Poland, create their upper secondary examinations based upon national curriculum goals and national learning standards.

Exams that are not aligned with the curriculum can have negative effects on students' education. Misaligned examinations compel students to seek out external support to learn the material on the examinations because they do not learn it in school. This incentive, combined with the high stakes of the examinations, can create backwash effects in which some students and teachers focus more on preparing for the examinations than on learning important skills (Bray and Kobakhidze, 2014[80]).

In Georgia, items on the UEE are not always aligned with the curriculum. Although MoESCS must approve of the examination's programme before items are developed, the final items themselves are not evaluated for their coherence vis-à-vis the curriculum and stakeholder interviews suggest that the items can stray from the curriculum's aims. As a result, students do not necessarily learn in school what they need to know to succeed the UEE. To aid students, teachers might deviate from the curriculum to teach to the UEE, or offer private tutoring to students with greater resources. These activities distort the education system by focusing teaching and learning on material that is not in the curriculum and widening the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students.

MoESCS can reduce the negative backwash effects produced by the UEE by implementing a final review of UEE items, after they are fully developed, to validate that the items that appear on the examination are truly aligned with the goals of the national curriculum. Not only would this reduce the negative backwash effects, but it would generate positive on pressure on students to attend classes and engage with the curriculum in order to better prepare themselves for the UEE.

Recommendations

Policy issue	Recommendations	Actions
2.1. Enhancing the educational value and use of teachers' classroom assessment	2.1.1. Make formative assessment a central focus of teacher practice	Use the new curriculum as a policy lever to encourage the use of formative assessment
		Consider the introduction of portfolio assessment in the curriculum to anchor more formative assessment practices in the classroom
	2.1.2. Reduce the pressure around summative marking and make it more educationally meaningful	Discontinue the practice of continuous log grading
		Help teachers align their summative marking with the new curriculum
	2.1.3. Systematically record assessment results in order to track student progress and inform key decisions	Create a common report card template and procedures around dissemination
		Integrate the standardised report card template into the EMIS E-Journal
		Use student assessment information to support vulnerable students
		Develop and record external measures of student performance at key moments to inform decision-making
		Consider making the external assessment in grade 9 (or grade 10 if compulsory education is extended) a certification examination
2.2. Building understanding that the goal of assessment is to improve student learning	2.2.1. Provide teachers with assessment resources to improve student learning	Strengthen the emphasis on improving assessment practices during initial teacher education
		Ensure that school-level activities are dedicated to improving student assessment
		Facilitate the development of teacher networks about assessment to support teachers, especially those in smaller and more rural schools
		Create an online repository of assessment resources
	2.2.2. Communicate that the goal of student assessment is to improve learning	Engage school leadership to improve assessment literacy in schools
		Support students and families in understanding the new report card template
		Build a communications campaign around the purpose of assessment
2.3. Reviewing the modes of examination for graduation and tertiary selection at the end of upper secondary education	2.3.1. Prepare for a single examination model in which one test would certify completion of upper secondary education and select students for entry into higher education	Set, as a medium-term objective (next five to ten years), the introduction of a single examination at the end of upper secondary education
		Determine who should take the single examination in accordance with national goals concerning VET schools
		Determine the design features of the examination
		Examine implementation requirements
	2.3.2. Take steps in the immediate term to improve upper secondary certification and strengthen the UEE	Strengthen school-level examinations in upper secondary education
		Better align the UEE with the national curriculum in order to reduce its backwash effects

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Chapter 3. Creating a highly qualified teaching workforce

This chapter looks at how Georgia's teacher appraisal system evaluates the country's teachers and supports them to develop professionally. Several factors are preventing Georgia from creating a more modern and professional teacher workforce. Its teacher professional development scheme is based upon acquiring credits, the accumulation of which do not necessarily signal good teaching practice. Furthermore, most teachers still remain at the lowest level of the scheme, reflecting a lack of support to improve themselves. Finally, over a quarter of Georgia's teachers are past retirement age, which contributes to a less motivated teaching population overall. To address this situation, Georgia should revise its teacher professional development scheme to focus more on demonstrating effective teaching practices and then use the scheme to support teachers to reach basic minimum standards of competence. To improve incoming teachers' skills, initial teacher preparation standards should be strengthened, and older teachers will have to be supported in exiting the profession in order to make space for incoming teachers.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Introduction

Teacher appraisal can be a strong lever for modernising and improving teaching and learning. By providing teachers with regular feedback and setting high standards for teaching quality, appraisal encourages teachers to continually adapt and improve their practice. Georgia clearly recognises the importance of appraisal for updating and strengthening teaching, as reflected in the recently implemented performance career system. The adoption of the teacher professional development scheme coincides with efforts to shift instruction towards a more student-centred approach that is focused on the development of complex competencies.

However, the current system has so far had little impact in terms of professionalising teaching or encouraging teachers to adopt newer, more effective teaching techniques. This reflects the system's design, in which moving up the teacher career path is contingent on form-filling and acquiring credits. Accumulating credits does not necessarily reward the most effective educators and distracts teachers from their central focus on student learning. While recognising the positive features of the system, this chapter recommends how its design can be improved. Notably, by basing promotion decisions on teaching quality.

The chapter also addresses the need for teachers to receive more regular guidance to develop professionally. Currently, undergoing professional development is not mandatory and many teachers have gone years without receiving formal support to improve their teaching. Georgia needs to systematise its provision of teacher support by designing a regular appraisal system that is linked to professional development opportunities. This is especially vital in Georgia, where many teachers are at the lowest level of the professional development scheme.

Along with improving in-service professional development, Georgia can improve the quality of incoming teachers by strengthening its initial teacher education programmes. Historically, entrance requirements into these programmes have been low, which affected the calibre of persons who became teachers. Raising entrance requirements into teacher education programmes and increasing the level of support that beginning teachers receive would help improve the overall quality of incoming teachers.

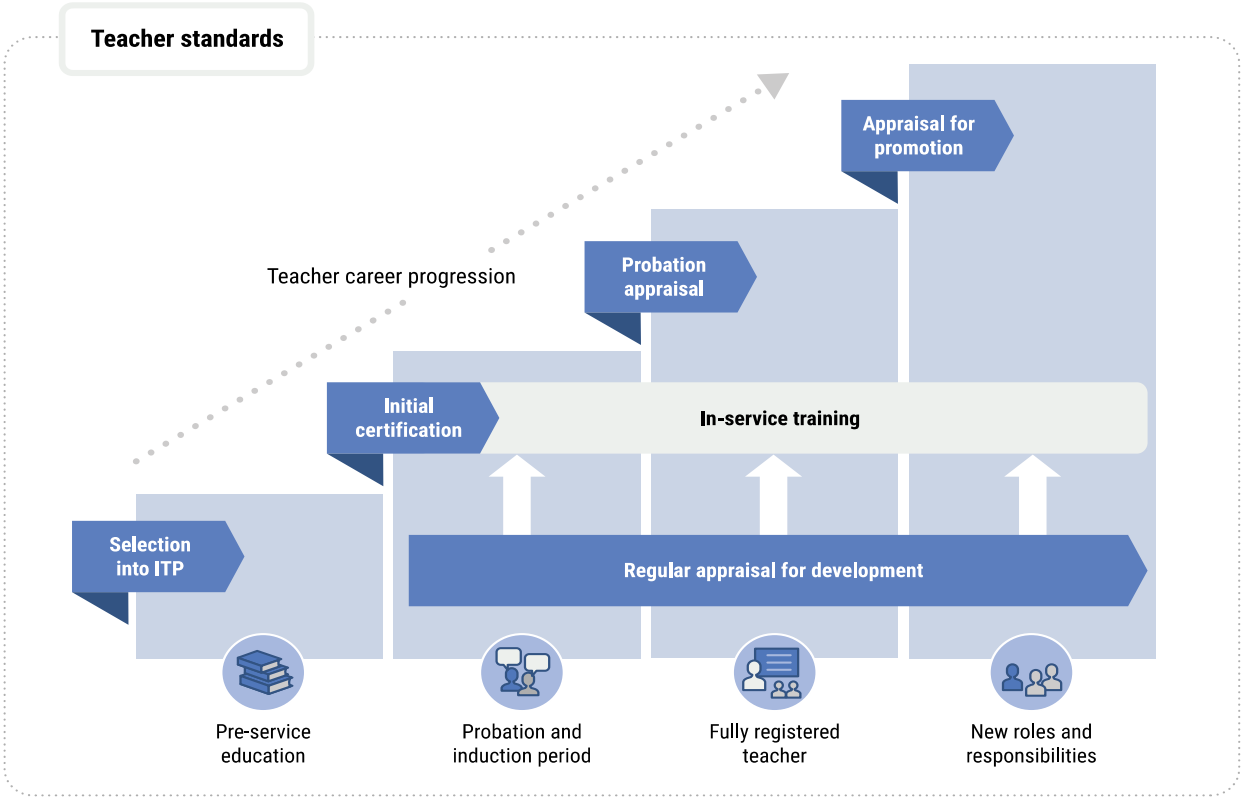
Finally, Georgia will need to take measures to attract talented new teachers into the workforce. Georgia's teaching population is the oldest out of any country that participated in the 2018 Teacher and Learning International Survey (TALIS). This review recommends that Georgia establish a retirement age for teachers, require existing teachers to become certified and support those who cannot, or who do not wish to, as they exit the workforce. The ministry can then take measures to improve the attractiveness of teaching to entice younger, capable persons to fill open positions and help modernise the teaching profession in Georgia.

Key features of an effective appraisal system

Teacher appraisal refers to how teachers are assessed and given feedback on their performance and competencies (see Figure 3.1). An effective appraisal system focuses on how well teachers are supporting the learning of all students. It provides teachers with incentives and support to continually develop their teaching competencies and assume roles that contribute to the development of the teaching profession overall. When used in this way, appraisal can positively influence teachers' attitudes, motivation and classroom practices and, through this, help to improve students' learning outcomes (OECD, 2013[1]).

Countries combine different types of appraisal at different moments of a teacher's career to inform on-going learning, professional development and career progression (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Types of teacher appraisal



Teacher standards

Standards provide a common reference point for teacher policies, including appraisal

A growing number of OECD countries have developed teaching standards to inform teacher policy and practices. Teaching standards describe what "good" teaching is and how it is demonstrated. They are used to align key teacher policies such as initial teacher training, certification and re-certification, career progression, professional development and teacher appraisal. Teacher standards are an essential part of an effective teacher appraisal system as they provide a common reference point for both teachers and evaluators that establish clear expectations, encourage consistent judgement and focus appraisal on the key aspects of teaching that matter for learning (Santiago et al., 2013[2]).

Teaching standards typically include a general profile setting out expected teacher competencies. Some also include specialised profiles for particular types of teachers, such as more experienced teachers as part of a differentiated career path, or teachers of different educational levels or subjects (Santiago et al., 2013[2]). Effective teaching standards are aligned with national education priorities, learning standards and curricula to ensure that teachers develop teaching competencies that will support national learning goals (Louden,

2000[3]). They are also grounded in national and international evidence of the types of teaching approaches that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student learning.

Initial teacher preparation

Select candidates with strong academic skills and motivation to teach

Selecting teacher candidates with strong academic skills and the motivation to teach is key to instilling high quality learning and teaching in schools. Selection refers to how teachers are recruited both into initial teacher education programmes and into the teaching profession. A recognised feature of the world's highest-performing education systems is setting a high bar for entry into initial teacher education, with places accorded only to the most able school graduates (Barber and Mourshed, 2007[4]). A common method of setting entrance requirements is by establishing a minimum threshold that candidates must achieve on upper secondary completion or tertiary entrance examinations.

Set a rigorous certification process at the end of teacher education to make sure to select qualified new teachers

Initial certification at the end of teacher education serves as a gatekeeper to ensure that those who enter the profession have acquired the basic competencies required for good teaching. In most OECD countries, initial certification requires successful completion of teacher education programmes, which provide at least a bachelor's level qualification, and increasingly a qualification at master's level. However, many OECD countries also require that prospective teachers pass an external licensing examination, which can help maintain fairness and consistency in selection and guarantee that basic minimum standards are met (OECD, 2014[5]). Licensing is particularly important in countries where teaching is a "career-based" public service, lifetime employment is largely guaranteed and where quality assurance in the tertiary sector is weak. Since an examination cannot recognise all the attributes that are important for teaching, countries with examinations often complement them with other forms of assessment such as interviews, which can capture motivation and socio-emotional skills. Finally, in most countries full certification as a teacher is dependent on successfully passing a probation appraisal, during which teachers are able to demonstrate their teaching skills in the classroom.

Types of teacher appraisal

A probation period and appraisal provides new teachers with essential support in their first year(s) on the job

The first years of teaching are critical to building the foundations of good teaching practices. Most OECD countries set probation periods that combine mentorship, classroom observations and formative feedback to provide new teachers with support to develop their teaching practice (OECD, 2014[5]). Regular appraisal and feedback to teachers are key components of the probation period. In countries where the latter are not part of the probation period, retention rates of new teachers are often lower (OECD, 2017[6]).

In about half of OECD countries, successfully passing an appraisal at the end of the probation period is a requirement to become a fully certified teacher (see Figure 3.2). Probation appraisals help ground decisions about full certification on an evaluation of all the key competencies for teaching. Appraisal by the school leadership team, the school board or the teacher's mentor are the most common approaches to awarding full

certification. These in-school actors have the opportunity to observe a trainee teacher's practice throughout the year, which provides them with a fuller picture of a trainee's readiness to enter the profession. In some countries, the probation appraisal also includes an external evaluator (OECD, 2013[1]). An external dimension for the probation appraisal is particularly important in education systems where the school leadership might lack capacity to make a valid and objective judgement about a teacher's competencies.

Regularly appraising teachers provides meaningful feedback and informs classroom practices

Regularly appraising teachers to provide feedback on their professional practices is a common component of teacher appraisal in the majority of OECD countries (see Figure 3.2). Regular appraisal is primarily developmental and identifies a teacher's strengths and learning needs. It draws on information from classroom observations to provide specific feedback to support teachers' continued professional growth (OECD, 2013[1]). Some OECD countries also use teachers' self-evaluation and their teaching portfolio as part of regular appraisal, as they encourage self-reflection and provide a range of evidence on a teacher's practices and needs for professional development (OECD, 2015[7]).

In most OECD countries, the regular appraisal of teachers is led by the school leadership team because they can develop a more accurate understanding of a teacher's practice based on multiple observations throughout the year. Since the leadership team is familiar to the teacher, this is also likely to create a more informal setting for appraisal to encourage open and honest feedback (OECD, 2013[1]).

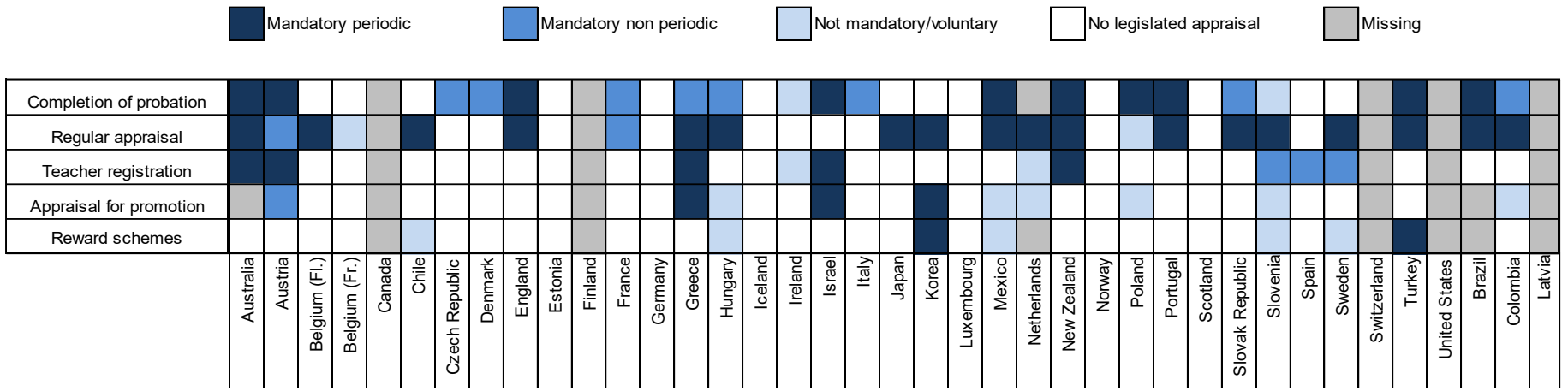
The formative value of regular appraisal is strengthened when the findings are used to inform decisions on teachers' professional development. In many countries, the school leader or leadership team is expected to work with teachers to establish individualised development plans, which define the type of activities a teacher will undertake in order to improve specific areas of practice. Such plans are most effective when they connect individual goals with school priorities for teacher development, as this helps to encourage teacher collaboration and peer learning (Goe, Biggers and Croft, 2012[8]).

Appraisal for promotion informs teachers' career progression and rewards performance

An increasing number of OECD countries are setting merit-based career structures to encourage teachers to develop higher levels of competence and take on differentiated teaching roles. External appraisal is often used in countries that introduce a merit-based career structure to inform teacher career advancement. This appraisal is often voluntary, at the request of a teacher, and is led by an evaluator that is external to the teacher's school to maintain integrity and transparency. This type of appraisal evaluates teachers' capacity to take on further responsibilities and rewards effective teaching (OECD, 2013[1]). Recognising and rewarding good teaching is important to motivating a teaching workforce. It also helps to make the best use of teachers' talent, by providing opportunities for career growth and retaining talented teachers.

Some education systems require teachers to go through an appraisal process to be re-certified periodically. Re-certification ensures that teachers are periodically appraised by an external body even if they are not applying for promotion, which helps a country uphold minimum teaching standards (Kitchen et al., 2017[9]).

Figure 3.2. Types of teacher appraisals in OECD countries (2015)

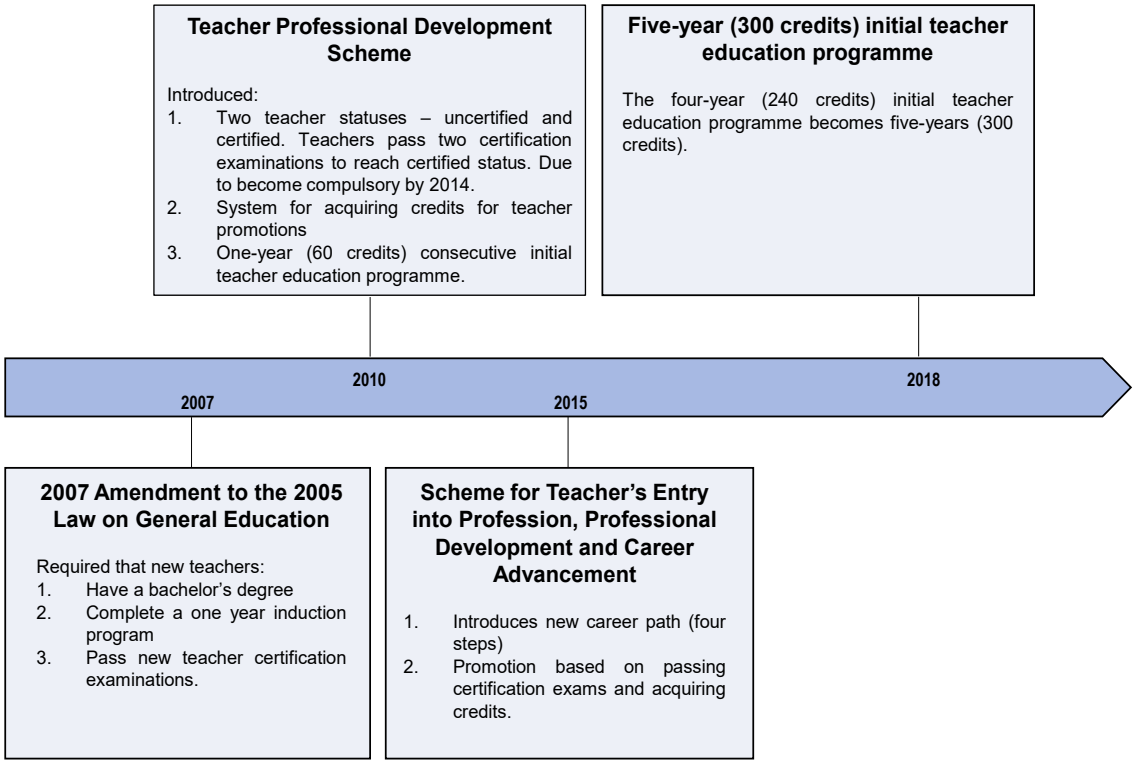


Source: (OECD, 2015[7]), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators,* OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en.

The teaching profession in Georgia

Since 2007, Georgia has implemented successive changes to teacher policy to professionalise and modernise the teaching workforce (Figure 3.3). These changes have included increasing the qualification requirements to become a teacher and introducing a merit-based career structure. Many of these changes bring Georgia more into line with practices in OECD countries. However, in many cases the impact of the reforms has been diminished by a lack of follow-through or policy reversals. For example, the requirement that new teachers complete a one-year induction has not been implemented. Similarly, the requirement that all teachers reach senior status by 2014 never came into force.

Figure 3.3. Timeline of teacher policy reforms



Sources: World Bank (2014[10]), *SABER Country Report Georgia – Teachers*, World Bank Group, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/788461468198234275/pdf/105634-WP-ADD-SERIES-PUBLIC-SABER-Teachers-Georgia-CR-Final-2014.pdf (accessed on 9 January 2019);
World Bank (2014[11]), *Georgia - Technical assistance to support preparation of education sector strategy : education sector policy review – strategic issues and reform agenda*, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/505151488895322292/Georgia-Technical-assistance-to-support-preparation-of-education-sector-strategy-education-sector-policy-review-strategic-issues-and-reform-agenda (accessed on 21 June 2018);
World Bank (n.d.[12]), *A Review of Teacher Policy Reforms in Georgia - A Case Study*, World Bank.

Teaching workforce

One in four teachers is over 60

A history of low teacher salaries, low pension payments and the absence of a retirement age mean that many teachers in Georgia continue to teach long after they start to receive their pension. Georgia teachers were the oldest on average out of all teachers from TALIS countries. Around 26% of Georgia's lower secondary teachers are over 60 (up from roughly one-fifth five years ago), compared with less than 8% across TALIS-participating countries (OECD, 2019[13]).

The high share of older teachers is a sensitive political issue. As teachers' salaries and pensions are low, there is a perception that it is fair for older teachers to benefit from their salaries as they collect their pensions. However, the presence of a large share of older teachers limits the availability of full-time teaching posts and also deflates average teacher salaries nationally. There are also concerns that older teachers less motivated to engage with professional development or upgrade their skills, making modernising teaching difficult (World Bank, n.d.[12]). Fewer older teachers, for example, have passed the new certification examinations to reach higher levels on the new teaching career path (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Georgia's teachers by age and status

	Under 25 years	25-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60 years or more	Status level as % of all teachers
	(% of teachers at each status level within each age group)						
Practitioner	9%	44%	56%	50%	56%	77%	59%
Senior	4%	23%	34%	41%	41%	22%	35%
Lead	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Mentor	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No status	87%	9%	2%	3%	3%	1%	6%
Age group as % of all teachers	1%	4%	4%	27%	25%	26%	100%

Source: Author's calculations based on data provided from EMIS in 2018.

The teacher population has not declined in proportion to the fall in student numbers

While the student population has declined by around 21% over the past decade, the teacher population has fallen by less than 1%. One reason that teacher numbers have not fallen in line with the decline in students is a political decision to keep open many small schools in rural areas. In these areas, the average student to teacher ratio is as low as 3.5:1 (World Bank, n.d.[12]). This leaves many teachers in part-time positions, even though they would like to work full-time. Overall in Georgia, 48% of teachers work part-time, in contrast to 23% on average across TALIS-participating countries (OECD, 2019[13]). The current oversupply of teachers is also reflected in principals' responses to a survey conducted for this review. When asked what their schools most important goals are, retaining staff or hiring more staff was ranked as the least important (improving teachers' pedagogical practices, however, was ranked as the most important).

There are teacher shortages in some subjects, and in rural, mountainous areas

Despite the general oversupply of teachers, there are shortages in some subjects such as sciences, mathematics, and Georgian as a second language. There is also a shortage of qualified teachers in rural, mountainous areas. In response, in 2009 the Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC) in the ministry launched Teach for Georgia. This programme provides young, motivated teachers with financial incentives, including a small salary bonus, to work in rural, mountainous areas. However, the scale of Teach for Georgia remains limited – with only 200 teachers participating in the programme in 2017.

Some teachers work across a broad range of grades

Among the schools that the OECD team visited, a number of teachers taught across grades 1-12. This practice was not just limited to small rural schools, but was also common in large urban areas. While necessary in some cases, asking teachers to teach across several levels creates some risk because the teachers might not be equally knowledgeable about student learning at different stages of their development. In most OECD countries, teachers focus on one or two grades within the same level of education because students' learning and developmental needs vary vastly across different age groups. This configuration enables teachers to develop specialised knowledge in effective teaching strategies for the age group that they work with.

Teacher salaries and career progression

Most teachers remain on the entry level of the career path

Two new teacher statuses – uncertified and certified - were introduced in 2010. Teachers were required to become certified, which entailed passing examinations in pedagogical skills and subject knowledge. However, few teachers actually became certified and an evaluation of the policy determined that a more effective scheme was needed. Established in 2015, the new scheme (called the teacher professional development scheme) sets out four categories of teachers: practitioner, senior, lead and mentor teacher. Each step is associated with a significant salary increase and teachers are expected to take on new roles and responsibilities (see Table 3.2). A new appraisal for promotion was introduced at the same time, according to which teachers must accumulate credits through various professional development activities (see Teacher appraisal in Georgia) in order to advance in the scheme. Nevertheless, despite the introduction of career pathways, the vast majority of Georgian teachers are still at the practitioner level (see Table 3.1).

While several factors, including the complexity of the evaluation procedures, have inhibited teachers' progression, the fact that the majority of teachers work part-time and do not stand to benefit fully from the salary increase also affects their motivation to move along the pathway. Instead of relying on the professional development scheme to raise their incomes, many teachers also supplement their low earnings through private tutoring (World Bank, n.d.[12]); around half of the teachers surveyed for this review indicated that they offer private tutoring.

Table 3.2. Georgia's teacher career structure

		Roles and responsibilities		
Teacher steps	**Annual salaries (2015)**	**Preparation and instruction**	**Professional development**	**Supporting the teaching community**
Practitioner	GEL 4 860 (Georgian lari) USD 5 758 60.4% per capita GDP	Practitioners plan and undertake teaching in line with the national curriculum and use assessments developed by the school.	Teachers determine their professional needs and pursue professional development	-
Senior	GEL 8 700 (Georgian lari) USD 10 308 108.2% per capita GDP	Senior teachers develop innovative teaching strategies. They create their own assessments and analyse results to improve the learning.	Teachers determine their professional needs and pursue professional development	Teachers cooperate with colleagues on research and to improve professional practices
Lead	GEL 10 860 (Georgian lari) USD 12 867 135% per capita GDP	Lead teachers adapt teaching in response to students' characteristics. They undertake research on effective learning strategies.	Teachers determine their professional needs and pursue professional development	Lead teachers support their colleagues to identify their professional needs and plan professional development.
Mentor	GEL 13 260 (Georgian lari) USD 15 711 164.8% per capita GDP	Mentor teachers undertake research and use the results to develop recommendations for the school to ensure a positive school environment and improve learning.	Teachers determine their professional needs and pursue professional development	Mentor teachers develop learning resources for colleagues and plan activities for professional development within the school

Sources: World Bank (n.d.[12]), *A Review of Teacher Policy Reforms in Georgia - A Case Study*, World Bank;
Ministry of Education/UNICEF (2015[14]), *Country Background Report: Georgia*.

Entry level salaries are low, but now increase rapidly with promotion

Full-time teachers in Georgia with minimum training and 15 years of experience earn less than 66% per capita GDP. In contrast, the average teacher in an OECD country with the same training and years of experience earns 10% more than the per capita GDP in their country (OECD, 2016[15]). However, reforms to Georgia's teacher career structure and salary scale in 2015 mean that once a teacher is promoted to the second step on the teacher career path (i.e. to "senior" teacher), their salary increases to 108% of per capita GDP. A teacher's salary also increases substantially with each subsequent step, so that a teacher at the top step – mentor – earns 2.7 times more than a teacher at the lowest step - practitioner. This is a bigger increase than virtually all other Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) participating countries (OECD, 2016[15]). At the time of this review, the Georgian government was planning to increase the salaries of teachers, however the details of this reform (e.g. scale of increase, criteria for allocation) had not yet been determined.

Schools have considerable autonomy for hiring and firing teachers

According to PISA 2015, almost all students in Georgia (99%) attend schools where the principal is responsible for hiring teachers, in contrast to 70% of students on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]). Principals are not expected to follow any central guidelines or requirements when recruiting teachers (World Bank, 2014[10]). Also, unlike in most OECD countries, teachers are not public servants. They are only employees of the school where they work with contracts signed by the school principal. Overall, this means that principals have considerably more autonomy and responsibility for managing the teacher workforce than in many other countries. While this level of autonomy can help principals align teacher recruitment with the school's needs, it also raises questions of fairness and transparency, and complicates management of the workforce.

Principals in Georgia also have far more autonomy over teacher dismissal than in many OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]). Making principals solely responsible for dismissals can put them in a difficult position. A principal works with the teachers in their school every day, and in rural areas may have close relationships with a teacher outside the school. This is one of the reasons why, in OECD countries, around half of students attend schools in which regional or national education authorities are responsible for teacher dismissal (OECD, 2016[15]).

Initial teacher education and continuous professional development

There are currently two routes into teaching – a four-year (240 credits) concurrent programme and a one-year (60 credits) consecutive programme. Historically, most teachers were educated through dedicated teaching programmes provided mainly by specialised pedagogical institutes. However, changes in the structure of higher education combined with declining interest in teaching as a first choice of profession mean that, today, most beginner teachers graduate from a consecutive programme (World Bank, n.d.[12]). At the time of the OECD review, Georgia was also considering introducing a two-year work experience period as an alternative pathway into teaching for mid-career professionals from other fields.

Some practising teachers received no or low quality preparation

Data from PISA 2015 indicates that roughly 30% teachers have not received any initial teacher preparation in Georgia. In contrast, virtually all practising teachers in OECD countries received initial preparation (OECD, 2016[15]).

Among those teachers with initial preparation in Georgia, there are concerns about the quality of their content knowledge. This is a particular concern regarding teachers who entered the profession in the past 10 to 15 years, as the academic aspect of initial teacher education programmes has reportedly declined in recent years. In a study of 17 countries' initial teacher education, future primary teachers in Georgia had the lowest scores for mathematics content knowledge and mathematics pedagogical content knowledge. The mathematical content knowledge of future secondary teachers was also the lowest of the 17 countries (Ingvarson et al., 2013[16]).

The threshold for entry to concurrent programmes is low

The concurrent programme educates prospective teachers for all levels of schooling. In September 2018, an additional year was added to extend the programme to five years (300 credits). The new programme devotes 60 credits to school practice and practice research. Starting in 2018, prospective primary teachers will receive a bachelor's degree from this programme and prospective upper secondary teachers a master's degree.

Entrance to the new concurrent programme, like for other tertiary programmes, is based on a student's score on the United Entrance Examination (UEE) at the end of upper secondary education. However, since demand to enter teacher education is low, entry is not selective. In 2014, entrants to the four-year teacher education programme had the lowest average scores in the UEE of all tertiary entrants (World Bank, n.d.[12]).

Recently introduced consecutive programmes are more selective and higher quality

In 2010, a one-year (60 credits) programme in pedagogy for holders of a bachelor's or master's degree in a national curriculum subject was introduced. The course prepares persons to teach Grades 7-12. Since the programme focuses on developing teaching skills, candidates must pass a subject knowledge examination for entry. This programme is perceived to be better designed than the existing four-year programme. Since entrants have to meet a minimum threshold in subject knowledge before they enter, it is more selective. The review team was told that graduates from this programme tend to be more successful in finding a teaching post than those from the four-year programme.

Initial teacher education providers have significant autonomy over content

Initial teacher education is provided by all nine public universities in Georgia. In the past, while providers were expected to incorporate the national teacher standards into their programmes, they developed their own curricula and were not expected to follow a standard course structure and content. The absence of robust and consistent requirements contributed to the low quality of initial teacher education. However, from 2018 providers will be expected to follow standard benchmarks, based upon national teacher standards, for the new 300 credits programme (National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, 2017[17]).

Accreditation requirements for teacher education programmes are also not very robust or specific, leaving providers with significant flexibility. For example, while all programmes

are expected to provide a teacher practicum, in recent years it has fallen out of use in many programmes (Ingvarson et al., 2013[16]). In contrast, a teaching practicum is mandatory in virtually all OECD and many non-member countries (OECD, 2016[15]).

Teachers participate less in professional development than in OECD countries

While the country's teacher standards create the expectation that teachers participate in professional development, participation is not compulsory. Just one-fifth of teachers in Georgia attended a professional development course in the three months preceding PISA 2015, compared to half of teachers on average in OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]). For teachers not seeking promotion, and therefore not needing to accumulate credits, there is little incentive to participate in professional development. Another explanation for the low rate of participation is the cost. Although courses are free for teachers, there are still transportation and accommodation costs for many.

The vast majority of teacher training is provided by the Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC) through regional training centres. However, following policy reversals in recent years to decentralise and then re-centralise training, courses provided by other institutions are once again starting to be accredited. The professional development on offer has also recently been strengthened by support from international donors. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other development partners have been have been working with TPDC to provide subject-specific professional development activities embedded in teachers' daily practice at the school-level (see Box 3.1). These projects reflect a major investment in the quality and availability of professional development in Georgia.

There is little tradition of school-based groups for professional development

Schools have established bodies – the pedagogical board and subject chairs – that encourage teacher collaboration. It is common in Georgia for teachers to come together in subject or grade groups to plan their lessons and determine how the curriculum will be delivered. However, there has historically been little culture of collaborative learning or deliberate focus on how to improve instructional practice. Since 2011, the G-PriEd programme has been implementing a school-based professional development model in around a third of Georgia's schools at the primary level. Since 2016, the MCC has been doing the same at the secondary level. These initiatives have sought to make teacher collaboration at the school-level more meaningful by training teachers within schools to lead peer learning and implement activities for professional learning, like observing teaching and providing feedback.

At the end of 2018, the ministry announced a "New School Model", which builds on the G-PriEd and MCC work. Under this new programme, schools will be supported by coaches to develop teachers' confidence and capacity to adapt instruction to students' needs and interests. This supports the country's on-going curriculum reform that is focused on competency development, and provides teachers with greater flexibility since the curriculum will now be organised by key learning stages rather than individual grades (see chapter 2).

Teacher appraisal in Georgia

With the introduction of the new teacher professional development scheme in 2015, Georgia has made a significant effort to use appraisal to encourage teachers' professional growth and base career progress on merit. However, many teachers are not engaging with this programme and few have been promoted. The scheme's current design, which requires teachers to participate in a broad range of activities in order to accumulate credits for promotion, is distracting teachers from their core function. This situation is exacerbated by the absence of a regular, formative appraisal that would support and feedback and motivate changes in teaching and learning. Finally, Georgia does not require new teachers to undergo a dedicated appraisal for probation to confirm their competence to teach after acquiring some classroom experience. This is a notable gap given concerns about the quality of initial teacher education programmes.

Table 3.3. Teacher appraisal in Georgia

Type of appraisal	Reference standards	Evaluator	Frequency	Procedure	Use of Results
Initial certification	Teacher standards	Initial teacher education providers National Assessment and Examination Centre (NAEC)		Complete initial teacher education programme and possess a bachelor's degree	Teachers apply directly to school vacancies
Probation	Does not exist at present, but plans to introduce a two-year probation as alternative pathway into teaching				
Regular appraisal	Does not exist at present, but plans to be introduced				
Promotion	Teacher standards	Teacher Assessment Group (composed of school principal, deputy principal, facilitator, relevant subject chair and representative of local Education Resource Centre (ERC)	Optional	1. Teacher's self-evaluation of professional activities in previous year 2. Classroom observations 3. Teachers acquire credits through a combination of different activities 4. Teachers upload documents certifying activities to an electronic portfolio 5. The TPDC validates the activities and awards credits	Teachers must accumulate a specified number to be promoted.
Re-certification	Does not exist				
Reward	Does not exist				

Teaching standards are based on evidence of effective teaching, but are not well-integrated with teaching policy and practice

When Georgia introduced its new teacher professional development scheme in 2015, it also developed new teaching standards for the four steps in the career path. The standards are based on international good practice and cover a number of the aspects that research suggests are important for effective teaching (see Table 3.2). While this was a positive step, the standards do not seem to be the central reference for teaching policy and practice in Georgia. For example, because the system for teacher's professional development focuses on the acquisition of credits, evaluators and teachers concentrate on meeting the

requirements for credits, rather than meeting the standards that set out higher levels of teaching competence in line with the teacher career path.

Requirements for initial certification have been strengthened in recent years

Beginner teachers are required to pass an examination in order to take up a teaching post

Prospective teachers in Georgia are required to have successfully completed either a concurrent or consecutive initial teacher education programme to be eligible to teach in a public school. Assessment of teachers during initial teacher education is continuous, based on a teacher's portfolio, which is reviewed according to standardised instruments. Since 2010, new teachers have also been required to pass subject examinations (secondary teachers) or an integrated test of different subjects (primary teachers), as well as teaching methodology examinations in order to take up a teaching post. The examinations are developed and administered by the National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC), following guidance from the ministry. Teachers that are successful enter the profession at the second step on the career path, as senior teachers.

Only around 40% of in-service teachers have passed the initial certification examinations

The certification examinations that new teachers are required to pass were initially introduced for the whole profession with the intention of incentivising all teachers to meet minimum standards in terms of teaching competence and subject knowledge. When the scheme was introduced in 2010, in-service teachers automatically became practitioner teachers with the goal that, by 2014, all teachers would be certified. However, low certification rates compelled a policy reversal, making it optional for in-service teachers to take and pass the examinations. As a result, nearly 60% of in-service teachers remain at the practitioner level as of 2018, according to data provided by EMIS. In PISA 2015, only 34% of science teachers were reported to be certified, compared to 84% on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]).

Georgia does not have an induction programme or a probation period with appraisal

As part of the General Education Law of 2007, Georgia planned to introduce the requirement that all new teachers complete a one-year induction programme in schools (World Bank, 2014[10]). However, the policy was never implemented, leaving Georgia without an induction period or associated appraisal for probation. This leaves new teachers without any support in their first years on the job, which are recognised to be challenging. It also means that there is no rigorous confirmation of core teaching skills before a new teacher becomes fully registered for the rest of their career.

There are plans to introduce a regular appraisal

One of the conclusions from the evaluation of the teacher professional development scheme in 2016 was the need to introduce a regular appraisal. This will be important in order for Georgia's appraisal system to more effectively support an improvement in teaching practice. At the time of drafting this review, it was not yet clear how Georgia planned to implement the new regular appraisal. Key questions that remain to be addressed include

the evidence it will be based on, who will be responsible for evaluating teachers and how the results will be used.

Teachers need to accumulate credits in order to be promoted

The teacher professional development scheme requires teachers to acquire credits to move up the four step career path. Teachers can acquire credits by completing a range of specified mandatory and voluntary activities like attending training, speaking at conferences, developing educational materials, and preparing students for academic competitions. Teachers also undertake a self-evaluation and receive a number of classroom observations, depending on the step that they are seeking to be promoted to (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Credits required for promotion

	Practitioner to senior teacher	Senior to lead teacher	Lead to mentor teacher
Number of credits required	19	19	25
Mandatory activities	Two internal classroom observations (4 credits) Subject knowledge exam (max. 10 credits) or Pedagogy exam (max. 10 credits)	External classroom observation (4 credits) Pedagogical research (2 credits) Two model lessons evaluated internally (2 credits)	Four model lessons evaluated internally (4 credits) Conducting assessment of an educational institution (3 credits) Developing educational resources or peer-reviewed professional literature (2 credits)
Optional activities	Meetings with colleagues (0.5 credit) Preparing students for competitions (0.5 credit) School group activities (0.5 credit) Using ICT in teaching (0.5 credit)) Member of the Teacher Assessment Group (1 credit) In-service training, 25 hours (1 credit) Club activities (1 credit) Working with students with special education needs (1-2 credits) Social projects (0.5 credit) Official language course (2 credits)	Professional development e.g. accredited training (1 credit), official language course (2 credits), or creating (1 credit) or providing (0.5 credit) an accredited training course Extracurricular activities e.g. running a school club (1 credit), or organising a summer school (1 credit) Teaching and learning e.g. working with students with special educational (1-2 credits), teaching projects (0.5 credit), or preparing students for competitions (0.5 credit). Supporting school development e.g. meetings with colleagues (0.5-1 credit); supervising other teachers (3 credits); membership of the Teacher Assessment Group (1 credit); External school activities e.g. speaking at a conference (1 credit); creating teaching resources (1 credit); producing peer-reviewed professional literature (1 credit); d); education blog (1 credit); Any other additional activity initiated by the teacher (number of credits defined by the Teacher Assessment Group).	
Credits required to maintain status	13 in 3 years	17 in 4 years	Status maintained permanently

Sources: Ministry of Education/UNICEF (2015[14]), *Country Background Report: Georgia*;
World Bank (n.d.[12]), *A Review of Teacher Policy Reforms in Georgia – A Case Study*, World Bank;
MoESCS (n.d.[18]), *Forms for teacher appraisal*, MoESCS.

Each school has a Teacher Assessment Group that is responsible for undertaking classroom observations and awarding credits. The group is led by the school principal and includes the deputy principal (if applicable), a facilitator and a subject chair. More recently, a representative from the local Education Resource Centre (ERC) has been added. The ERC is a small team of four-five staff in each municipality that visits schools to check compliance with regulations and shares the information with the ministry (see chapter 1 and chapter 4). After having awarded credits to a teacher, the Teacher Assessment Group makes a recommendation to TPDC on whether the teacher should be promoted to the next step or retain their current status. TPDC reviews each teacher's file and takes the final decision. One positive aspect of the system is that it provides teachers with multiple ways to demonstrate their competencies. In practice, however, the process often requires lots of form filling without necessarily evaluating teaching quality (World Bank, n.d.[12]).

The ministry has recently decentralised the management of underperformance to schools

In cases when a teacher applies for promotion and the Teacher Assessment Group determines that they have not satisfied the credit requirements for maintaining their position, the teacher can be demoted (except for practitioner teachers). However, if a teacher does not apply for promotion there is no central mechanism to assess or address their underperformance. The ultimate sanction – teacher dismissal – is the responsibility of school principals.

Policy issues

Georgia's most pressing priority is to develop existing teachers so they have the knowledge and pedagogical skills to deliver the changes to instruction envisaged by the country's new curriculum. Achieving this goal will mean revising the teacher professional development scheme so that it is more effective in driving modernisation and improvement in teacher practice. Teachers also need to receive regular support and feedback – through regular appraisal and by continuing the recent work to strengthen teachers' professional development – so that they are motivated to continue developing professionally throughout their career. Over time, requiring that new entrants to the profession have strong academic skills and are well supported in their early years will raise the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Policy issue 3.1. Applying minimum standards for teaching and encouraging the development of higher teaching competencies

Since 2004, Georgia has attempted to shift teaching towards competency development and a more student-focused approach. This implies a major change in a teacher's role – from lecturing and giving instructions to guiding and supporting students in response to their individual needs. It also implies an important shift in pedagogical resources and practices – away from tests where students recall facts and towards tasks that require them to critically use information to solve problems and produce a compelling argument. Many countries have implemented a similar change in recent years and have found that teachers need to be equipped with the necessary pedagogical skills in order for this new approach to reach all classrooms. Addressing this concern in Georgia will be critical as teachers already engage in less professional development than most other countries.

Reforms to the teacher professional development scheme since 2010 reflect an important effort by the ministry to professionalise and motivate the country's teaching body. However, nine years after the scheme was first introduced, it has had little impact on improving teaching quality. The majority of teachers remain at the entry stage, suggesting that they are not motivated to progress up the career path or lack the skills and knowledge to do so.

Georgia's priority should be to revise the teacher professional development scheme to better achieve its original aims. First, it should require all teachers to demonstrate minimum teaching competencies, broadly indicated by reaching senior teacher status, and support them in their efforts to reach that level. Second, instead of focusing on credit accumulation, which is distracting teachers from focusing on individual student learning, the scheme should recognise and reward effective instructional practice. This emphasis will help motivate teachers to develop higher levels of teaching competence as set out in the country's teacher standards.

Recommendation 3.1.1. Support all teachers to meet minimum standards

The teacher examinations that were introduced in 2010 were originally intended to ensure that all teachers possess basic subject and pedagogical knowledge. While written examinations cannot evaluate all the attributes of effective teaching (D'Agostino and Powers, 2009[19]), they can reveal whether teachers have acquired a basic knowledge. For beginner teachers, an examination can help to make sure that new graduates have acquired the foundations for teaching. This is particularly important in Georgia, where quality assurance in initial teacher education is weak and teaching tends to attract students with low levels of academic achievement (see Recommendation 3.3.1). For teachers already in the classroom, the requirement to pass an examination for certification can help establish clear standards for the profession and make sure that teachers have the knowledge and skills required to meet national learning goals. Requiring that teachers pass an examination can also help direct professional development to address important gaps in teacher competencies.

Clearly communicate the examinations' role

One important message that the ministry needs to communicate about the examinations is that they are essential for professionalising teaching. One of the reasons some practitioner teachers currently appear unmotivated to take the exams are recent policy changes that have created ambiguity around whether teachers need to pass the exams or not. This has led some teachers to think that it is not worth investing in passing even one of the examinations since this requirement may be changed in the future (World Bank, n.d.[12]). Consequently, the ministry should clearly state that all teachers are required to reach senior teacher level within a reasonable period of time (e.g. three years).

The original policy that teachers had to meet a minimum threshold in both subject content and pedagogy examinations was positive because it validated that teachers are both knowledgeable in their domain and have the teaching skills to make content accessible for students. However, this policy has now been changed, and teachers are able to reach senior level by doing well in only one examination. Since both pedagogical and content knowledge are essential for teaching, the ministry should revert to requiring that teachers pass both examinations.

The examinations should also be presented as the first step to be confirmed in a profession that is setting higher standards for itself. The examinations are not independent, but rather

are part of a wider policy to support teachers to move up the career path, alongside fuller, more authentic types of evaluations. This message is important to address teachers' valid concerns that the examinations cannot accurately assess all the skills and qualities of an effective teacher (World Bank, n.d.[12]).

Another important message to communicate is that examinations are primarily developmental. This means that the results will be used to confirm that teachers have the knowledge to teach the curriculum and, where this is not the case, direct teachers to professional development to address their knowledge gaps.

A policy for managing those teachers who are unable to demonstrate minimum teaching competence also needs to be introduced. If a practitioner teacher is unable to reach senior teacher status within the determined period of time, they should be offered a non-teaching role or a position within the central administration.

Develop the certification examinations with the goal of assessing essential teaching knowledge and skills

Georgia should review the examinations with the goal of determining whether their content and question types effectively assess minimum standards for knowledge and skills. The review team's interviews with practising teachers who had passed the examinations suggested that the content was generally relevant for the role of a teacher and accessible for well-prepared teachers. However, teacher focus groups also demonstrate that around half of teachers are sceptical that the examinations effectively assess their skills (World Bank, n.d.[12]).

While it is true that such examinations can never assess all the attributes of teaching knowledge and skills, some steps can be taken to strengthen the connection, such as:

- Align the examinations with the curriculum. The examinations should assess if teachers have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum in order to deliver it.
- Align the examinations with teacher standards, in particular the standard for new entrants (see Recommendation 3.3.1).

The ministry might also consider if the content for the pedagogy examination should be adapted for existing and graduate teachers. Since existing teachers have acquired many years of teaching experience, they can be expected show a deeper understanding of how to apply teaching concepts. Adapting the examination's content would also provide the opportunity to reflect upon the different expectations of existing and graduate teachers, as set out in the revised teacher standards that this chapter recommends.

Support existing teachers to master essential knowledge and skills

The ministry is faced with two challenges to support all teachers to pass the examination. First, as of the end 2018, nearly 40% of teachers below 60 years of age had not taken even one examination. These teachers may not be motivated to take the examinations for a variety of reasons - it is no longer a compulsory requirement, the value of the examinations is questionable, or they work part-time and the potential pay increase is not attractive enough. These challenges are addressed elsewhere in this chapter (Recommendation 3.1.1 and Recommendation 3.4.1).

A barrier for minority language teachers is that the examinations and associated training are not currently available in minority languages. This is likely one reason why a far higher share of minority language teachers – over 75% of Armenian and Azerbaijani teachers -

have not yet taken one examination. The ministry should make it a priority to address this gap immediately.

Second, at around 30% between 2010 and 2016, the pass rate for the examinations is very low. TPDC already provides training to help in-service practitioner teachers prepare for the examinations, which should be continued. There are a number of other steps that the ministry should consider in order to support teachers to gain the knowledge needed to teach the curriculum (which is also assessed in the examination):

- Provide more support in areas or topics where examination results indicate teachers are struggling. The examination results vary widely across subjects. On average in 2017, the review team was told that teachers did less well in mathematics, civic education and Georgian language and literature. The ministry should conduct further analysis to identify the specific types of questions or topics that teachers find difficult so as to better orient training.
- Provide greater support for groups of teachers who tend to do less well in the examinations. These teachers could be in rural areas and smaller schools who, on average, perform less well in the examinations (World Bank, n.d.[12]). In 2018, the share of practitioner teachers was more than 20 percentage points higher in villages than in cities.
- Cover the transport and accommodation costs associated with participation in training for teachers.

Georgia will also need to develop a specific policy for older teachers who are not motivated or able to pass the examinations (see Recommendation 3.4.1).

Encourage each school to make it a priority that all teachers reach senior status

Principals need to recognise that passing the examinations is not just the goal and responsibility of an individual teacher, but also for themselves and their schools. Transforming their role in this manner would be line with existing national efforts (e.g. MCC's leadership academies and the G-PriEd programmes) to help principals in Georgia become instructional leaders (see chapter 4).

A key responsibility of an instructional leader is supporting teachers' professional development and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the school. This might mean that, in the school development plan, principals are encouraged to include a target for the share of practitioner teachers who will become senior teachers within the year and how the school intends to support them to do this. For example, principals should help teachers develop individual learning plans that set out how they will reach senior status and arrange for senior teachers to mentor practitioners. Principals might also organise teacher groups to discuss the kinds of content that the examinations assess.

Recommendation 3.1.2. Re-focus the teacher professional development scheme on demonstrating higher levels of teaching competencies

The design of the current teacher professional development scheme is not always rewarding good teaching practice nor motivating teachers to develop. A central issue is the requirement to accumulate credits for promotion. This involves burdensome reporting, encourages teachers to undertake activities that might contribute little to improving their teaching and pays little real attention to the quality of teaching practice.

Other issues include how the promotion decision is taken, by school-level committee, with limited external actors. In many countries with promotion appraisal, external evaluators are more involved in decision-making since promotion carries high stakes for a teacher's career (OECD, 2015[7]). Teacher standards are also vague in terms of the specific differences between the roles of senior, lead or mentor teachers. This makes it difficult for the evaluation group to fairly and consistently evaluate whether a teacher has demonstrated the competencies required to be promoted to the next level. Finally, while promotion in theory provides a significant increase in a teacher's salary (see Table 3.2), since more than half of teachers only work part-time they cannot fully benefit from the increase. Georgia should consider the following changes to the teacher professional development scheme as part of wider changes to management of the teaching profession and the planned pay increase (see Recommendation 3.4.2).

Make teacher standards the main reference for promotion

Teacher standards should be the main reference for promotion to focus the process more directly on demonstrating higher levels of teaching competence. For example, when a teacher is applying to be promoted from senior to lead teacher, an evaluator would expect that teacher to demonstrate competencies similar to those of a lead teacher (or have clear capacity to develop these competencies). Instead, the current scheme in Georgia focuses on completing forms to acquire credits for activities, such as attending a conference or organising extracurricular activities.

To address these inconsistencies, Georgia should first review and revise its current standards so that they become a more operational tool to determine appraisal judgements. Revisions include:

- Clearly set out expectations for increasing teaching competence. Georgia's current teaching standards do mention some key features of good teaching and how these evolve as teachers move up the career path. However, not all areas that are important for effective teaching are discussed in this manner. For example, areas like planning and preparation and managing the classroom environment are important and relatively underdeveloped in Georgia's standards (Danielson, 2013[20]). Providing more clarity would help teachers be evaluated at all levels of the career ladder in relation to the types of practices that are most important for effective teaching.
- Add specific examples to illustrate effective practice at each step on the career path to guide evaluators to make consistent promotion decisions. This would also provide teachers with a clear understanding of what they should be aiming towards. Georgia might consider using videos, like Australia's teacher standards does, to illustrate examples of effective teaching practice at the different steps (AITSL, 2011[21]).
- Demonstrate the new roles and responsibilities teachers are expected to take on as they move up the career path. For example, in Australia teachers who reach higher levels are expected to take on broader roles within the school that contribute to teacher and school development (AITSL, 2011[21]). In Georgia, this might include mentoring trainee teachers during their induction period (see Recommendation 3.3.2).

Focus promotion appraisal on authentic evidence of teaching practice

Georgia's appraisal for promotion already includes many of the evidence sources that are common in OECD countries - classroom observation, an interview between the teacher and their evaluator(s), a teacher's self-assessment and review of a teacher's portfolio (OECD, 2015[7]). Classroom observations is one of the most accurate methods of assessing a teacher's ability to teach because most of the key aspects of teaching are displayed when a teacher interacts with their students in the classroom (OECD, 2013[1]). However, alongside classroom observations, promotion in Georgia is also based on many other credit-awarding activities that provide less relevant information about a teacher's impact on student learning. For example, teachers can receive credits for organising extracurricular activities, writing an education blog or speaking at a conference (see Table 3.4).

Georgia should revise its appraisal to focus more on demonstrating effective teaching. The practice of collecting credits should end and be replaced by appraisal based on classroom observations, a teacher's self-evaluation, the review of a teacher's portfolio and an interview with the teacher. Each of these sources of evidence is already part of appraisal for promotion in Georgia. A few changes could be introduced so that they are used more effectively:

- Provide evaluators with guidance on the kinds of evidence of student learning that can be collected during classroom observations. Teachers should be evaluated in relation to how effectively they are engaging with the learning needs of every student in their class and helping them to realise their full potential. Evaluators might be provided with guiding questions to help them focus on the quality and frequency of teachers' formative assessment and summative judgements (see chapter 2).
- Restructure the teacher portfolio to document how teachers have demonstrated the knowledge and skills for the next level in the teaching career path. The current portfolio is primarily used for adding certificates of completed training. Instead, teachers would use the restructured portfolio to provide evidence of teaching practice like examples of lesson plans where they have made changes to accommodate a new teaching approach, or examples of student work where different types of assessments are used. The new portfolio can be used by teachers during their self-evaluations and interviews to demonstrate how they have understood and applied curriculum and other instructional changes to their practice.
- Provide evaluators with guidance on how to structure the appraisal interview so that teachers can demonstrate increasing professional maturity and competence. For example, evaluators might be provided with prompts or questions to ask teachers about which professional development opportunities they have pursued, and how they have demonstrated higher levels of teaching competence.

Strengthen the role of independence and professional competence in promotion decisions

The current arrangement for promotion decisions – by the Teacher Assessment Group – provides important opportunities for school input. However, external actors can be more independent and impartial than school-level actors who are personally familiar to a teacher. They should also have professional competence, as a trained evaluator, to make such decisions.

In Georgia, while the Teacher Assessment Group might continue to provide their views on teacher promotions, the final decision should be undertaken by an external evaluator. The external evaluator might undertake classroom observations and the teacher interview to collect evidence to reach their decision. As part of its new professional development programme for teachers, Georgia has recently started to contract experts to undertake external classroom observations of teachers. These experts could also be given the responsibility for making decisions about promotion. Given that their responsibilities will affect the career trajectories of many teachers, the experts should be highly qualified to assume their responsibilities. For instance, they should have significant teaching experience. They should also receive training on how to undertake classroom observations that are focused on determining the quality of teaching and learning, and in particular how to assess the competencies required to move up the teaching career path.

Policy issue 3.2. Supporting teachers to develop professionally throughout their career

With the introduction of the teacher professional development scheme, Georgia has recognised the importance of appraisal for professionalising the teaching workforce. However, an important lever to embed more student-centred teaching is also providing regular feedback and guidance to teachers. Regular appraisal can encourage and support teachers to adopt teaching methods with a proven impact on learning, such as formative assessment and student feedback. While Georgia does not have regular appraisal, the country has recently announced plans for its introduction. This section provides suggestions on how this might be designed and used most effectively.

Regular appraisal will need to be complemented by a significant expansion in high quality professional development opportunities. The latter has recently been boosted by donor-funded projects that are focused on school-based professional development programmes. This policy issue also provides recommendations for expanding and continuing these programmes to ensure their future sustainability.

Recommendation 3.2.1. Focus the new regular appraisal on student learning and providing feedback for teachers' professional learning

Regular, formative appraisal encourages open discussion and critical self-reflection, activities which have long been recognised as important for professional growth and development (Dewey, 1938[22]). Regular appraisal tends to be relatively informal, since it is frequently led by a school principal or someone else who is familiar with a teacher's work, and carries few stakes for a teacher's career. Effective appraisal is action-oriented, giving teachers advice and support on how they can improve their daily classroom practice.

One of the challenges of developing an impactful regular appraisal in Georgia will be creating the kinds of informal, open conversations that are fundamental to this type of appraisal. The current appraisal process for promotion is formal and high stakes, and has not developed evaluators' capacity to provide constructive, formative feedback. In particular, it has reinforced existing approaches where the measure of success is not learning in the classroom, but teacher activities largely outside the school. In this context, creating an effective, regular appraisal process in Georgia will be difficult and take time. This recommendation provides practical advice for developing an impactful and valuable process.

Introduce guidelines on a set of simple steps that schools can take to encourage regular appraisal practices

Regular appraisal guidelines should clearly state that the purpose of regular appraisal is formative and then provide simple pointers on how the school can execute the process. For example:

- Evaluators start the year with a conversation with teachers on where they stand in terms of the teacher standards and the skills that they would like to develop over the coming year.
- The evaluator and teacher develop a simple Individual Teacher Development Plan and agree how the teacher will be supported throughout the year.
- During the year, the evaluator regularly undertakes short classroom observations and provides the teacher with feedback on their strengths and suggestions for improvement.
- At the end of the year, the evaluator and teacher discuss how the teacher has performed that year, focusing on the teacher's development in reference to the teacher standards.

Since regular appraisal will be new for the teachers that are evaluated, they will also need a clear explanation of how it will work and the purpose. Teachers will also need to feel ownership of regular appraisal, rather than perceiving it as an externally imposed process. These factors make it important to engage key school actors like the principal but also other experienced and respected teachers in each school. Teachers might also be asked to contribute to the development of regular appraisal tools, such as the forms that guide evaluator-teacher interviews.

Determine the evaluators

It will be important to select an evaluator(s) that is familiar with a teacher's work, and has the opportunity to regularly observe their teaching. In order to establish an accurate view of a teacher's daily practice, classroom observations do not need to be long but should be conducted frequently. To create an open discussion where teachers feel comfortable to discuss any difficulties they are experiencing, it is helpful for the evaluator to be known to the teacher. In most OECD countries, regular appraisal is led by an evaluator that is internal to the school (OECD, 2015[7]).

In Georgia, principals should start to conduct regular appraisals. However, they will need to be strongly supported as they take on this responsibility as many are not experienced with observing teachers and evaluating their teaching accordingly. According to a survey administered as part of this review, roughly one-third of teachers have not been observed by their principals within the past year, and 10% have never been. To support principals, deputy principals and/or experienced teachers can be asked to assist with performing observations and appraising teachers (also see Chapter 4 about developing the capacity of principals). In particular, undertaking regular appraisal might be a specific responsibility for lead and mentor teachers, especially when they do not have a full teaching load.

Involving the Teacher Assessment Group, which includes five individuals, in the direct evaluation of teachers for regular appraisal is likely to inhibit the kinds of open discussion and critical self-reflection that are essential for its efficacy. However, the Teacher Assessment Group could fulfil an important function by meeting once a year with the

principal and any other evaluators. The purpose of this meeting would not be to discuss the appraisal of individual teachers but rather how the process has been all teachers across the school, identify what worked well and areas to be improved in the coming year. The discussion might also be used to identify professional development needs across the school, which would inform a school's annual development plan (see chapter 4).

Develop national guidance for evaluators on how to collect and review evidence of teaching quality

Evidence of student progress and learning is central to evaluating the effectiveness of classroom teaching (OECD, 2013[1]). At present, a major gap in the appraisals for promotion that are undertaken as part of the teacher professional development scheme is the lack of a central focus on learning (World Bank, n.d.[12]). Evaluators for regular appraisal should be provided with guidance that encourages them to focus on the strategies that teachers are using to enable student learning. Examples of things that evaluators should be encouraged to look at include evidence of formative assessment, student feedback, creating an inclusive classroom that responds to different learning styles and monitoring students at risk of falling behind. Evaluators also need to collect evidence on whether teachers' summative judgements are accurate and aligned with national learning expectations (see chapter 2).

Collecting evidence on and effectively evaluating the above will require significant expertise in teaching and learning and how to provide feedback. Evaluators for regular appraisals – school principals and other experienced teachers – will therefore need substantial support to undertake classroom observations. One form of support might be videos developed by the ministry to demonstrate good practices for observations like which materials to focus on, questions to prepare and how to engage with the teacher and students.

Support evaluators to provide useful developmental feedback

Following each classroom observation, teachers should receive feedback on their lesson, as well the opportunity for a broader discussion with their evaluator about their strengths, learning needs and plans for professional development over the coming year. The following tools can be developed for evaluators on how to provide feedback:

- A form with guidance on how to conduct the evaluator-teacher interview. The form might include prompts for the evaluator to highlight the teacher's strengths and how to provide constructive advice to address development areas, both in relation to national teacher standards.
- Guidance and/or a template to systematically introduce teacher development plans. Research suggests that effective teacher development plans identify specific actionable growth objectives that are tied to the classroom, with realistic timelines and practical examples of activities that can lead to change (Cole, 2012[23]).

Recommendation 3.2.2. Give teachers access to high quality professional development

Countries that provide teachers with high quality, impactful professional development frequently combine two main types. One is in-service training, often organised at the national level outside a teacher's school. This type of training can be helpful when introducing major policy changes (e.g. updating teachers on curricula changes) or advancing policy priorities (e.g. on formative assessment). The second is school-embedded professional development that takes place in a teacher's school. This type of professional development often involves collaboration with other teachers and focuses on challenges or issues related to a teachers' daily practice. In contexts where overall teaching capacity is relatively low, an external impetus is essential to make school-embedded professional development a genuine learning experience.

In Georgia, the G-PriEd project, MCC projects and the recently announced "New School Model" reflect many of the characteristics that are associated with the most effective types of professional development (Box 3.1). These include: providing professional development that is subject specific, providing opportunities for teachers to try out new teaching strategies through classroom observations and feedback, and creating school-based groups for teacher collaboration (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017[24]). Evaluation of the G-PriEd programme found that it has positively impacted students' learning outcomes in mathematics and reading (USAID, 2016[25]). This reflects the OECD team's interviews with stakeholders which indicated that the G-PriEd and MCC programmes are perceived to be having a major positive impact on support for teachers.

To continue this work, Georgia will need to address some of the structural issues that currently impede some teachers from engaging in professional development. It will also necessitate creating the necessary support to progressively mainstream this support and create a sustainable model to provide high quality professional development in the future.

Box 3.1. Support for teachers' professional development as part of the Millennium Challenge Account and the Georgia Primary Education Project

USAID Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd)

Launched in 2011 and ending in 2017, G-PriEd provided comprehensive assistance to around 28% of Georgia's public schools to improve the reading and mathematics competencies of students in grades 1-6, and to introduce financial literacy. A major component of the project was supporting teachers to improve reading and mathematics instruction. The emphasis was on creating school-based professional development by:

- Providing teacher training to primary teachers and national trainers. Training combined online training and face-to-face training. An online forum for teachers was created, with a series of webinars where trainers provided feedback to teachers and responded to their questions.
- Developing an e-Portal with a variety of instructional resources including videos, electronic training courses, teacher resource books and tutorials.
- Teacher learning circles for mathematics and reading were created for teachers to collectively discuss student achievement and ways to enhance instructional effectiveness. G-PriEd trained facilitators for these groups.
- Classroom observations provided teachers with follow-up and feedback after training. National trainers provided teachers with descriptive feedback on how they implemented new teaching methods after training.

Millennium Challenge Corporation – Georgia, Training Educators for Excellence Project

The Training Educators for Excellence project will train 18 300 grades 7-12 teachers of science, mathematics, English and geography over 2016-19. The project aims to train teachers in modern teaching methods and strategies through:

- three modules on student-centred learning approaches (36 hours in total)
- six modules in active learning in subject-specific modules (144 hours in total).

The project also includes the training for teacher trainers and the development of training materials. Teachers who complete the training will be able to participate in study groups organised by the project. The study groups provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their training experience, develop their professional skills and plan their teaching practice with their colleagues.

Sources: USAID (2018[26]), *Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd)*, https://chemonics.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Georgia-Primary-Education-Project-G-PriEd-Final-Report.pdf (accessed on 6 January 2019);
MCC (2018[27]), *Millennium Challenge Account-Georgia Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Compact II*, https://assets.mcc.gov/content/uploads/georgia-compact-ii-me-plan.pdf (accessed on 22 January 2019).

Require that all teachers undertake professional development

All teachers need to understand that undertaking professional development is a part of their professional duties as a teacher. Requiring that teachers devote some time to school-based

professional development is also important so that the work that has taken place as part of the G-PriEd and MCC projects continues.

Teachers in Georgia are expected to work 36 hours per week, but are only expected to teach for half of this time. While teachers are officially required to engage in non-teaching tasks, there are no mechanisms to verify that this takes place (World Bank, 2014[10]). This means that teachers have a significant amount of time that could be devoted to school-based professional development. At present however, while there is no official data, the review team's interviews with stakeholders suggested that many teachers do not remain in school when they are not expected to teach. It is likely that many use this time for private tutoring. National research has found that 89% of private tutors in Georgia are school teachers (World Bank, n.d.[12]) and a survey conducted for this review revealed that roughly half of all teachers offer private-tutoring services.

To encourage teachers to collaborate with their colleagues on professional tasks for at least some of the time when they are not teaching, Georgia might consider introducing some of the following requirements:

- Require that teachers spend at least a proportion of their non-teaching time in their school. This is a practice in many OECD countries (OECD, 2017[28]). Requiring that teachers remain in school makes communication and collaboration with colleagues more likely, and in Georgia would limit opportunities for teachers to engage in private tutoring.
- Make collaboration with other teachers a mandatory, non-teaching task. In Georgia, required non-teaching tasks include collaboration on the school plan and designing the curriculum (World Bank, 2014[10]). However, collaboration for the purposes of instructional improvement is not a specified task. Across OECD countries, teamwork and dialogue with colleagues is mandatory for lower secondary teachers in around half of the countries with available data (OECD, 2017[28]).
- Specify the number of hours or percentage of working time that teachers are expected to devote to non-teaching tasks. In Singapore, for example, 20 hours per week are built into teachers' schedules for shared planning and classroom visits (Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011[29]). The specified time should include non-embedded professional development that takes place in training outside schools, as well as working collaboratively with other teachers in the same school.

Teacher's participation in and contribution towards professional development should also play a much greater role in all types of appraisal. Teachers should be asked about how they have engaged with professional development in their school during the discussion with the evaluator, and to provide authentic examples of how they have integrated what they learnt during professional development into their teaching practice.

Sustain the programmes and capacity that has been built up through G-PriEd and MCC

G-PriEd has been provided to almost a third of primary schools, and MCC has covered well over 1 000 schools. While expanding these programs will be time consuming, Georgia should take steps in the immediate term to help sustain their impact. The first priority will be to provide sufficient financial resources for professional development. Georgia's plans to increase the education budget (see Chapter 1) create the opportunity to increase resources for professional development. As well as increasing the national budget for professional development activities, the ministry should consider providing schools with

their own funds that can be used flexibly for encouraging and developing school-embedded professional development activities. This would also support the country's plans for a "New School Model" where schools have more confidence and capacity to adapt instruction to students' individual needs and interests (see chapter 4).

One important use of the increased funds will be ensuring a sufficient number of national trainers across the country. The G-PriEd programme has already trained around 330 national trainers and MCC trained 446. The ministry's "New School Model" promises to provide schools with their own coaches to develop teachers' skills (see chapter 4). Since reaching all schools will be a major undertaking, an effective use of resources would be to prioritise the most disadvantaged schools.

Provide relevant and high quality training

As the G-PriEd and MCC programmes end, it will be important to establish other high quality training programmes. In line with the recent policy direction to start accrediting external providers of professional development again, TPDC should take an active role in facilitating the development of effective training offerings. One way to do this is by accrediting programmes based upon whether they exhibit many of the features that are associated with successful professional development. Such important features include:

- Subject-specific professional development. This was a need echoed by teachers that the review team met. Teachers would like less generic training and more subject-specific courses that enable them to develop higher levels of teaching competence in their subjects.
- Interactive professional development. Courses should also provide teachers with opportunities to design and try new teaching approaches through hands-on activities.
- Follow-up. Require that teachers receive follow-up after participating in a course on how they have put what they have learnt into practice. For example, a requirement for completing a course might be that a teacher can demonstrate how they have applied new practices in their classroom.

As part of its role to provide professional development, TPDC should also consider how it can fully exploit opportunities for online learning. For example, an online repository of teaching materials like model lesson plans and videos of effective instruction can be made available so that they can be accessed by a wide range of teachers, especially those in remote areas (see chapter 2).

Use data to inform the design and supply of professional development

The TPDC should also use available information about teachers' learning needs to design courses that are relevant for teachers. For example, if the results from the teacher examinations reveal that classroom management is a need, then resources should be directed towards developing or identifying professional development that strengthens teachers' skills in this area. Equally, an annual summary from each school's Teacher Assessment Group based on the learning needs of the teachers' in their school could be shared with the ministry and analysed to make decisions regarding professional development opportunities. School external evaluation results can also be used to identify teachers' development needs (see chapter 4).

Policy issue 3.3. Setting high standards for entry to teaching and provide more structured support in the early years

Strong education systems have teachers with robust academic competencies, an aptitude for teaching and motivation to teach. Countries use a combination of different mechanisms to build this kind of teaching population, such as selecting candidates with strong academic skills, establishing high quality initial teacher education and requiring teacher candidates to pass a standardised examination and/or formal probation appraisal in order to become fully qualified. In the past, none of these mechanisms has been present in Georgia. A study of the initial preparation of mathematics teachers in 17 countries found that Georgia had among the least developed quality assurance systems for new entrants to the profession out of all the participating countries (Ingvarson et al., 2013[16]).

Over the past decade, Georgia has introduced wide-ranging reforms to address this concern and raise the bar for entry into teaching. These have included certification examinations at the end of initial teacher education, a new one year consecutive initial teacher education programme and, most recently, a new master's degree in education. These measures improve the support for and expectations of new entrants. However, more could still be done to enhance the rigour of pathways into the profession and the process for full certification. Interviews with the OECD team revealed that one of the reasons why the latter has not been done so far is that low demand to enter the profession means policy-makers want to avoid further dis-incentivising an already small pool of candidates with additional quality controls for entry. However, this risks that new teachers will continue to lack essential academic and teaching competencies. It also creates the perception that teaching is not a demanding profession for talented school graduates, thus perpetuating the cycle of low quality teaching and contributing to low learning outcomes nationally. Finally, the high teacher numbers in relation to student numbers suggests that they is scope to be more selective about entry into the profession.

Recommendation 3.3.1. Establish more rigorous standards for entry and completion of initial teacher education

Initial teacher preparation needs to provide new teachers with the subject knowledge and the pedagogical skills they need to build students' competencies. Beginner teachers in Georgia, however, have very low levels of both content knowledge and pedagogical content skills (Ingvarson et al., 2013[16]). Investing in stronger quality assurance mechanisms to improve both the standards of initial teacher programmes and the rigour of licensing requirements should be a priority.

Set a minimum threshold for teacher candidates' academic knowledge and skills

High-performing education systems select new teachers from among students with the strongest academic performance (Barber and Mourshed, 2007[4]). In contrast, entrants to the four-year initial teacher education programme in Georgia obtain the lowest results in the Unified Entry Examination (UEE) of all tertiary entrants (World Bank, n.d.[12]). To improve this situation, Georgia should require that teacher candidates reach a certain threshold in their UEE subject tests in order to be admitted to a teacher preparation programme. Not only would this guarantee minimum qualifications of the entrants, but it would also help boost the perception of teaching as a rigorous and demanding profession, thus attracting higher quality candidates in the future.

It was repeatedly mentioned to the OECD review team that a key concern with increasing the requirements to enter the teaching profession was that this would disincentive a pool of already small candidates. The limited number of full-time teaching posts, however, indicates that there is currently a surplus of teachers in Georgia. This situation suggests that there is space to be more selective about new entrants to the profession.

Set clear standards for certification, and use these as the key reference point for the design and quality assurance of initial teacher preparation

A number of OECD countries use teacher standards to set out expectations for new teachers. Such standards inform the content and quality assurance mechanisms of initial teacher education programmes, including accreditation requirements and certification examinations for new graduates. The standards are also the main reference for the probation appraisal of new teachers. In Georgia there is ambiguity around the expectations for new teachers that will need to be addressed. At present, Georgian Teaching Standards do not set out the specific expectations for teacher graduates. Rather, new teachers who graduate from an initial teacher education programme and pass the certification examinations are automatically appointed as senior teachers. At this level, they are accorded the same status and pay as practising teachers who have gone through the full performance appraisal process. This situation raises a number of concerns, both in terms of the inconsistency in requirements to reach senior status, as well as the lack of clear expectations to guide initial teacher programme providers and aspirant teachers. By default, the certification examination becomes the main quality reference, though it only captures some of the competencies that a graduate teacher should be expected to master.

This review recommends that, as part of the proposed revisions to the country's teacher standards (Recommendation 3.1.2), a specific standard be developed for "Graduate" teachers. This standard would set out and illustrate the expectations for teachers upon graduation from an initial teacher education programme and signal the standards expected of any new teacher taking up a teaching post in a Georgian school. In developing such a standard, Georgia could look to similar standards in other countries, such as the Standard for Registration in Scotland or the Graduate Standard in Australia (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2018[30]; AITSL, 2011[21]). Once developed, the standard should be a key reference for quality assurance processes in higher education, such as accreditation and provider guidelines, as well as for the certification examination. Teachers who pass this exam would be eligible, with initial certification, to teach. They would be expected to gain full and permanent certification, and with this senior status, upon successful completion of a structured probation period and formal probation appraisal. A related salary that graduate teachers would receive during their induction period would also need to be set. The salary would need to be competitive, probably close to the salary for senior teachers, to attract talented graduates.

Establish an attractive and high quality 300-credit programme

Policy-makers in Georgia are concerned that the recent changes to its concurrent initial teacher education programme, in particular its longer length, will discourage potential teacher candidates. However, these changes are important and will provide more time to cover in-depth core knowledge domains and strengthen the teaching practicum. The latter are recognised internationally as being key aspects of effective initial teacher education (OECD, 2019[31]). Five years is also the most common duration of initial teacher education for lower and upper secondary teachers across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]). Georgia

should continue to develop its new, longer programme and take steps to make it high quality and attractive.

First, the programme should provide new teachers with a strong foundation in all knowledge domains. Initial teacher education should equip new teachers with:

- content knowledge (i.e. knowledge of specific subject content)
- pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the teaching and learning processes particular to a subject)
- general knowledge of pedagogy (i.e. knowledge of teaching and learning that is cross-curricular) (Shulman, 1987[32]).

In the past, initial teacher education in Georgia reportedly provided teachers with strong content knowledge. However, the low levels of new teachers' content knowledge (Ingvarson et al., 2013[16]) and the pass rates in the certification examinations suggest that this is has become weaker.

Second, the teaching practicum needs to be well-integrated and provide teacher candidates with professional feedback from experienced teachers. The teaching practicum has also been a weak element of initial teacher education programmes in the past. Since it is left to universities' discretion, it does not always occur (Ingvarson et al., 2013[16]). When the practicum does take place, universities and schools do not always work together closely to provide a meaningful experience for the teacher-students (World Bank, 2014[11]). The teaching practicum should become a mandatory part of the new teacher education programme, as it is in the majority of OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]).

University-school partnerships should also be strengthened in which universities work closely with schools to explain how the practicum should be organised so teacher candidates benefit fully (e.g. by being paired with an experienced teacher for mentoring and receiving regular feedback following classroom observations). Mentoring a teacher-student might be an explicit responsibility for lead or mentor teachers. Schools that provide good practicum experiences might receive a reward or recognition, such as a training session from university staff.

Third, it is important to provide teacher educators with a good knowledge of modern teaching and learning. At present, Georgia's teacher educators have not all been trained in modern teaching and learning methods, which affects how new teachers approach education (World Bank, 2014[11]). The country should require that teacher educators regularly update their knowledge, for example, by making this part of the accreditation requirements for teacher programmes. Teacher educators should also be encouraged to model new teaching practices to provide an authentic and coherent model of teaching for their teacher-students. Research suggests that this kind of "role-modelling" can be very effective in helping new teachers understand and apply new teaching techniques (OECD, 2019[31]). It is particularly important in Georgia, where few teacher-students will have experienced modern teaching techniques during their own schooling or their practicum.

Review the quality of the consecutive model

Since most new teachers enter through the consecutive initial teacher education programme, it is important the programme be effective. Given the programme's shorter length, particular efforts need to be made to provide new teachers with a strong foundation in modern pedagogical skills. As with the concurrent programme, teacher educators should be required to keep their teaching knowledge up-to-date and be encouraged to model

effective teaching techniques in their programme delivery. Again, as with the concurrent programme, Georgia needs to systematically include in all consecutive programmes a teacher practicum that gives quality feedback to teacher-students.

As the consecutive programme has now been in place for nearly ten years as the main entry point for new entrants, the ministry should consider evaluating the programme. The evaluation should focus on aspects to be improved and where there is a need to improve alignment with recent changes to the system, such as the new curriculum. The evaluation should also draw on evidence from the certification examinations, programme graduates' entry into, and retention in the teaching profession, and the results of probation appraisals.

Ensure that the new alternative pathway for entrants is well-targeted and rigorous

Georgia is planning to introduce a two-year in-service programme as an alternative pathway into teaching for mid-career professionals. A number of OECD countries have similar alternative pathways that require entrants to have a number of years of work experience (OECD, 2014[5]). In Georgia, the country might consider focusing the programme on specific fields where there is an identified teaching shortage, such as sciences, foreign languages and mathematics (World Bank, 2014[10]).

It will be important that new entrants to teaching via this pathway still have sufficient opportunity to reflect on teaching practice, alongside time in the classroom. This is important so that new teachers can reflect on what they have seen and experienced in the classroom. Georgia might consider providing study time during or alongside practical teaching experience for this purpose. In all OECD countries with alternative pathways, participants have classroom time for learning and reflecting either before they begin teaching practice or alongside it (OECD, 2014[5]).

Entrants to teaching via the alternative pathway should be required to demonstrate the same levels of competence as all other new teachers. They should be required to pass the existing certification examinations and the probation appraisal recommended in this chapter in order to become fully certified, senior level teachers (see Recommendation 3.3.2). At the same time, Georgia will also need to consider their salaries. While mid-career professionals may be motivated to move into teaching because of intrinsic factors, they are likely to be discouraged if they will experience a significant reduction in salary. Georgia might consider providing financial benefits to recognise mid-career professionals' previous experience in a different sector.

Recommendation 3.3.2. Introduce an induction period and probation appraisal for new teachers

When Georgia introduced changes for new entrants to teaching in 2007, they included a one-year induction programme. However, the programme was never implemented, in part because of a lack of consensus around the salary that a trainee teacher should receive, and a desire to avoid creating another hurdle to enter a profession where demand is already low. This report recommends that Georgia reconsider introducing an induction period, as well as a probation appraisal for all teachers from initial teacher education programmes. The country's recent investment in a new professional development scheme also means that there are potential lead and mentor teachers who can take on mentorship functions as part of a new probation period and appraisal.

The support and accountability functions of an induction period and probation appraisal are particularly important in Georgia. The one-year education programme from which the majority of new entrants is drawn is generally regarded to be well-structured and provides graduates with a good foundation to begin their teaching careers. However, one year is a relatively short period of time in which to acquire pedagogical theory, and in particular to receive sufficient opportunities to practice teaching. In England, Scotland and Spain, which also have one-year consecutive programmes, trainee teachers are also required to successfully pass a probation period before they become fully qualified teachers. In England and Scotland the induction period is mandatory (OECD, 2014[5]). An induction period and probation appraisal are important to have in Georgia, given the acknowledged weakness of the concurrent teacher education programme (Recommendation 3.3.1), which will take time to address.

Create a mandatory induction period, with one year as the minimum duration

Formal induction periods are mandatory in around half of OECD countries. They include structured activities, such as mentoring from experienced teachers to help introduce new teachers to the profession (OECD, 2014[5]). The regular, professional advice and feedback that this kind of structured induction provides can help teachers manage the demands of teaching when they reach the reality of the classroom.

When defining its induction period, Georgia should consider one year as a minimum. The country might also consider a longer period, since this would allow trainees to receive additional support, mentoring and coaching. In some systems, such as Boston and Chicago in the United States, probation lasts three or even four years (OECD, 2013[1]). Introducing a probation period would be beneficial in Georgia where, at present, the majority of initial teacher education graduates has only received one year of preparation. A longer induction period can also enable a better decision to be made on a teacher's potential to be a successful teacher, in particular if the probation appraisal is able to draw on reliable feedback of their daily practice from the trainee's mentor and school principal.

Provide mentoring for new teachers during their induction period

All trainee teachers entering their first teaching post should receive a mentor. The mentors can be drawn from teachers who have reached lead or mentor level in the career path. Mentors would need to be provided with training on the purpose of their role, which should focus on acting as a "critical friend" who provides formative feedback to help trainee teachers grow professionally. Minimum expectations for a mentor should include:

- Visiting a trainee teacher's classroom at least once a month to observe their teaching and giving the trainee formative feedback on their strengths and learning areas.
- Having at least one informal discussion with the trainee teacher each month. During this discussion, the mentor would ask the trainee to reflect on their progress, and identify any aspects of teaching that they find particularly challenging so that the mentor can work with them to address their learning needs.

The ministry should develop this guidance as well as providing mentors with pointers on what to look for when they conduct the classroom observations and what kinds of questions to ask during their informal conversations with new mentees. The majority of OECD countries (23) also provide new teachers with mentors in their first years of teaching (OECD, 2014[5]), and Georgia might try to build on their experiences (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. Mentor programmes in OECD countries

In **Finland**, a pilot induction programme called "Osaava Verme" ("Expert Peer Group Mentoring") was launched in 2008. This programme consists of monthly meetings for teams of new teachers that are facilitated by experienced and trained teachers and supported by the expertise from eight teacher preparation institutions.

In **Queensland (Australia)**, the Mentoring Beginning Teachers (MBT) programme aims to support beginning teachers with mentorship and their schools with increased funding. Beginning teachers are selected for the programme according to the following criteria:

- be provisionally registered with the Queensland College of Teachers
- have worked for less than 200 days
- be employed permanently or on a term-long temporary contract in a Queensland state school.

Principals are given flexibility to decide the mentoring arrangements of beginning teachers according to their school contexts. Annual evaluations of the programme are conducted to ensure schools are properly supporting their beginning teachers.

In **Ireland**, mentoring is an important part of the National Induction Programme for Teachers. In the framework of this programme, trained Professional Support Teams (PST) and mentors provide personal, professional and pedagogical support to newly qualified teachers during their first year. PSTs are fully certified teachers with minimum of 5 years teaching experience that are nominated by the schools.

In **New Zealand**, mentoring is part of the induction programme for provisionally certified teachers and aims to provide them with the guidance of an experienced, fully certificated colleague who has received training to give constructive feedback. Although induction and mentoring programmes may be different from one setting to another, essential components must be developed and these are explained in a set of guidelines.

Sources: Driskell, N. (2015[33]), *Global Perspectives: Mentoring and Support for New Teachers in Ontario and Finland*, NCEE, http://ncee.org/2015/09/global-perspectives-mentoring-and-support-for-new-teachers-in-ontario-and-finland/ (accessed on 29 July 2019);
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NIPT (n.d.[35]), *About NIPT*, http://teacherinduction.ie/en/about/about-nipt (accessed on 29 July 2019);
Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2019[36]), *Induction and mentoring*, https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/induction-and-mentoring (accessed on 29 July 2019).

Give new teachers in small, rural schools access to mentorship

Introducing trained, experienced mentors for all new teachers in Georgia will take time. At the end of 2018, there were only 420 teachers who have reached lead status, and 26 who had reached mentor levels. In the country's small, rural schools, there are even fewer teachers, who have reached these levels, with less than 0.1% of teachers in small towns or villages at either lead or mentor level.

Giving new teachers in the country's small, rural schools guidance and feedback from a mentor is critical. The smaller teaching body in these schools means that new teachers have

fewer opportunities to learn professionally from their peers. Also, their teachers are less able to access professional development opportunities than their colleagues in urban areas. At the same time, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and ethnic minority groups are more prevalent in these schools, both of which are associated with lower learning outcomes and higher drop-out rates in Georgia (see chapter 1). There is a critical need to provide new teachers in small rural schools with more support to meet these demands.

One way of meeting this need is to enable lead or mentor teachers to work across multiple schools. Another option is that the new school coaches from the "New School Model" (see chapter 4) could act in this capacity for new teachers in schools where there are not sufficient numbers of experienced teachers. The country's good technological infrastructure might also provide opportunities for e-mentorship by using telecommunications software that enables video discussion and voice calls.

Introduce an external appraisal at the end of the probation period

By evaluating attributes that cannot be assessed in an examination and requiring classroom experience, a formal process for confirming teaching competence at the end of a probation period helps to ensure that new teachers demonstrate important practical and attitudinal qualities before they are fully confirmed in their post. This is particularly important in Georgia given the lack of rigorous quality assurance mechanisms for initial teacher education programmes, and in particular the absence of a strong practicum. The results from probation appraisal can also be used by the ministry to monitor the quality of initial teacher education programmes and help address areas of recognised weakness.

In most OECD countries with a formal probation appraisal, a combination of evaluators internal and external to the school are involved in taking the decision on whether the trainee teacher meets the requirements for full certification. An individual that is familiar with the trainee's teaching practice contributes to the decision, such as a principal or mentor. There is also an external evaluator who tends to be drawn from the central, regional or local education authorities or from an externally accredited evaluation body (OECD, 2014[5]). Some externality for the probation decision is important to ensure independence and reliability across different schools and teachers given the high stakes that the decision carries for a new teacher's career. In Georgia, this responsibility might be given to the external experts that have recently been contracted to undertake external classroom observations of teachers and that this review recommends take on the role of appraising teachers for promotion (Recommendation 3.1.2). As for the promotion appraisal, these external experts would need to receive training and support for their new roles and be made clearly aware of the different expectations for teachers at different levels of the career path.

The external evaluator would appraise the trainee teacher at the end of the probation period according to the standards for a senior teacher. The appraisals might include a classroom observation focusing on teaching practice and an interview with the trainee teacher about what they have learnt during their probation period and what they consider to be their strengths and learning needs. The school principal and the trainee teacher's mentor would also be asked to complete a form detailing this information. The external evaluator would use this information to make the probation decision.

Develop a clear process for addressing underperformance

Where trainees do not successfully pass their probation on their first attempt, they should be provided with the opportunity to re-enter the probation period. This should be accompanied by specific support tailored to their particular needs. This might include

developing a plan with their mentor focused on addressing areas where they have not met the required standards. If a trainee teacher is not successful after a second attempt, they will no longer be eligible to teach in a school.

Policy issue 3.4. Attracting new teachers and motivating them to succeed

Georgia is looking to transform its teaching workforce to make it highly capable and motivated. While facilitating such broad change is beyond the scope of this review, this Policy issue discusses briefly several factors that currently hinder the development of a professional and qualified teaching workforce. These include a large number of older teachers who are relatively less interested in developing themselves but continue to teach, the perception of teaching as a less prestigious career and financial incentive schemes that are misaligned with the actual causes of lower teacher earnings. These concerns will need to be considered as part of overall strategic planning to improve the state of education in Georgia (see chapter 5).

Recommendation 3.4.1. Encourage renewal of the teaching profession

The presence of a large share of older teachers who are less motivated to engage in career development is impeding the success of the educational reforms introduced by the ministry. By remaining in their positions, these teachers also reduce opportunities for talented young graduates to enter the profession. Devising a resourcing strategy that considers the needs of established teachers and persons who wish to enter teaching will be necessary to effectively renew the profession.

Establish a mandatory retirement age

A challenge to modernising the teaching profession in Georgia is the fact that many teachers are over the retirement age of 60. A lot of these persons are motivated to keep working because their salaries were low for most of their career and they were allowed by the government to stay in their positions in order to continue earning their salary while also collecting pension payments, which are likewise low. Since certification is currently not mandatory, many of these older, uncertified teachers have little incentive to invest in the preparation needed to meet certification requirements in the future and engage with the new pedagogical approaches that the professional development scheme encourages teachers to adopt.

To address this situation, this review first recommends that Georgia introduce a mandatory retirement age for teachers. This will prevent the current circumstances from becoming worse in the future (the share of teachers over 60 grew from roughly one-fifth in 2013 to over one-fourth in 2016). This measure will have to be phased in so teachers have ample time to prepare and to avoid a sudden loss of a quarter of the profession. Teachers already over retirement age would leave the profession after the requirement is phased in. For teachers who are approaching retirement age (e.g. within four to five years), they would be given the choice of engaging with the professional development scheme so they can continue teaching until retirement age, or leaving the profession.

It will be important to consider the social impact of mandatory retirement for older teachers. These persons have worked for a long time under difficult financial circumstances and are still working in their positions with the expressed consent of the government. If they do not pass or engage with the certification requirement, they will need to be supported as they

exit the teaching profession. Supporting measures could include a one-time financial bonus to off-set the potential loss of income that these individuals will face if they leave.

Attract talented graduates into the profession

Attracting the most able school graduates to enter teaching will take time and require a coordinated approach across a number of areas. Some of the actions detailed throughout this report, such as raising the threshold to enter teaching and ensuring that all teachers demonstrate minimum competencies (Recommendation 3.3.1 and Recommendation 3.3.2) will help recruit talented teaching candidates. In addition, Georgia might also consider introducing incentives to encourage high-performing high school graduates to apply to become teachers. For example, applicants with high marks in the UEE might receive a scholarship to enrol in initial teacher education. Any increase in entry level teacher salaries should also be well communicated to potential teaching candidates.

A communications campaign could help advertise new incentives and improve the overall prestige of teaching. Many countries have organised similar campaigns to address the low demand to enter the teaching workforce (see Box 3.3). In order to encourage individuals with strong intrinsic motivation to teach, such a campaign might focus on the essential role that teachers have in students' lives and the development of Georgia. The campaign might combine national advertisements on television, in cinemas, the press and include a website and leaflets to provide further information.

Box 3.3. A national campaign for teaching from the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, a national marketing campaign called "Your Future | Their Future" aimed at teacher training recruitment was launched in 2014 by the Department for Education. The campaign included:

- creating an official website, "Get Into Teaching", which disseminated information and advice on teacher training and on the teaching profession
- television advertising, social media channels and online videos
- recruitment events where higher education institutions, subject associations (such as the Institute of Physics) and a network of 600 teaching schools provided guidance to prospective teachers.

The government has also been offering financial incentives to attract more of the best graduates to teach in-demand subjects.

Sources: GOV.UK (2014[37]), *Your future their future: new teacher recruitment campaign*, www.gov.uk/government/news/your-future-their-future-new-teacher-recruitment-campaign (accessed on 29 July 2019);
(Lane et al., 2019[38]), *Your Future, Their Future impact: initial findings - Main report*, Department for Education, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/768485/Teacher_marketing_evaluation_2019_-_initial_findings_Main_Report.pdf (accessed on 29 July 2019).

Purposefully allocate new teachers to high need subject areas and geographic locations

While there is currently a surplus of teachers overall in Georgia, ministry officials acknowledge there are shortages in some specific subjects and in the more remote areas of the country. Therefore, as Georgia becomes more selective about new entrants to the profession (see Recommendation 3.3.1) and actively recruits new teachers, it is recommended that these new, talented teachers should be purposefully allocated to specific subjects and to certain schools. It is important to consider this recommendation in light of the expected departure of older teachers in the short term. As well as thinking about the impact of teacher retirement on overall teaching numbers, Georgia should consider if the departure of many older teachers is likely to disproportionately affect demands in specific subjects or parts of the country. How new teachers are allocated can be continuously adjusted in response to these teacher retirement trends.

Recommendation 3.4.2. Review planned adjustments to teacher salaries to make them impactful and educationally valuable

While teachers in Georgia historically have had lower salaries than international benchmarks, the introduction of career pathways and associated salary scale revisions have helped bring Georgian teacher pay scales in line with OECD norms. In fact, teachers at all levels except the practitioner level currently earn more, in relative terms, than their peers internationally. The reasons that, despite these changes, Georgian teachers' earnings are still considered low are because most teachers are at the lesser paid practitioner level and also most only work part-time.

The ministry has recently announced an increase to teacher salaries, but changing the salary scale will not necessarily increase the incomes of most teachers because of the aforementioned reasons. In fact, such measures could undermine concurrent efforts to professionalise the teaching workforce by, for example, removing incentives for teachers to progress through the pathways. Therefore, it is recommended that future adjustments to teacher salaries be carefully reviewed so they actually impact teachers' earnings while also helping to improve the quality of education that students receive.

Limit teacher salary scale increases to practitioner teachers and consider alternative methods to raise teachers' earnings

According to the current pay and career structure, only practitioner teachers have salaries levels that are low by national and international standards (see Table 3.2). Any increases to the formal teacher salary scale, therefore, should only affect the practitioner level. Beyond this, this review recommends that Georgia should expand professional support so more teachers can move along the career path and therefore benefit from higher salaries (see Recommendation 3.3.2). Another way to make effective use of additional funding for teacher pay, which would also help improve educational equity, is to provide financial incentives to teachers who work in hard-to-staff schools. Similarly, working in such environments could be considered positively in teachers' appraisal for promotion.

Consider options to reduce the high share of part-time teachers

The large share of part-time teachers who do not earn a full salary contributes to the overall low level of teacher earnings. Over time, enforcing a retirement age and creating more

rigorous standards for entry will reduce the overall teacher numbers. This will create more full-time teaching posts for in-service teachers and reduce the number of part-time teachers.

In the short term, the ministry should consider introducing opportunities for qualified part-time teachers to take on additional non-teaching activities and increase their working time. For example, part-time lead or mentor teachers could be given additional mentoring or professional development activities in their school or across other local schools (see Recommendation 3.2.2). These roles should be explicitly set out in the revised teacher standards (see Recommendation 3.1.2). These measures would not only increase teacher earnings, but their extra time spent in schools (along with the added income) would also discourage them from providing private tutoring (see Chapter 2).

Recommendations

Policy issue	Recommendations	Actions
3.1. Apply minimum standards for teaching and encourage the development of higher teaching competencies	3.1.1. Support all teachers to meet minimum standards	Clearly communicate the examinations' role
		Ensure that the certification examinations effectively assess essential teaching knowledge and skills
		Support existing teachers to master essential knowledge and skills
		Encourage each school to make it a priority that all teachers reach senior status
	3.1.2. Re-focus the teacher professional development scheme on demonstrating higher levels of teaching competencies	Make teacher standards the main reference for promotion
		Focus promotion appraisal on authentic evidence of teaching practice
		Strengthen the role of independence and professional competence in promotion decisions
3.2. Support teachers to develop professionally throughout their career	3.2.1. Focus the new regular appraisal on student learning and providing feedback for teachers' professional learning	Introduce guidelines on a set of simple steps that schools can take to encourage regular appraisal practices
		Determine the evaluators
		Develop national guidance for evaluators on how to collect and review evidence of teaching quality
		Support evaluators to provide useful developmental feedback
	3.3.2. Ensure teachers have access to high quality professional development	Require that all teachers undertake professional development
		Sustain the programmes and capacity that has been built up through G-PriEd and MCC
		Ensure that training is relevant and high quality
		Use data to inform the design and supply of professional development
3.3. Set high standards for entry to teaching and provide more structured support in the early years	3.3.1. Establish more rigorous standards for entry and completion of initial teacher education	Set a minimum threshold for teacher candidates' academic knowledge and skills
		Set clear standards for certification, and use these as the key reference point for the design and quality assurance of initial teacher preparation
		Establish an attractive and high quality 300 credits programme
		Review the quality of the consecutive model
		Ensure that the new alternative pathway for entrants is well-targeted and rigorous
	3.3.2. Introduce an induction period and probation appraisal for new teachers	Create a mandatory induction period, with one year as the minimum duration
		Provide mentoring for new teachers during their induction period
		Ensure that new teachers in small, rural schools receive adequate support
		Introduce an external appraisal at the end of the probation period
		Develop a clear process for underperformance
3.4. Attracting new teachers and motivating them to succeed	3.4.1. Encourage renewal of the teaching profession	Establish a mandatory retirement age
		Attract talented graduates into the profession
		Purposefully allocate teachers to high need subject areas and geographic locations
	3.4.2. Review planned adjustments to teacher salaries to make them impactful and educationally valuable	Limit teacher salary scale increases to practitioner teachers and consider alternative methods to raise teachers' earnings
		Consider options to reduce the high share of part-time teachers

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Chapter 4. Assuring quality schooling through external evaluation and school-led improvements

This chapter looks at how Georgia can improve schooling through introducing effective quality assurance mechanisms. Schools in Georgia have considerable autonomy, but few accountability measures in place to ensure that schools provide adequate services. Most schools have not undergone school authorisation, and a school evaluation framework is still being developed. Georgia should continue with its plans to authorise all schools, but prioritise authorisation visits and follow-up supports for schools that are struggling. Using the authorisation standards, Georgia can then finish developing a comprehensive school external evaluation framework that supports teaching and learning and holds schools accountable for their actions. Simultaneously, Georgia should improve the value of school self-evaluation, which is currently conducted but does not necessarily lead to school improvement.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Introduction

Starting in 2005, Georgia began decentralising its schooling system. Compared to international benchmarks, schools in Georgia now have significant autonomy for assessment, curriculum, human resourcing and financial management (OECD, 2016[1]). The autonomy afforded to schools is supposed to be balanced by accountability and oversight from the school board and competition arising from parents exercising school choice. In practice, however, school boards lack the capacity and authority to provide robust oversight or accountability. Parental choice is also limited outside the biggest urban areas (Transparency International, n.d.[2]). Because Georgia lacks a robust school evaluation system, the country's schools operate with very limited oversight and accountability. This situation is problematic because many schools could be struggling but there are no measures to identify them and help them improve.

Recognising the need for more and better information about the country's schools, Georgia is planning to extend its authorisation model to ensure that all schools are meeting basic standards. However, the country lacks the resources to visit all its schools in the short term. This chapter recommends a risk assessment model to identify those schools in greatest need of improvement.

In line with the country's ambitions to introduce in the future a fuller model of school evaluation focused on educational quality, the chapter also suggests how Georgia can start to prepare its institutions and schools for this change. In particular, it focuses on how greater support can be provided to schools so that they develop the confidence and capacity to use evaluation to lead improvement. Enabling schools to drive improvements will also support the country's reforms to create a "New School Model" where schools adapt teaching and learning to meet the needs and interests of individual students.

Key features of an effective school evaluation system

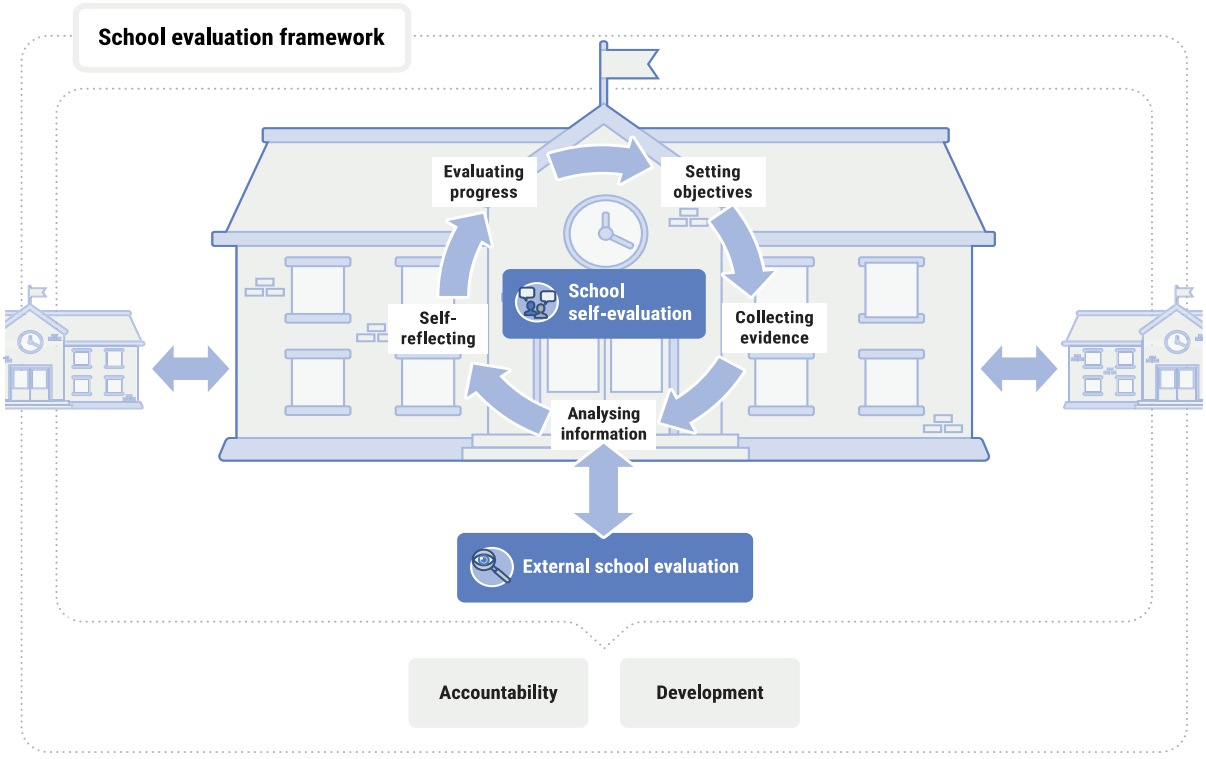
In most OECD countries, school evaluations motivate schools to comply with rules and procedures, and focus increasingly on school improvement (see Figure 4.1). Another recent trend has been the development of school self-evaluation, which has become a central mechanism for encouraging school-led improvement and objective setting. Internationally, strong systems for external and school-level monitoring and evaluation are seen as essential complements to decentralised systems to ensure local and school accountability for education quality.

Frameworks for school evaluation focus on key aspects of the school environment and help drive school transparency and consistency

Frameworks for school evaluation should align with the broader aims of an education system. They should encourage schools to create an environment where all students can thrive and achieve national learning standards. As well as ensuring compliance with rules and procedures, effective frameworks focus on the aspects of the school environment that are most important for students' learning and development. These include the quality of teaching and learning, support for teachers' development, and the quality of instructional leadership (OECD, 2013[3]). Most frameworks also use a measure of students' educational outcomes and progress according to national learning standards, such as assessments results or teachers' reports.

A number of OECD countries have developed a national vision of a good school (OECD, 2013[3]). The vision guides evaluation, helping to focus on the ultimate purpose of ensuring that every school is good. Visions are often framed around learners, setting out how a good school supports their intellectual, emotional and social development.

Figure 4.1. School evaluation framework



Countries' external evaluations balance accountability and improvement

The vast majority of OECD countries have external school evaluation. Schools tend to be evaluated on a cyclical basis, most commonly every three to five years (OECD, 2015[4]). Within the broad purpose of evaluating school performance, some countries emphasise accountability for teaching quality and learning outcomes. In these countries, national assessment data, school ratings and the publication of evaluation reports play an important role. In contrast, in countries that place greater emphasis on improvement, evaluations tend to focus more on providing support and feedback to schools. They also place strong emphasis on helping schools develop their own internal evaluation and improvement processes.

Evaluations aim to establish a school-wide perspective on teaching and learning

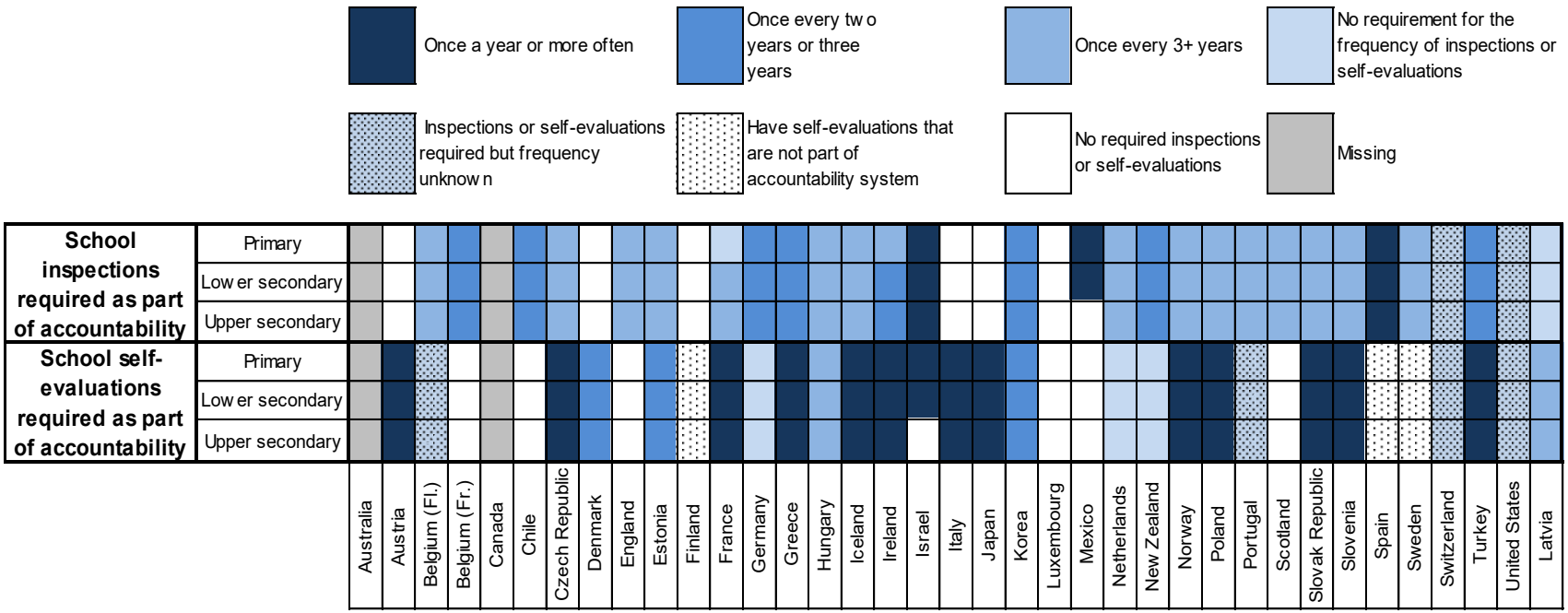
Using administrative information to check for compliance is a standard procedure for evaluations, although the data is now collected digitally in most countries (OECD, 2015[4]). Digital data collection frees up time during school visits to collect observed evidence of school quality. Most evaluations are based on such school visits over multiple days. Visits frequently include classroom observations. Unlike for teacher appraisal, these observations do not evaluate individual teachers but rather aim to cover a sample of classes across

different subjects and grades to establish a view of teaching and learning across the school. Inspectors also undertake interviews with school staff, students and sometimes collect the views of parents. Since much of this information is qualitative and subjective, making it difficult to reliably evaluate, countries develop significant guidance, such as rubrics for classroom observations, to help inspectors evaluate schools fairly and accurately.

Many countries have created school inspectorates in the central government

External evaluations are led by national education authorities, frequently from the central government (OECD, 2013[3]). Across Europe, most countries have created an inspectorate that is affiliated with, but frequently independent of, the central education authority. This arrangement ensures integrity and enables the inspectorate to develop the significant professional expertise necessary for effective evaluation. School inspectors may be permanent staff or accredited experts contracted to undertake evaluations. The latter provides flexibility for countries, enabling them to meet the schedule of school evaluations and draw on a range of experience, without the costs of maintaining a large permanent staff. Inspectors across OECD countries are generally expected to have significant experience in education and teaching. Figure 4.2 illustrates the characteristics of school evaluation in OECD countries.

Figure 4.2. School evaluation in OECD countries



Source: OECD (2015[4]), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en.

The consequences of evaluations vary according to their purpose

To serve improvement purposes, evaluations must provide schools with clear, specific feedback in the school evaluation report, which helps them understand what the school's strengths are and what they can do to improve. To encourage schools to implement the recommendations contained in their evaluation reports, countries often require schools to use evaluation results in their development plans. In some countries, local authorities also support evaluation follow-up and school improvement. Around half of OECD countries use evaluation results to target low-performing schools for more frequent evaluations (OECD, 2015[4]).

In most countries, evaluations also result in a rating that highlights excellent, satisfactory or under-performing schools. To support accountability, most OECD countries publish evaluation reports (OECD, 2015[4]). Public evaluation reports can generate healthy competition between schools and are an important source of information for students and parents in systems with school choice. However, publishing reports also risks distorting school-level practices such as encouraging an excessive focus on assessment results or preparation for evaluations. Therefore, it is critical that evaluation frameworks emphasise the quality of school-level processes and an inclusive vision of learning where all students, regardless of ability or background, are supported to do their best. Evaluation systems that emphasise decontextualised outcome data like assessment results are likely to unfairly penalise schools where students come from less advantaged backgrounds, since socio-economic background is the most influential factor associated with educational outcomes (OECD, 2016[1]).

Self-evaluation is an internal tool for improvement

Most OECD countries require schools to undertake self-evaluations at least once every two years. Self-evaluations encourage reflection, goal setting and inform school development plans (OECD, 2013[3]). To emphasise the formative purpose of self-evaluation, many countries encourage schools to appropriate self-evaluation as an internal tool for improvement rather than an externally imposed requirement. In some countries, schools develop their own frameworks for self-evaluation. In others, they use a common framework with external evaluation, but have the discretion to add or adapt indicators to reflect their contexts and priorities.

The relationship between external and internal evaluations varies across countries. In general, as systems mature, greater emphasis is placed on self-evaluation while external evaluation is scaled back. Most OECD countries now use the results from self-evaluations to feed external evaluations, with, for example, inspectors reviewing self-evaluation results as part of external evaluations. However, the relationship is also shaped by the degree of school autonomy – in centralised systems, external evaluations continue to have a more dominant role, while the reverse is true for systems that emphasise greater school autonomy.

Effective self-evaluation requires strong school-level capacity

Effective self-evaluation requires strong leadership and strong processes for monitoring, evaluating and setting objectives (SICI, 2003[5]). Many OECD countries highlight that developing this capacity in schools is a challenge. It is therefore important that principals and teachers be given specific training in self-evaluation, such as using evaluation results, classroom and peer observations, analysis of data and developing improvement plans

(OECD, 2013[3]). Other supports include guidelines on undertaking self-evaluations and suggested indicators for self-evaluations.

While a principal's leadership plays a critical role in self-evaluation, creating teams to share self-evaluation roles is also important. The most effective self-evaluation teams involve a range of staff that are respected by their colleagues and have a clear vision of how self-evaluation can support school improvement. In order to support collective learning, self-evaluation should also engage the whole school community. This includes students, who have a unique perspective on how schools and classrooms can be improved (Rudduck, 2007[6]). Students' views also help to understand how the school environment impacts students' well-being and their overall development, which is important for evaluating the extent to which a country or economy has achieved a national vision that is focused on learners.

Data systems provide important inputs for evaluation

Administrative school data – like the number of students, their background and teacher information – provides important contextual information for internal and external evaluators. Increasingly, countries use information systems that collect information from schools for multiple purposes, including evaluation and policy-making.

Most countries also collect information about school outcomes. Standardised assessments and national examinations provide comparative information about learning to national standards. However, since assessment results do not provide a full picture of a school, they are often complemented by other information like student retention and progression, student background, school financial information and previous evaluation results. A number of countries use this data to develop composite indicators of school performance. Indicators frequently inform evaluation and support school accountability. Some countries also use this information to identify schools at risk of low performance and target them for evaluations (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015[7]).

Principals must be able to lead school improvement

Strong school leadership is essential for effective school self-evaluation, and school improvement more generally. Principals support evaluation and improvement through a number of leadership roles – defining the school's goals, observing instruction, supporting teachers' professional development and collaborating with teachers to improve instruction (Schleicher, 2015[8]). This diversity points to a major shift in the principal's role in recent years, with principals increasingly leading instructional improvement.

Principals need a deep understanding of teaching and learning, and strong leadership skills to become instructional leaders

Most principals bring significant experience of the teaching profession – among the countries participating in the OECD Teacher and Learning International Survey (TALIS), the average principal has 20 years of teaching experience. Teaching experience alone, however, is not sufficient, and the ability to demonstrate strong leadership of the school community is particularly important. Nearly 83% of principals in TALIS-participating countries reported that they received training in instructional leadership either before or after taking up their position, or both (OECD, 2019[9]).

Principals' initial training must be complemented by opportunities for continued professional development once in post. One of the most effective types are collaborative

professional learning activities, where principals work together to examine practices and acquire new knowledge (DuFour, 2004[10]). In countries where international assessment results suggest that learning levels are high, like the Netherlands and Singapore, more than 80% of principals reported participating in these kinds of activities in the last 12 months (OECD, 2019[9]).

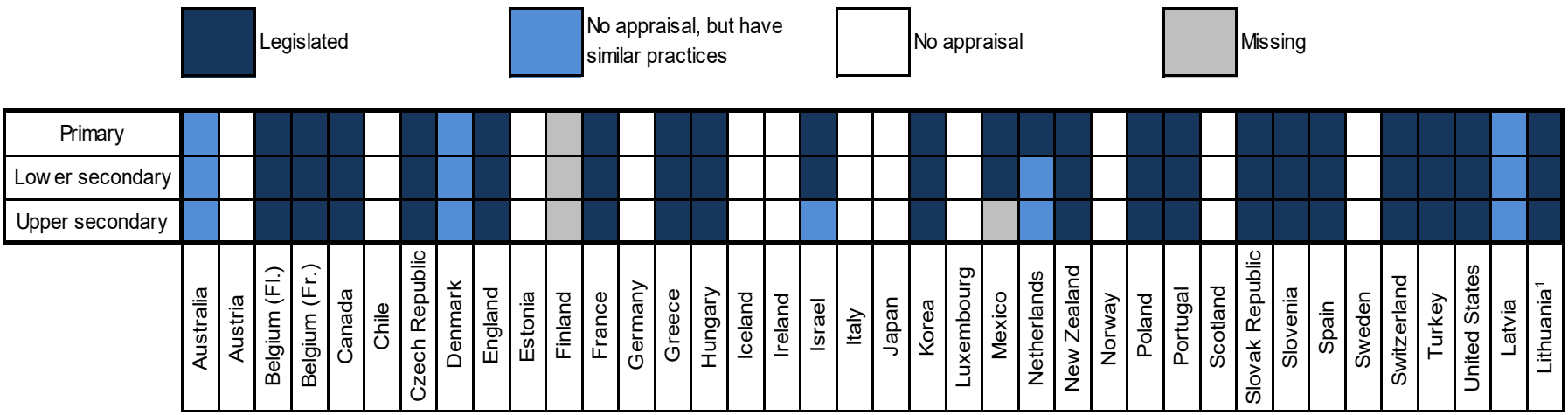
Professionalising school leadership – standards, selection and appraisal

Given the important role that principals occupy, many OECD countries are taking steps to professionalise the role. A number of countries have developed professional principal standards that set out what a school leader is expected to know and be able to do. Principal standards should include how principals are expected to contribute to self-evaluation and improvement. Similar to teachers, principal standards guide the recruitment of principals, their training and appraisal.

Around half of OECD countries have legislated appraisal of school leaders (OECD, 2015[4]). These kinds of appraisals hold principals accountable for their leadership of the school, but also provide them with valuable professional feedback and support. Responsibility for principal appraisal varies. In some countries, it is led by central authorities, like the school inspectorate or the same body that undertakes external teacher appraisals. In others, it is the responsibility of a school-level body, like the school board. While the latter provides the opportunity to ensure that appraisal closely reflects the school context, boards need significant support to appraise principals competently and fairly.

Figure 4.3. Existence of school leader appraisal in OECD countries and economies (2015)

In general programmes



Source: OECD (2015[4]), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en.

Schools in Georgia

School principals

Principals have similar levels of experience and academic qualifications as their counterparts in OECD countries

Principals in Georgia are required to have three years of any type of work experience (World Bank, 2014[11]). While this differs from many OECD countries, where principals must have teaching experience, in practice the vast majority of Georgia's principals have been teachers in the past. In TALIS 2018, principals in Georgia reported having 23 years of teaching experience on average, greater than the OECD average of 20 (OECD, 2019[9]). Almost all principals report having at least a short-cycle tertiary degree (ISCED 5).

Principal appointment

Candidate principals must pass a two-stage selection process to be eligible to be appointed to a school. First, they must pass a certification examination that is organised by the Education Management Information System (EMIS) unit in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS). Second, candidates are interviewed by a commission that includes the Deputy Education Minister, the Head of Preschool and General Development Department, the Head of the Human Resources Department and representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and trade unions. Candidates who pass this process can then be appointed to individual schools by the school board. The members of the board vote for a new principal through a secret ballot. If the board cannot reach a decision, the ministry can appoint a new principal.

Principals receive little preparation for the requirements of their new role

Principals in Georgia are not required to complete any initial preparation (World Bank, 2014[11]). In contrast, the international trend towards professionalising the school principal position means that an increasing number of countries provide some initial training for new principals. Over 30% of principals in TALIS-participating countries in 2018 report receiving training in instructional leadership before taking up their position. This was the case for just 12% of principals in Georgia (OECD, 2019[9]).

Provision for principals' continuous professional development is also limited

The Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC) does provide some professional development for principals, but significantly less than for teachers. The OECD team's interviews suggested that TPDC's offerings are insufficient to meet principals' needs. Principals in Georgia report participating in professional development much less than their counterparts in other TALIS-participating countries. Just 39% of principals in Georgia report participating in education conferences and 21% in peer or self-observation and coaching, compared to 73% and 51%, respectively, across TALIS 2018 participating countries (OECD, 2019[9]). The lack of continuous professional development specifically tailored for principals is reflected in principals' responses to a survey administered for this review. When asked to identify in which areas they would like to receive further development, the most commonly selected area is school administration (e.g. scheduling and budgeting).

Recently, however, a number of projects funded by international donors have been developed to provide more support for principals. In 2016-18, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funded leadership academies, led by TPDC. The academies provided training for principals on being an instructional leader, including how to lead school evaluations. The Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd) also focused on developing the instructional role of school principals by engaging them in classroom observations, providing constructive feedback and teacher performance evaluations (USAID, 2018[12]) (see chapter 3).

Principals have significant autonomy with limited oversight

Principals have more autonomy for school management, such as staff hiring and firing and developing the school budget, than principals in many OECD countries (OECD, 2016[1]). However, there is currently little oversight to monitor the quality and integrity of their actions. While schools receive regular checks from the Educational Resource Centres (ERCs), these are focused on checking compliance with legislation and not on the quality of schooling. In theory, principals are supposed to be appraised by school boards, but, in the absence of training or guidance on how to undertake this role, boards are unable to meaningfully appraise principals.

School governance

School boards have an important role but lack the capacity to undertake it effectively

As part of the decentralisation reforms of 2005, school boards were established as the main decision-making body in schools. The boards comprise six to 12 members, with equal representation of parents and teachers, one student representative and one local government representative. Boards are supposed to appoint the principal, approve the annual school budget, monitor all school spending and appraise the principal (Transparency International, n.d.[2]; World Bank, 2014[11]).

However, boards have not received support to take on these key roles in school management. A related concern is the boards' ability to maintain the independence and integrity of their decision-making. There are reports of board members being intimidated to vote a certain way in decisions regarding principal appointments (Transparency International, n.d.[2]). The lack of boards' professional independence and capacity also makes it very difficult for them to oversee effectively the school budget or appraise principals.

Schools receive regular checks from Education Resource Centres

ERCs were created in 2005 in each municipality following decentralisation reforms. Each ERC has around four to five staff, including a financial officer, secretary, educational specialist(s) and an assistant. ERC staff visit all schools at least once a month, and on many occasions more frequently, to check compliance on issues such as school infrastructure, student attendance and record keeping. Representatives from ERCs fill out standard forms that are shared with the General Education Department in MoESCS.

ERCs replaced regional representations of the ministry and were supposed to contribute re-orienting education governance to be more supportive instead of controlling. While many ERCs have developed close relationships with the schools in their municipalities, their roles are limited to serving as conduits between the ministry and schools with little

time, staff capacity or resources to support schools. This situation partly reflects the inefficient organisation of ERCs. Staff from ERCs are required to visit all schools every month, regardless of whether there are any concerns or issues in the school. Moreover, all ERCs have the same number of staff, regardless of the number of schools within an ERC's jurisdiction. This means that some ERCs are stretched across 50 or more schools, while others in less populated areas might work with just 10.

A "New School Model" aims to strengthen school-level support

Georgia is at the beginning of a comprehensive reform across its education system (see chapter 1). One aim of this reform is to change instruction from focusing on acquiring knowledge to focusing on developing key competencies like critical thinking, problem-solving and communication. Changes to the structure of the curriculum also mean that it will now be organised across multiple grades, reflecting key stages in student learning, rather than by individual grades as in the past. This change is intended to provide teachers with greater flexibility to differentiate teaching to individual students' interests and needs (see chapter 2).

As part of these reforms, a "New School Model" aims to strengthen schools so that they have the confidence and capacity to make the most of this more flexible approach to teaching and learning. While detailed plans were not available at the time of this review, one aspect of the "New School Model" is to strengthen the role of school principals as instructional leaders. Another is to use school coaches to build in-school capacity for instruction. The coaches will encourage teachers to take advantage of the freedoms provided by the new curriculum to design their own lessons and assessments. This approach builds on the school-based development model started by the G-Pried and MCC activities (see chapter 3). The "New School Model" will begin as a pilot in 50 of the country's "average" schools in spring 2019. It will then be adapted and expanded to cover schools that meet specific conditions, such as those with a large share of students from linguistic minorities or schools in remote, mountainous areas.

Data systems

Georgia collects school-level data but it is difficult for schools to use and analyse

Georgia collects and stores a wide range of school data on students, teachers and infrastructure in its EMIS system. This information is entered by schools via E-School, EMIS's online portal. However, E-School lacks simple tools to access and analyse data. Schools cannot, for example, easily obtain information about trends in the school over time or in comparison to other schools (see chapter 5). The OECD team's visits to schools revealed that they do not use data like student attendance to set school-level objectives or monitor quality.

There is no standard monitoring of learning outcomes

A major challenge for monitoring learning outcomes across Georgia's schools is the lack of reliable data on student learning outcomes. Following examination reforms in 2019, the only standardised assessment that students take is the Unified Entry Examination (UEE) at the end of grade 12 for entry to tertiary education. The introduction of a national assessment would provide valuable data to monitor learning outcomes. Most OECD countries administer such an assessment (see chapter 5).

However, the data that is available could also be better exploited. One challenge for schools is that, while school administrative data is held in EMIS, results from the national examination are held in the National Assessment and Examinations Centre's (NAEC) database and the two systems are not linked. This makes it difficult for schools to compare their student results to other schools with similar contexts and student populations. The system for school authorisation also makes limited use of school administrative data or data on learning outcomes.

School evaluation in Georgia

While Georgia does not yet have a full school evaluation model (see Table 4.1), it aims to develop one over the medium to long term. This will entail a major change from the current authorisation process, which is focused on compliance with regulations, towards a broader evaluation of school quality and capacity for improvement. In the short term, Georgia wishes to apply the authorisation process to the country's public schools in preparation for the implementation of a fuller evaluation model in the future.

Table 4.1. School evaluation in Georgia

Types of evaluation	Reference standards	Guiding documents	Body responsible	Procedure	Frequency	Use
External school evaluation		Does not exist at present but standards being developed for its introduction				
School authorisation	School authorisation standards	Authorisation report	National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) Council for Authorisation of General Education Institutions	A team of external experts undertakes Evaluation of school self-evaluation report School visit Authorisation report is validated by the Council	Every six years	School not authorised are closed
School self-evaluation		Self-evaluation form	National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)	School staff	At least every three years	Self-evaluation reports are required for authorisation and inform school development plans.

External school evaluation

School authorisation focuses on compliance with basic standards

School authorisation was introduced in 2010 and is led by the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE). The purpose of authorisation is to maintain compliance with three national school standards (see Box 4.1). Unlike school evaluation in OECD countries and economies, authorisation does not evaluate educational quality or take into account school outcomes like student retention or assessment results.

Box 4.1. Georgia's school authorisation standards

Schools must meet the following three standards to be authorised:

1. **The school's study plans are aligned with the national curriculum**, including:

- School study plans provide equal support for different students' learning needs, and a programme for students with special educational needs.
- Systems and criteria for student assessment are transparent, and the outcomes are used to support students' academic progress.
- There are procedures in place to report students' progress to parents, and to involve parents in the life of the school.

2. **Schools have material resources that meet the needs of its study plans**, including:

- The school has at least 250m^2 (except if there are less than 50 students).
- Classrooms have necessary equipment such as desks and blackboards.
- The school has basic infrastructure (electricity, sanitary conditions, lighting and heating).
- The school has plans to safeguard health and safety (e.g. fire safety systems, evaluation plans, first aid equipment, etc.).
- The school has action plans providing for efficient use and further improvement of material resources.

3. **The school has an adequate number of staff and skills profiles to undertake the activities set out in its study plan**, including:

- School teachers are selected in line with legal requirements.
- The school has rules for staff selection, employment and dismissal, and transparent procedures for promotion and sanctions.
- The school has a system in place for staff's professional development.
- The school environment is based on mutual respect and co-operation, and provides a context where staff can fulfil their potential.

Each school authorisation takes six months and is based on data analysis and a school visit with classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students and feedback from families. The NCEQE also conducts a shorter, 90 day monitoring of schools, in response to a complaint or an application. While full authorisation takes places every six years, all schools receive at least one follow-up visit between authorisations, and schools with significant issues receive more.

Authorisation has now been applied to the country's 200 private schools and Georgia's original intent was to extend authorisation to public schools. According to the Law, all public schools should be authorised by 2021. However, this means authorising some 2000 schools and the NCEQE has the capacity to authorise between 50 and 100 annually, making

this objectives unfeasible. This chapter provides suggestions on what NCEQE can do to meet the 2021 target (see Recommendation 4.1.1).

With the introduction of the "New School Model", adapting the authorisation framework for public schools has been somewhat deprioritised. It is unclear to what extent the ministry plans to authorise public schools and has given some indications (e.g. presentations and public communications) that it might not consider authorisation to be a key instrument for monitoring and improving schooling. There have been discussions to explore other methods of doing so, such as developing a composite index to measure quality.

Planned new authorisation standards focus on performance and quality

The NCEQE is in the process of revising the current authorisation framework so that it is better adapted to guiding a review of education quality in public schools. The current draft of the new framework appears to bring the authorisation process more into line with school evaluation practices in many OECD countries, with more emphasis on teaching and learning practices and outcomes, as well as stronger focus on school leadership quality. It is also intended that the revised framework will include clearer expectations with respect to school accountability for performance. An initial suggestion was that schools found to be non-compliant with the new standards would be closed, while others would be required to develop improvement plans according to differing timelines depending on their performance. Like existing authorisation, the process is expected to take place every six years.

The National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement is responsible for overseeing school quality, but its staff does not have a strong background in monitoring and evaluation

NCEQE has 150 staff, but most serve an administrative function. NCEQE has historically perceived itself to be a management arm of the ministry and not as an assessor of teaching and learning quality. Though it is responsible for overseeing the school authorisation process, authorisations themselves are not conducted by NCEQE staff, but external experts with teaching experience who are contracted by NCEQE.

Georgia's move towards a more quality-oriented school evaluation model in the future will require expertise in school quality and improvement within NCEQE. In line with the practice in countries with established school evaluation models, a body like the NCEQE will need to review draft standards and determine if they focus enough on key issues for school quality, produce national, analytical reports on the results of school evaluations and advise ministers on school quality. These activities require that NCEQE have a strong understanding of what makes for a quality teaching and learning environment, but this type of background is not widely found among NCEQE staff.

A Council currently reviews all school authorisation reports

A Council comprising 11 members meets each month to review each school authorisation report. The members include representatives from TPDC, school principals, national trainers and teachers. The Council's role is seen as providing an important independent review of authorisation decisions. However, when authorisation is extended to public schools, the volume of authorisations will mean that it will not be realistic for the Council to review each school's authorisation report. Recently, there have been discussion about integrating staff from ERCs into the review process to help increase review capacity.

Self-evaluation

Schools do not yet see self-evaluation as an internal tool for improvement

All schools are required to submit self-evaluation reports to the NCEQE at least once every three years. Schools are expected to use their self-evaluation report to develop both a long-term development plan and a one-year operational plan. Self-evaluation focuses on the same three standards as authorisation (see Box 4.1), with the overall purpose of assessing a school's readiness for authorisation.

The process of self-evaluation is well-established in Georgia. Self-evaluation was introduced in 2010, and 88% of the schools surveyed for this review reported that they undertake a self-evaluation annually. However, the OECD team's interviews revealed that schools perceive self-evaluation to be an add-on to their existing management processes, rather than a tool to inform improvement. These circumstances reflect a number of challenges with the current self-evaluation model, including the absence of a clearly defined purpose, the lack of tools and guidance to help schools undertake self-evaluation and the absence of hands-on, external support. To address these challenges, in 2016 NAEC initiated an MCC-funded pilot with fifteen schools on self-evaluation to identify tools, resources and training to help schools more effectively use self-evaluation for improvement.

Policy issues

Georgia's most immediate concern is to develop a model of authorisation that can be practically applied to all the country's schools. This can be achieved by modifying its current authorisation process to focus on schools in greatest need of support. In addition to enabling targeted support, strategically extending authorisation to all the country's schools in this manner will collect information about the most important challenges that schools in Georgia face. MoESCS can use this evidence to inform the development of a full school evaluation framework, which could require self-evaluation and encourage school-directed improvement efforts.

Policy issue 4.1. Reaching all schools for authorisation

The review team recommends that Georgia focus its attentions on its original aim to authorise all public schools in the short term, which will help to address the significant gap in school oversight that currently exists. While developing composite indices of school quality can help monitor schooling, the use of such measures is a complement to, not replacement for, regular school evaluation processes (OECD, 2013[3]). By providing information about the current state of public schooling across the country, authorisation will also help the ministry prepare to introduce a fuller model of external evaluation in the future. However, as the ministry has recognised, authorising all public schools by 2021 is not feasible. Therefore, this policy issue recommends that Georgia develop a risk-assessment model to identify those schools at greatest risk of not meeting the basic conditions for a quality education. It also suggests the kinds of follow-up support that can be provided to struggling schools to help them rapidly meet basic educational standards.

Recommendation 4.1.1. Develop a risk assessment model to guide the provisional authorisation of public schools

Georgia has strong systems for collecting basic school information. The country's EMIS and NAEC databases contain a wealth of administrative school data and national examination results. A number of the ministry's units or departments also regularly visit schools, for example to check sanitary conditions, curriculum implementation and school infrastructure. Because authorisation of public schools cannot be realistically completed in a short amount of time, Georgia can use the available information from these sources to identify schools that need immediate support and those that can be provisionally authorised in the short term and receive a fuller evaluation later in the cycle.

Identify indicators for the risk assessment model

In a number of OECD and European Union (EU) systems, various data are used to underpin a differentiated approach to school evaluation, in which schools with greatest needs are identified and then prioritised to receive support. In the Netherlands, the risk assessment is based on learning outcomes on national tests and school processes like financial administration, in Sweden, on the results of a school survey, in Ireland on student retention and attendance data and in England and Northern Ireland, on judgements from previous inspections (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015[7]).

Based on the experiences of other countries, available research about effective schooling environment and the specific challenges that schools in Georgia face, the country might consider the following indicators for its risk assessment model:

- Material resources. Existing information from the ministry's infrastructure unit can be used to develop a set of material resource indicators, based on the existing authorisation standards. The indicators should set out a minimum level of basic infrastructure that all schools are expected to have. The infrastructure unit can provide this information, complemented by data from ERCs and schools.
- Financial data. Information from EMIS about a school's budget can be used to monitor if resources are being used appropriately and efficiently. The ministry could set minimum expectations for the school-level management of financial data, such as maintaining a transparent budget, which would make it possible to track how funds are used.
- Staff. Data from EMIS can be used to provide information on the share of teachers in each school by age, gender, teaching status, and participation in professional development. Based on the country's goals to professionalise teaching, minimum standards in terms of the share of teachers who have passed certification examinations and regular participation in professional development could be developed (see chapter 3).
- Student outcomes. This could include minimum standards with respect to student retention and attendance. Data from the NAEC databases on UEE results can be used to measure student learning outcomes. When a national assessment is implemented, its results will provide information about learning at earlier stages of schooling (see chapter 5).
- Student profile. Risk assessments should reflect the context in which a school is operating. Using student demographic data will highlight schools where there is a concentration of students at greater risk of low performance given their

backgrounds. Relevant information about student demographics include age, grade, mother tongue and socio-economic background (indicated by the proxy measure of family receipt of social assistance).

- Processes. To focus on quality and school improvement, risk assessments might also try to take into account the quality of school processes. Minimum standards could be for having key policies and practices and following transparent financial planning procedures. Other important school processes to look at include student assessment and staff policies (recruitment, promotion, dismissals, etc.), support for teachers' professional development, as well as having a self-evaluation report and school charter or vision. Authorisation could then review in greater detail the documentation of these policies and processes.

Develop minimum thresholds for indicators

Once Georgia has decided the indicators that it will use, it will need to identify minimum thresholds for each indicator. These will help to quickly determine if a school is not meeting basic standards. Georgia will need to set minimum thresholds not only based on national priorities, but also available staff and resources for school follow-up and authorisation visits.

One approach would be to first collect available school data based on the risk assessment indicators. Georgia can then determine minimum thresholds based on NCEQE's capacity to undertake full authorisations and national capacity for school follow-ups (e.g. how many schools would meet standards given a threshold level, and would NCEQE have the capacity to follow-up with that number of schools).

Determine the consequences of risk assessment

On the basis of collected information, schools might be grouped into two broad categories:

1. Provisional authorisation. Schools meeting minimum thresholds are provisionally authorised. These schools might receive a full authorisation visit once the schools in greatest need of improvement have received the necessary support and follow-up visits.
2. Prioritised to receive an authorisation visit. Schools not meeting minimum thresholds should receive a full authorisation visit. Schools in this category should also receive guidance and feedback to support improvement (Recommendation 4.1.2).

The information that is collected as part of the risk assessment model can also be used to better understand school needs and challenges, with these insights feeding into the development of the full external school evaluation model in the future (Policy issue 4.2).

Recommendation 4.1.2. Focus Education Resource Centres on supporting schools

Schools that do not meet provisional authorisation standards should be provided with more support and resources to improve. The ministry is already aware that schools need greater external support and the "New School Model" plans for greater school-level support from coaches.

Research on the quality of external support to under-performing schools in the United States highlights the importance of relevance and "fit" between a school's needs and the

support provided. Other factors include responsiveness, stability and timeliness (Boyle et al., 2000[13]) (see Box 4.2). In Georgia, ERCs are close to schools and, over the past decade, have developed a close and trusting relationship with them. ERCs are, therefore, likely to have a good understanding of local schools' needs, enabling them to provide relevant support. ERCs' geographic proximity to schools also means that they are likely to be able to provide support that is timely.

However, moving from focusing on compliance checking to supporting school improvement will entail a major change for ERCs. Their capacity is currently fully absorbed by school visits and they lack the necessary expertise in teaching and learning to support schools in addressing the challenges that they face. This recommendation discusses how ERCs' current structure and function can be revised to better reflect a school support and improvement function.

Box 4.2. What makes external support effective?

According to the research on the quality of external support to under-performing schools in the United States (Boyle et al., 2000[13]), the factors that influence the quality of external support include:

- the "fit" of the support, such as the alignment of the expertise of a support provider to a specific school's needs and the fit between a school's challenges and the intervention
- the responsiveness of the support, including the feedback mechanisms that allow the support's coordinators and providers to monitor the provision of support and make adjustments, and the availability of support providers to schools' requests
- the intensity, such as the number of days of assistance and the amount of financial support
- the stability, such as, the commitment of support providers to the process and sufficient political will to engage with the school throughout the change process
- the coherence of the support, implying that the national or sub-national policies should collectively reinforce each other to avoid duplication of effort and confusion
- timeliness, so that the sequence of activities included in the school improvement process can be undertaken during the school year.

Sources: Boyle et al., (2000[13]), *State Support for School Improvement: School-level Perceptions of Quality Evaluating the Quality of State Support for School Improvement*, American Institutes for Research, Washington D.C., www.air.org (accessed on 5 December 2018);
Padilla, Woodworth and Laguarda (2006[14]), *Evaluation of title I accountability systems: School-improvement efforts and assistance to identified schools*, paper presented at the 2006 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Reduce/end ERCs' mandate for compliance checking

All schools currently receive an ERC visit once a month. The primary focus of these visits is to ensure compliance with ministry regulations and procedures. As Georgia implements the risk assessment model that this chapter recommends (Recommendation 4.1.1) and extends authorisation to all public schools, a large part of ERCs' compliance checking function will become redundant. National databases and information systems will be able

to provide automatically and electronically much of the information currently provided by ERCs. These data will be supplemented by information collected during the authorisation visits.

If there are concerns that there are some aspects of school compliance that will not be checked as part of the risk assessment and authorisation process, Georgia can consider providing schools with standard protocols to follow and ask them to share the completed compliance documents electronically. Increasingly across OECD countries, compliance information related to aspects ranging from teacher qualifications, the curriculum and safety issues are provided digitally (OECD, 2013[3]). As in OECD countries, the accuracy of this data can be checked during the school authorisation visit and/or as part of ERCs' audit function that this review recommends Georgia introduce (see below).

Reform ERCs to provide school-level support for improvement

Reducing ERCs' role in compliance would allow them to focus more on school-level improvement. This will need to be followed by a reform and restructuring of ERCs so that they are able to take on a more support-oriented function. This change should be led by the ministry and begin by changing the mandate of ERCs and setting out core responsibilities.

First, the ministry will need to change the mandate of ERCs from compliance to support. Then, ERCs and schools should be provided with centrally developed materials that set out the tasks they are expected to undertake (see below). This review recommends that, given the current capacity and profile of staff within ERCs, their primary responsibility would be that of school monitoring, orientation and networking. This focus would be part of a broader reconfiguration of education support structures, where professional capacity for technical assistance in areas such as teacher and school development would be consolidated at a higher, regional level.

The ministry should also consider creating a team at the central level to provide support and oversight for ERCs' work. One of this team's tasks would be to create regular events or meetings for ERCs from across the country to come together to collaborate and share experiences. Meetings might focus on issues like common challenges seen in schools, effective techniques or methods for working with schools and identifying potentially useful school partnerships across regions.

While ERCs will not be direct providers of instructional support and guidance, they will need to have adequate experience and understanding of teaching and learning and how to create effective school environments. ERCs already have some education specialists. In each ERC, individuals in this role should be expected to lead school support. ERC staff should also receive regular training on the changes to the curriculum, teaching policy and school evaluation so they become qualified to guide and advise schools with respect to the most recent national policy changes. This training can build on the existing TPDC training for ERC staff.

Finally, the ministry will need to rationalise the ERC network. The current level of ERC support across each municipality is an inefficient use of resources. Furthermore, it will not be possible to develop ERCs' capacity while they continue to be spread thinly across each municipality. In line with the practice in many OECD countries, Georgia should consider making ERC support and presence more proportional to school needs. One aspect of this will be to create the expectation that ERCs focus on those schools in greatest need of support (see below). Another will be aligning the national distribution of ERCs with school and student numbers in each area. After the risk assessment model is implemented, it will

provide the information needed to more efficiently distribute ERCs and their staff according to school need. Regions with a greater share of schools not meeting minimum thresholds should have a greater ERC presence than those where there are few schools in this category. Over time, ERC support might move to the regional level where they will remain close to schools but be able to develop real improvement capacity and efficiencies of scale.

Develop a model for ERCs' support to schools

The ministry will need to communicate and develop national guidance that clearly sets out how the reformed ERCs are expected to work. Core functions of ERCs should include:

- Identifying urgent and pressing needs on the basis of the risk assessment. ERCs should work with schools to develop a plan to address priority concerns following the risk assessment, pending the review and feedback from authorisation.
- Regularly checking in with schools to monitor progress against their improvement plans. Schools identified as being at greatest risk should receive more regular visits (e.g. monthly). The school authorisation team should brief ERC staff at the end of their visit to guide this follow-up work.
- Pairing schools who have effective and less effective management processes to encourage peer learning and collaboration between them.
- Directing schools to external support. Many schools will not be able to improve teaching and learning on their own – they have limited resources to draw on and teachers and principals lack important content and pedagogical knowledge. While ERCs do not have specific expertise in instructional improvement or school improvement, they have a key role in directing schools to relevant sources of support. They can direct schools or teachers to TPDC training, linking with other effective schools in the vicinity or schools with similar problems. ERCs should also be expected to work with new school coaches as part of the "New School Model" to develop tailored school-level support.

Reinforce ERCs' role in financial auditing

Ensuring that schools manage their budget transparently, competently and with integrity is critical for school quality and effectiveness. This is particularly true in Georgia, where financial transparency and integrity are a concern (see chapter 1). Financial reporting is one indicator in the proposed risk assessment model but, given its importance and the high degree of school autonomy in this area, it should be reinforced by other measures.

One way to do this is by bolstering ERCs' role in financial auditing. At present, there is a financial officer in each ERC but, considering the scale of the challenge, this function needs reinforcing. Georgia should consider creating a separate audit unit within ERCs, staffed by professionals in financial auditing, to check how schools are using resources. The units would monitor school budgets review how funds are being used. They might also be expected to undertake full financial audits of school budgets on a cyclical basis. To ensure integrity and objectivity, it is important that the auditing function be distinct and separate from school support functions.

Use the new school coaches to provide intensive support for teaching and learning

NAEC's project on school self-evaluation found that schools are not well equipped to develop solutions to the instructional challenges that they face (NAEC, 2018[15]). While ERCs will be able to direct some schools to external support, such as from the TPDC, achieving deep, sustained change will require building in-school capacity. The school coaches that will be provided as part of the "New School Model" have the potential to help schools develop capacity for sustained and significant improvement. To achieve this, the new coaches will need to have a specific mandate to support school-wide improvement, including working with principals to develop instructional leadership. In implementing coaching, the most effective use of resources would be to prioritise those schools in greatest need according to the risk assessment and authorisation processes.

Policy issue 4.2. Developing an external school evaluation model over the medium to long term

School authorisation is a helpful, short-term method for instilling school accountability. In the long term, however, Georgia will need to develop a full school evaluation model. The country has already developed new draft standards for the authorisation of public schools, which go beyond the existing authorisation standards by focusing on school quality. These can be built upon to create standards that underpin a full-fledged evaluation system.

To support school evaluation, however, several materials and structures of the education system will need to be strengthened. The draft standards, while a significant improvement over their predecessor, can still focus more on school improvement and less on compliance. Furthermore, Georgia currently lacks a cadre of qualified school evaluators. Identifying and developing these individuals will be vital to ensuring successful school evaluation.

Recommendation 4.2.1. Develop a model of school evaluation that supports schools to improve teaching and learning

School evaluation is now recognised in most OECD countries and many non-member states as being an essential lever to monitor school quality, encourage future improvement and provide school-level accountability (OECD, 2013[3]). The latter is particularly important in the context of the international trend towards increasing autonomy at the school-level. School evaluation processes also direct the provision of support when countries are introducing major educational reform to help schools understand and prepare to implement planned changes. In Georgia, decentralisation of management and comprehensive curriculum reform mean that introducing school evaluation will be particularly helpful in ensuring that schools meet basic minimum standards. However, the challenges of introducing external evaluation are significant. The country's plans to introduce it gradually provides the necessary space to develop appropriate tools and build evaluative and school leadership capacity.

Anchor the new evaluation standards in a clear vision for a good school

In an increasing number of OECD and non-member countries, school evaluation is guided by a vision of a good school (OECD, 2013[3]). A school vision sets out the key characteristics of what makes a good school and help schools and evaluators understand what they are working towards. It communicates the overall objectives of school evaluation, such as improving school quality, which helps prevent evaluations from

becoming overly focused on compliance or a box checking exercise. A school vision can also help to communicate and focus schools on national priorities, such as the "New School Model" in Georgia.

In Georgia, developing a school vision that communicates the formative, developmental function of the new school evaluation model will be particularly important to allay schools' fears that it might be used for punitive purposes. In the past, school principals had been fired for low results on the examination at the end of upper secondary, the Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE). When developing its national definition of a good school, Georgia can draw on the experience of countries that have developed similar visions. Many OECD economies, such as Australia, Finland, the Netherlands and Scotland, have developed a definition of what makes for good schooling (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015[7]; OECD, 2013[3]). Among non-member countries, the Kingdom of Morocco has put its own "New School Model" at the centre of its national vision. It is framed around the key principles of equity and equality of opportunities, education quality for all and the promotion of individuals and society (Conseil Supérieur de l'Education, 2015[16]).

Revise the draft standards for school to focus more on school quality and improvement

In 2018, Georgia began developing new school standards with the purpose of focusing less on inputs and more on school quality processes and outcomes (see Box 4.3). The new standards cover many areas known to be important for creating an effective school environment. These include the school's management, the quality of teaching and learning and assessment practices (OECD, 2013[3]).

Box 4.3. Georgia's new school evaluation standards

Georgia's draft standards for external school evaluation are organised around the following areas:

1. School mission and strategic development, including:
   - The school mission reflects national education goals.
   - The school has a long-term strategic plan and action plan.
2. Creating a positive school culture
   - The school provides a safe, caring and cooperative environment and offers equal conditions for all students to demonstrate their capabilities.
3. Planning, managing and assessing learning, including:
   - School curriculum:
     - The school community is involved in the development of the school's curriculum, and the curriculum reflects national legislation.
     - The school has an inclusive education strategy to meet the needs of different learners.
   - Teaching quality:
     - Teachers take into account students' different learning approaches and interests.
     - Students have equal learning opportunities.
   - Student assessment:
     - The school has assessment policies and a variety of assessment strategies are used.
     - Students are provided with regular feedback on their progress.
     - Assessment results are analysed to improve teaching and learning.
4. Material, training and information resources (to be developed in collaboration with the Infrastructure Agency).
5. Management, leadership and organisational development, including:
   - School management is effective and transparent.
   - Internal school quality assurance mechanisms are effectively implemented.

While more quality focused than previous school authorisation standards (see Box 4.1), these draft standards are still concerned with ensuring that schools have certain documents, policies or processes in place rather than specifying how the quality of these processes should be evaluated. There are also a number of gaps in the evaluation framework in terms of key areas of the school environment that are known to be important for educational quality. Before Georgia implements its new model for school evaluation, it should revise its draft standards to address the above issues, in particular by:

- Taking into account student outcomes – such as retention and achievement. These measures are especially important at the upper secondary level, where student drop out is comparatively high (see chapter 1). Student outcomes on the UEE can be used currently and, when Georgia implements a national assessment, these results should also be used to further focus school evaluation on student learning. Nevertheless, any measure of learning and general student outcomes should take into account a school's context, in particular its location and student profile, since these are known to significantly impact learning outcomes in general and in Georgia specifically.
- Equity – such as student outcomes by different linguistic groups and socio-economic backgrounds. In Georgia, both of the latter are strong determinants of a students' learning outcomes. This criteria should also consider how teaching, learning and school-level policies are adapted to meet different students' needs. The current draft standards focus on the importance of students' equal access to learning opportunities. However, since all students have different starting points, interests and backgrounds it is also important to include indicators that describe effective processes for adapting teaching and learning to the individual needs of each student, so that all students make good progress at school.
- Quality of teaching, learning – while the new standards recognise the importance of the quality of instruction, the indicators in the framework focus almost exclusively on the presence of various policies and systems. For example, the indicators for systems to report student progress are information preparation forms, reports, presentations, etc. Far more important than the presence of such systems and processes is their quality and how far they help students understand where they currently are in their learning and what they need to focus on in the future.
- Support for teachers' professional growth – teachers' participation in external training and professional development within the school (see chapter 3).
- A school's self-evaluation practices – for example, to what extent does the self-evaluation report identify key issues for improvement and how are evaluation results being used to inform the school's development plan?

Most OECD and EU education systems have, over the years, limited the number of core indicators in their school evaluation frameworks to steer evaluation towards in-depth reviews of processes rather than compliance-based box checking. Having fewer core indicators also helps focus attention on what matters most in the national context. The indicators can then be adapted at lower levels to address municipal or school specific needs. Box 4.4 shows the three areas and fifteen core indicators from the school inspection framework in Scotland, which is recognised for its brevity and clarity of purpose. As Georgia's draft standards appear to be relatively heavy and complicated, it can draw on this example to make the final standards more coherent and tightly focused.

Box 4.4. Indicators for school evaluation in Scotland

The fourth edition of the school evaluation framework in Scotland, "How good is our school?" is composed of 15 quality indicators divided in three domains: leadership and management, learning provision and successes and achievements. While different sources of information are evaluated to inform the evaluation of each indicator, only one rating is provided for each indicator. The complete set of indicators is shown below.

Table 4.2. School evaluation indicators from Scotland

Domains	Leadership and Management	Learning Provision	Successes and achievements
Indicators	1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	3.1 Ensuring well-being, equality and inclusion
	1.2 Leadership of learning	2.2 Curriculum	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement
	1.3 Leadership of change	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	3.3 Increasing creativity and employability
	1.4 Leadership and management of staff	2.4 Personalised support	
	1.5 Management of resources to promote equity	2.5 Family learning	
		2.6 Transitions	
		2.7 Partnerships	

Source: Education Scotland (2015[17]), *How good is our school?* 4th edition, https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf (accessed on 14 March 2019).

Develop the materials and central capacity needed to support the implementation of the school evaluation framework

Implementing a school evaluation framework will necessitate supporting schools as they undergo evaluation. Principals will not be familiar with the procedures and will require careful guidance so they can prepare their staff to be evaluated and execute the tasks expected of them. A key component of supporting schools is to provide them with the necessary resources. These include materials:

- about how a judgement of school quality is formed vis-à-vis indicators
- that explain the components of a school visit
- that explain how to conduct a classroom observation
- that explain the evaluation process to schools.

It is important that these materials be made available for all schools to see as this creates a transparent and trusted process. To this end it is recommended that the ministry develop a school evaluation website that can hold these materials and other related resources.

Presently, NCEQE staff do not have the relevant background to develop these kinds of resources. There is, therefore, an urgent need to develop NCEQE's capacity in the areas of measuring teaching and learning. One way of developing this capacity is connecting NCEQE with networks of school inspectorates, such as the Standing International

Conference of Inspectorates. NCEQE can then directly draw on and learn from practices that other countries have built over the course of many years.

Make the consequences of external evaluations support school improvement

In order for school evaluation to lead to improvement, schools needs to receive specific, targeted advice that helps them understand what they need to do next. Schools that require significant improvement will also need to be supported by external help and guidance.

As Georgia develops its new model for school evaluation, it will need to consider how the evaluation report should be developed to best support school improvement. An effective report will help a school to understand what its strengths are so that it can build on them. Reports also need to provide schools with a clear description of where improvements are needed, as illustrated by specific examples from the evaluation team's visit. Finally, to support schools to develop their own capacity for improvement, evaluation reports should provide schools with specific feedback on their self-evaluation practices and what can be improved.

Second, the country will need to clarify the consequences of evaluation results for schools. The draft evaluation standards propose to introduce four possible school ratings: fully compliant, mostly compliant, partially compliant and non-compliant, with non-compliant schools facing closure. While school evaluations can influence decisions on school closure, most countries prefer to provide intensive support to help schools address failings. School closure is considered a last resort because it is disruptive for students and imposes significant logistical challenges (OECD, 2013[3]). Georgia should consider creating a similar process for schools that fall into the non-compliant category. This process can build on the external school support to be provided by ERCs and school coaches as part of authorisation (see Recommendation 4.1.2).

Finally, Georgia might also consider publishing the evaluation reports. While there is a risk that the publication of school reports can encourage schools to focus on their evaluation ratings alone, publication can encourage healthy competition across schools and has been shown to be associated with improvements in school quality (Ehren et al., 2013[18]). Providing students and parents with more transparent information about school quality is also an essential complement to the school choice model that Georgia is trying to promote.

Communicate the role of external school evaluation to schools and teachers

In the short term, the application of the authorisation standards to public schools will help them become accustomed to the concept of external evaluation and feedback. However, the shift towards school quality and improvement that the new evaluation model represents will be a major change. If schools are to appropriate evaluation as a useful tool to support their own improvement, they will need to understand that this is a developmental, formative process. Using national consultation to develop a good school vision will certainly help to communicate the new evaluation model. Other measures include:

- Training for principals on external school evaluation. Principals need to understand how they can prepare their schools for an evaluation visit. This information could be provided to principals via the previously recommended school evaluation website. Principals should then be expected to organise similar school-level sessions (e.g. with the school board and parents) to disseminate information.
- ERCs organising cross-school events. These events would provide opportunities for schools to share their questions and concerns about school evaluation, become

familiar with the process and discuss ways in which an external evaluation can be helpful to the school.

- Sharing good practices across schools. NCEQE could build on its idea that schools identified as being "good" through authorisation become advisors to other schools. Schools identified as having good processes (e.g. effective strategies for improvement, providing inclusive learning environment, supporting teachers effectively and using self-evaluation to critically reflect and find constructive solutions) could receive public recognition and be asked to partner with other local schools.

Recommendation 4.2.2. Develop capacity for external evaluations

Implementing a new evaluation model will require a significant strengthening of Georgia's school evaluation capacity, in terms of both numbers and expertise. Of particular importance will be identifying a pool of capable external evaluators (given their current functions and relationships with schools, ERC staff cannot be expected to fill this role). Furthermore, the capacity of NCEQE staff will also need to be improved so they become more familiar with teaching and learning in Georgia and can use this understanding to steer school evaluation policy.

Ensure that new school evaluators have the skills and knowledge needed to assess the quality of teaching and learning practices

Georgia currently contracts experts to undertake school authorisations and, at the time of the OECD team's visit, was planning to recruit more to meet the needs of external school evaluation. Contracting evaluators is common in many countries since it provides the country's inspectorate with the flexibility to work with evaluators with broad and diverse experiences without the costs of maintaining a large body of permanent staff. In most countries, contracted inspectors are combined with a permanent body of evaluators, which is important to maintain quality and consistency and enables the on-going development of evaluation capacity and processes. Georgia might consider a similar model so that it has a corps of evaluators that it can invest in and rely upon to help implement external evaluation and develop core instruments.

The additional evaluators that Georgia wishes to hire need to meet high standards of experience, expertise and understanding of the new school evaluation model. The latter is difficult because reaching a judgement about teaching and schooling quality is naturally subjective and therefore difficult to do in a fair and consistent way. Georgia already takes a number of steps to identify competent evaluators. For example, they are required to have teaching experience, which is important as it indicates that they have the experience needed to evaluate schools and to provide feedback. Teaching experience is also important for the perceived legitimacy of evaluation in schools. This criteria might be expanded to require demonstrated experience and understanding of school improvement. Practitioners, especially previous school principals, could provide important insights in this area. As discussed below (see Recommendation 4.3.2), moving into external school evaluations on a full-time or ad-hoc basis might be one career development opportunity for effective school principals.

In Georgia, recruited evaluators already receive training in how to use the existing standards. This training will need to be re-developed in line with the new evaluation standards. During this process, it will be important not just to convey the content of the new standards, but also help evaluators understand the fundamental purpose of the new

evaluation model. Evaluators will also need practical experience of how to conduct evaluation. For example, they should have opportunities to undertake mock school evaluations and receive feedback, and participate in real school evaluations before they are accredited to become evaluators. Evaluators should also have opportunities for hands-on learning in the key competencies that are important for evaluators, such as how to provide feedback that is helpful and constructive to schools.

The OECD understands that Georgia is also considering using staff from ERCs as external evaluators. While such a measure would increase school evaluation capacity in hard to reach areas, the review team does not think that this type of measure would be effective overall. ERC staff are familiar with communicating between the ministry and schools, not with evaluating school quality. Furthermore, they have already established relationships with schools and would not be able to evaluate them objectively.

Reconsider the role of the Council

While the Council members have significant experience and expertise in education, they are not well-positioned to form a judgement about an individual school because they are not directly involved in school authorisation visits. This concern will be accentuated when school evaluation is implemented because evaluators must draw on what they see and hear in a school to form a nuanced judgement of its performance. The Council's lengthy individual review of each school report will also no longer be feasible once authorisation and then evaluation is extended to all the country's schools.

However, the Council is seen to provide important independence for authorisation decisions. The Council members are also experienced with teaching and learning, expertise that NCEQE currently lacks. As a new model of school evaluation with a greater focus on school quality is implemented, this experience will become even more important. In most OECD countries, the school inspectorate itself occupies an influential role in the country's education system. Inspectorate leadership advises the Ministry of Education on education policy. The presence of another evaluation-related body, such as Georgia's Council, is uncommon.

The OECD recommends that the role of the Council be revised over the short- and long-term to bring the country more in line with internationally evaluation recognised processes. In the short term, as authorisations are extended to all schools, the Council might review the quality and fairness of the authorisation process. Practically, this might mean that the Council meets every six months or annually to review the authorisation process and how it is being applied to public schools. They could focus on a representative sample of decisions in terms of context, and authorisation and risk assessment results. Their review might focus on questions such as how far are a school's results justified and substantiated, and how useful were recommendations and feedback to schools. Importantly, the Council would not necessarily render judgement on individual decisions of authorisation, just on the quality of the procedures as a whole.

In the future, Georgia will need to seriously reconsider the role of the Council. It is neither practical nor fair that the Council provide a judgement about a school in whose evaluation it was not involved. Georgia should consider creating an independent school inspectorate, as is the practice in many OECD and non-member countries. The inspectorate would remain affiliated to the ministry, but have its own multi-year budget and work plan to ensure its independence. Staff in the inspectorate and especially the leadership, who could be current Council members, should possess deep experience of school improvement so that they have the legitimacy and credibility to assume responsibility for the quality of the

country's schools. The inspectorate's independence should be balanced by accountability and transparency mechanisms to ensure the fairness and quality of its work. These mechanisms can include publishing an annual report on its activities and the extent to which it has achieved its objectives, and clear procedures to receive and address complaints.

Policy issue 4.3. Creating the foundations for school-led improvement

The vast majority of Georgia's schools complete self-evaluations annually. However, there is broad acknowledgement nationally across policy-makers and school practitioners that self-evaluation is not yet supporting school improvement. At the heart of the issue is that schools have not yet appropriated self-evaluation as an internal tool, integrated into their management cycles, to support improvement.

This situation reflects the fact that, despite the decentralisation reforms over the past decade, building capacity for school-level leadership has not received sufficient attention in Georgia. In contrast to international trends towards the development of principals as instructional leaders, the principal role in Georgia is not clearly defined. Teachers become principals without having the background or preparation to meet the requirements of the position. Schools also receive little support to undertake self-evaluation or to understand its purpose. The OECD team's interviews revealed that this means, in many schools, self-evaluation is frequently limited to a cut and paste exercise to meet external requirements.

In recent years, the importance of more school-level support has been recognised. School-based professional development models like G-PriEd have been developed. Principals have also received dedicated training through the MCC principal academies. The "New School Model" promises to provide direct support for schools and principals. The following recommendations suggest how these initiatives can be built on to help schools lead their own improvement efforts.

Recommendation 4.3.1. Support schools to use self-evaluation effectively

Effective self-evaluation requires significant in-school and external capacity. OECD countries with long-standing traditions of self-evaluation – like England and Scotland in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and New Zealand – have developed and refined their evaluation processes over decades. Over time, extensive external guidance, models and templates have been created in these countries to support schools so they can lead quality self-evaluation exercises that are adapted to their needs and spur a culture of on-going learning and improvement.

In contrast, schools in Georgia receive very little support on how to undertake self-evaluation in a meaningful way. The NAEC and MCC project on self-evaluation identified two key challenges that Georgia's schools face when using self-evaluation. First, they are not confident in leading self-evaluation. Second, they find it difficult to clearly formulate indicators and identify data sources (NAEC, 2018[15]). Both these challenges point to broader issues around the lack of preparation and support for self-evaluation in schools. These issues are accentuated by a self-evaluation exercise that lacks a clearly defined purpose and a process that requires schools to focus on complying with a rigid set of indicators. By contrast, the hallmark of effective self-evaluation internationally is schools feeling empowered to appropriate and adapt self-evaluation guidelines to identify and achieve their own objectives (OECD, 2013[3]).

This recommendation discusses how self-evaluation in Georgia can be re-designed to become a more useful, less burdensome tool for schools. It also suggests the kinds of supports that need to be developed so that, over time, schools develop the capacity to adapt self-evaluation to be most meaningful for their own contexts.

Define the purpose of self-evaluation

First, schools in Georgia must perceive self-evaluation as a valuable exercise and good use of their time. At present, however, the purpose of self-evaluation is not well-defined. Schools in Georgia undertake self-evaluation at least once every three years and send their reports to the NCEQE. The vast majority of schools – public schools – have not received any feedback or follow-up on their reports. The lack of follow-up and, more fundamentally, a clear purpose for self-evaluation, has contributed to the perception in most schools that it is an externally set exercise from which they derive little value.

As Georgia extends authorisation to its public schools, there is opportunity to clarify within the ministry and to schools what the purpose of self-evaluation is and why schools should engage with it. The ministry should make clear that self-evaluation is primarily a developmental exercise intended to help schools improve the quality of their processes and outcomes (OECD, 2013[3]). How self-evaluation is referenced in the revised authorisation standards also matters. The outcomes of self-evaluation should be taken as a key source of evidence for evaluators, and school evaluation indicators must go beyond looking at whether school is conducting a self-evaluation to examining the quality of this process and how the school is using the results to drive improvement. Finally, self-evaluation can also be integrated into the "New School Model", which would further communicate its purpose and importance through key policy initiatives.

Help schools makes fuller use of self-evaluation results

Once the purpose of self-evaluation is more clearly defined, it needs to be reflected in how self-evaluation is used. At present, requesting all schools to share their self-evaluation reports without providing feedback undermines schools' perceptions of the exercise's value and utility. It also reinforces the perception of self-evaluation as an externally dictated process that is not linked to schools' annual planning cycle or needs.

Georgia should consider which actor(s) can provide useful guidance to schools based upon the reports they submit. In line with this review's recommendation that the role of ERCs' shift towards school-level support, ERCs could provide more immediate and direct feedback to schools on their self-evaluation reports and how to use the results for improvement planning. This could be part of a more open dialogue between schools and ERCs on improvement, and not a linked to a specific requirement that schools share their self-evaluation reports with ERCs according to a set timetable. In order to encourage schools to take the self-evaluation reports seriously, they might also be a source of evidence for the risk assessment model (see Recommendation 4.1.1).

So that the insights from self-evaluation feed into policy-making, and in particular the design and implementation of full external school evaluation in the future, ERCs can be required to provide an annual analysis of the reports from their municipalities to the ministry. This analysis could aggregate the results of all schools in the municipality and determine which needs are more prevalent in certain areas of the country. To help enhance their own work, a regional or national meeting of ERCs could be organised to discuss key findings from municipal-level analyses with a view to identifying ways in which staff can better support schools in making self-evaluation a meaningful exercise.

In the short term, develop a simplified model of self-evaluation that supports school authorisations

For a country like Georgia that is in the nascent stages of developing a school self-evaluation system, a standardised self-evaluation report template can provide helpful support and guidance to schools. However, the current form is a prescriptive checklist of separate indicators. It should be re-designed to encourage schools to review holistically how they are doing across the three areas of the authorisation standards. At the same time, Georgia can ask schools to respond to a series of open-ended questions that would encourage schools to focus on the processes, evidence and questions that are recognised to be important for effective self-evaluation (OECD, 2013[3]). This would provide each school with greater flexibility to tailor self-evaluation to their context and priorities. It would also develop in-school capacity for evaluation and objective setting. For example, across each of the authorisation standards, schools could be required to consider:

- How are we doing? What is the evidence for this? What does the data show, what do staff say, what do pupils say?
- What could we do better?
- What do we plan to improve over the next two years?
- How we will measure our progress?

Help schools exploit available data

Data and evidence must play a central role in schools' processes to reflect on performance and set future targets. Research on school evaluation often places data, including quantitative data like student learning outcomes and "soft data" like surveys and interviews (NCSL, n.d.[19]), at the centre of process. In the schools that the OECD team visited, however, there was no practice of using metrics like assessment results or student participation data to monitor performance. Data from PISA also suggest that schools in Georgia record and make use of data far less than in other countries (OECD, 2016[1]). One likely reason is that schools find it difficult to know which data to use and how to use it, as suggested by a NAEC study (NAEC, 2018[15]). Another is that data, while widely available, is difficult to analyse because of the lack of easy-to-use tools (see chapter 5).

To help schools develop a better understanding of how they can best exploit data, the ministry could do far more to provide them with data in an accessible format. For example, once the list of indicators for the risk assessment model are developed, the ministry can make this information available to schools or even pre-populate self-evaluation forms with the information. Schools should also be able to see the established minimum thresholds for indicators so that each school has a sense of where it stands nationally. Data should also be compared to regional and national benchmarks, along with groups of schools with similar characteristics (e.g. other rural schools and schools with similar student profiles). Schools should also be provided with more external resources about how they can collect more qualitative information, such as how to design and organise staff focus groups and student surveys, and how the collected information can be used for self-evaluation.

Provide more external support for self-evaluation

As well as creating a simpler, more helpful framework for self-evaluation, schools will require far more external support to really engage in genuine evaluative activities. In line with this report's recommendation that ERCs' mandate be changed to one of school support

(see Recommendation 4.1.2), ERCs can help orient schools during their self-evaluations. While ERC staff do not have specific expertise in school self-evaluation, they can be expected to provide practical support, such as guiding schools through the process and critically questioning a school's self-evaluation report. ERCs can also help by pairing schools together (e.g. weaker schools with stronger schools) to encourage collaboration and peer learning.

Another important source of support will be the new school coaches under the "New School Model". The coaches are intended to work closely with individual schools to understand their strengths and challenges so that they will be well-positioned to support schools to use self-evaluation to achieve their priorities. To ensure that the coaches have sufficient time for this role, it should be an explicit part of their role with dedicated time.

ERC staff and school coaches will need to receive the necessary support and training for their role in supporting schools' self-evaluation. Since the NAEC study revealed the challenges that schools face in undertaking self-evaluation, the training and preparation that ERC staff and school coaches receive should be informed by the project's findings.

Finally, the ministry should expand the online supports for schools' self-evaluation practices. Schools in most OECD countries can draw on a wealth of online resources about how to undertake self-evaluation. In Georgia, guidance and documentation related to self-evaluation can be put on the previously recommended school evaluation website (see Recommendation 4.2.1). One particularly useful self-evaluation tool that should be used is examples of effective self-evaluation processes in other schools. In Scotland, the United Kingdom, many local authorities showcase online examples of effective self-evaluation processes and reports from local schools (Education Scotland, n.d.[20]).

In the long-term, develop a comprehensive self-evaluation framework

Once a more simplified, useful self-evaluation process is implemented, schools in Georgia over time will develop greater capacity for self-evaluation and to lead improvement. At the same time, the wider system of school evaluation and support – including school evaluators, ERCs and online school supports – will also mature and develop. This will create a context that can better support a comprehensive self-evaluation framework that is focused on improvement.

Once Georgia has developed new standards for external school evaluation (see Recommendation 4.2.1), Georgia should develop a self-evaluation framework around the new external school evaluation standards. Similar to developing indicators for external, evaluation, Georgia should focus on keeping the list of self-evaluation indicators relatively short and focused on core areas for school improvement. These areas should be determined by national policy objectives such as improving student learning (see chapter 2), and concerns like improving equity.

In creating the new self-evaluation framework, Georgia should also consider how schools can be provided with flexibility to adapt the framework to their local contexts. In many OECD countries such as England (United Kingdom), Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Scotland (United Kingdom), schools are not expected to follow a central self-evaluation form. Instead, they have the freedom to design self-evaluation to meet their own needs, guided by the overall framework for school evaluation. This approach is important to help schools take ownership of self-evaluation.

As schools in Georgia develop capacity for self-evaluation, they should progressively acquire greater flexibility in conducting self-evaluation. For example, when the new

self-evaluation framework is first introduced, schools may have the option of adding one or two additional indicators to reflect their own priorities. They can then add more in subsequent self-evaluations and be given the flexibility not to measure some central indicators that are less relevant to their contexts.

Finally, schools will need significant support to implement the self-evaluation framework. The ministry should consider how the initial self-evaluation support provided by ERCs, school coaches and online should be adapted to help schools transition towards a more improvement-focused model. Consideration should also be given to providing dedicated training for school leaders and other members of the school community who are expected to contribute to self-evaluation, which is the case in most OECD countries (OECD, 2013[3]).

Recommendation 4.3.2. Build school leadership for improvement

Effective school leadership is a critical component to school-led improvement. The OECD team's interviews revealed that one of the key challenges to developing school principals as instructional leaders in Georgia is the absence of support and incentives. Once principals enter the school leadership role, there are few incentives, in terms of salary or possibilities for career development, for them to improve their skills. This absence of incentive to develop is matched by little available professional development opportunities for principals, which further prevents them from improving themselves. Finally, despite the concerns about principal capacity, they are given significant autonomy in school management, and there are few mechanisms to keep them accountable for their decisions or the quality of their school leadership.

This chapter's recommendations to strengthen the overall system for school evaluation will help to create stronger oversight and support for the principal role. This recommendation suggests that principals receive more targeted support and be given incentives to develop.

Identify and support potential school leaders

Georgia should take steps to clearly define the role of principals so that it becomes a conscious career choice for talented teachers with leadership potential. Possible steps that can be taken include:

- **Reviewing principal standards**. Georgia's current standards reflect more of a job description than the specific competencies, accompanied by practical examples, that are associated with effective school leadership (MoESCS, 2010[21]). Therefore, Georgia should review its principal standards so they reflect the expectations from the "New School Model" and wider changes to teaching and learning envisaged under the new curriculum. The standards should also be compared to those of other countries where the school leadership role is well-established, such as Australia, Ontario (Canada) and Scotland (OECD, 2013[3]).
- **Developing a process to identify teachers with leadership potential**. Georgia could use its revised appraisal system, especially regular appraisal when it is introduced (see chapter 3), to identify teachers with the motivation and skills for leadership. This is the case in Singapore, where future school leaders are chosen from successful teachers already in the education system. Young teachers are continuously assessed for their leadership potential and are given the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity (Schleicher, 2015[8]).
- **Creating better awareness of the expectations of the job**. The ministry might consider developing a specific programme to introduce would-be principals to the

demands of the job. In Denmark, teachers who may want to have a leadership position can begin to understand the different components of becoming a school leader through a "taster" course offered by local school districts or municipalities. The course consists of theoretical assignments, case studies, personal reflections, discussions with a mentor about career opportunities, personal strengths and areas for development and networking (Schleicher, 2015[8]).

- **Introducing mandatory preparation for the role of principal**. In contrast to the situation in Georgia, the majority of principals in other TALIS-participating countries received dedicated preparation in school leadership either before or after taking up their position. Roughly 54% of principals from OECD countries say they received training in school administration before becoming a principal, compared to 28% of principals in Georgia (OECD, 2019[9]). The optional leadership academies organised by the MCC in Georgia have been well-received and attended by principals. The ministry might use the insights from this training to design new initial and continuous education courses for principals. The ministry should also make some initial preparation a mandatory requirement to become a principal.

These steps should go alongside a review of the current principal examination. While examinations can help to identify certain prerequisites such a basic educational knowledge, they are not an effective means to discriminate the broad range of capacities and personal skills that are essential for school leaders. When Georgia has developed a new initial preparation programme for the new principals, the programme's content and continuous assessment should primarily focus on principals' basic educational and legal knowledge. This would create space to focus principal recruitment more directly on identifying candidates with the competencies to be an effective school leader. Increasingly in OECD countries, principal recruitment is based on a longer selection process that aims to assess the full range of a candidate's capacities and personal skills. The process might include a traditional interview, but also school visits, presentations and an assessment of the specific competencies required for the position, alongside the measures suggested above with respect to developing a leadership pipeline (OECD, 2008[22]).

Incentivise principals to develop

In Georgia, it was repeatedly reported to the OECD team that principals have few incentives to develop professionally once they enter the role. This reflects existing concerns about both a principals' salary and their career development options.

To complement Georgia's recent reforms to teacher pay, the structure of principals' salaries should be reviewed to fairly award principals for their increasing experience and practice. In addition, the country should consider introducing financial incentives for working in schools in remote areas, given the challenges of staffing them. A number of European countries take a school's characteristics into account when calculating a principal's salary. These characteristics include the size of the school, its location, the provision of differentiated teaching and the offer of special programmes, for instance for linguistic minorities (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018[23]).

It will also be important to think more consciously about principals' on-going professional development. The measures suggested in this report – principal appraisal, external school evaluation that evaluates school leadership and more professional development opportunities – will help recognise and support the principal role. Steps could also be taken to create more dedicated career development options. While not all countries have a

dedicated career development scheme for principals, there are a few steps that Georgia could consider to incentivise principals to keep developing, such as:

- Facilitating the placement of high-performing principals in schools that are identified (by authorisation and later evaluation) as having the greatest needs. Working in a school in significant need of improvement should be recognised as an important career development opportunity for the most capable school leaders. Principals might also receive a financial bonus to move into such posts.
- Providing opportunities for high-performing principals to move into different posts at the regional level or in school evaluation. Effective principals might be offered opportunities to work in ERCs, as school coaches or as a lead school evaluator. This would provide variety to their role and ensure that their significant school experience contributes to systemic improvement.
- Creating school leadership networks at the municipal level. Through these networks, strong principals and principals in need of improvement can connect with each other, with the expectation that the former mentor the latter. For this to occur, schools would need to have leadership teams so that leadership responsibilities can be maintained while principals engage in peer learning. Several countries, including New Zealand and Singapore, have facilitated mentoring between principals (OECD, 2017[24]).

Introduce appraisal for principals with accountability mechanisms

An important complement to greater support for principals will be to enhance their accountability. This is particularly important in Georgia as principals have significant autonomy for school and staff management and school-wide instruction.

In theory, principals in Georgia should be appraised by the school board. However, in practice, the limited capacity of the boards and the absence of national guidance means that this does not take place. In a number of OECD countries, school boards also have a role in appraising school principal (OECD, 2015[4]). However, in these countries there are efforts to build the capacity of school boards through training and central guidance about how to execute their responsibilities. Providing similar support for boards in Georgia would require a major investment. Given the widespread reforms across the country's education sector, another actor might be encouraged to take on the principal appraisal role instead.

One option is to appoint an external evaluator to appraise principals. This could be the same external evaluator that this review suggests leads teacher probation and promotion appraisals (see chapter 3). In developing a new principal appraisal system, the focus should be on developing a light and useful process. In line with the most common source of evidence for principal appraisal in OECD countries, the process can be organised around an interview between the principal and evaluator (OECD, 2015[4]). Guided by the new principal standards, the interview would focus on what measures the principal has taken to improve teaching and learning at their school.

The appraisal should be formative, providing the principal with constructive feedback. To encourage a link to professional development, principals might be expected to use the interview to develop a personal development plan setting out the professional development opportunities they intend to pursue. The appraisal could also be used to explore future career development opportunities for principals, like opportunities to take on other roles alongside their principal job or roles outside the school (e.g. an external school evaluator).

The appraisal should also have some consequences. One would be linking good appraisal performances to regular and incremental salary increases which would help to incentivise principals to develop. To detect and act upon underperformance, principals who receive more than one negative appraisal might receive additional support as well as more regular follow-up.

Revise the role of school boards

Georgia's school boards are currently not fulfilling the school management function that they were originally intended to fill (Transparency International, n.d.[2]). This chapter suggests that some of the boards' key oversight and accountability functions be moved to specialised bodies or actors with the requisite capacity and resources. These responsibilities include:

- accountability for school performance, which needs to be strengthened through external school authorisation and later school evaluation
- the financial auditing of school budgets, which should be introduced and then led by trained staff in ERCs
- principal appraisal, where a formal process needs to be put in place and led by an external evaluator.

Reducing the statutory functions that boards are expected to fulfil will create space to redesign their role in a way that is more useful for schools. To define the future role of boards, Georgia should undertake a national consultation of board members, principals and the wider school community. At a minimum and based on recognised good practice across other countries, the boards can be expected to represent the views of the wider school community, notably parents and students, and to engage the local community. This link will be particularly important in Georgia to help explain the impact of widespread educational changes (e.g. reforms to the curriculum and examinations) to parents. This role might be accompanied by a requirement to organise events or activities for parents and the wider community, such as information evenings or open school days.

As Georgia redefines its boards, it should also draw on research which has highlighted a number of characteristics of effective boards. These include clarifying the boards' role, in particular how they are expected to work with the school principal. Selection processes for boards should assess whether members possess key skills and are highly engaged. Finally, board members need some training on basic issues like school governance and improvement to effectively perform their functions (OECD, 2008[22])

Recommendations

Policy issue	Recommendations	Actions
4.1. Reaching all schools for authorisation	4.1.1. Develop a risk assessment model to guide the provisional authorisation of public schools	Identify indicators for the risk assessment model
		Develop minimum thresholds for indicators
	4.1.2. Focus ERCs on supporting schools	Reduce/end ERCs' mandate for compliance checking
		Reform ERCs to provide school-level support for improvement
		Develop a model for ERCs' support to schools
		Reinforce ERCs' role in financial auditing
		Use the new school coaches to provide intensive support for teaching and learning
4.2. Developing an external school evaluation model over the medium to long term	4.2.1. Develop a model of school evaluation that supports schools to improve teaching and learning	Anchor the new evaluation standards in a clear vision for a good school
		Revise the draft standards for school to focus more on school quality and improvement
		Develop the materials and central capacity needed to support the implementation of the school evaluation framework
		Make the consequences of external evaluations support school improvement
		Communicate the role of external school evaluation to schools and teachers
	4.2.2. Develop capacity for external evaluations	Ensure that new school evaluators have the skills and knowledge needed to assess the quality of teaching and learning practices
		Reconsider the role of the Council
4.3. Creating the foundations for school-led improvement	4.3.1. Support schools to use self-evaluation effectively	Define the purpose of self-evaluation
		Help schools makes fuller use of self-evaluation results
		In the short term, develop a simplified model of self-evaluation that supports school authorisations
		Help schools exploit available data
		Provide more external support for self-evaluation
		In the long-term, develop a comprehensive self-evaluation framework
	4.3.2. Build school leadership for improvement	Identify and support potential school leaders
		Incentivise principals to develop
		Introduce appraisal for principals with accountability mechanisms
		Revise the role of school boards

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Chapter 5. Strengthening system processes to evaluate national education performance

System evaluation in Georgia is built upon a strong foundation of data collection. Despite having rich data, however, the use of evidence in policy-making is not systematic, which leads to an unstable environment in which policies can be created or eliminated quickly without rigorously evaluated rationale. Several reasons contribute to this environment, including the lack of a dedicated research and evaluation body within the ministry and the lack of tools that can be used to analyse Georgia's educational data. These should be established and created to embed policy-making structures that are underpinned by evidence review and guided by continuous monitoring of data. An important component in system evaluation, which is currently missing in Georgia, is regular national assessments that collect information about student outcomes at various stages of learning. Establishing these would strengthen the evidence base that would then inform decision-making.

Introduction

System evaluation is central to improving educational performance. Evaluating an education system holds the government and other stakeholders accountable for meeting national goals and provides the information needed to develop effective policies. In Georgia, system evaluation has seen significant development over recent years, especially in the areas of data collection and management.

Despite these advancements, however, some elements of system evaluation are still lacking. In particular, Georgia does not have a strong culture of using evidence to inform policy-making and there are few tools that can be used to analyse the rich data that are centrally collected. As a result, decisions are sometimes made without being based on relevant evidence. Furthermore, though national assessments are administered, the funding that supports these activities is being phased out and, afterwards, Georgia will not have a regular, external measure of student outcomes. In a context where educational inequity is worsening, it is problematic that these processes, which would help to systematically identify and address equity gaps, are not in place.

This review recommends that Georgia create a research and evaluation unit whose explicit purpose is to analyse data and embed the use of evidence in decision-making. More data analysis tools need to be created to aid stakeholders at all levels in making sense of the available data. These tools include analytical functions built into the E-School platform, but also a digital monitoring dashboard. Finally, Georgia should develop a national assessment strategy so external measures of student learning can be continuously collected and used to help guide school-level instruction and system-level strategic planning.

Key features of effective system evaluation

System evaluation refers to the processes that countries use to monitor and evaluate the performance of their education systems (OECD, 2013[1]). A strong evaluation system serves two main functions: to hold the education system and the actors within it accountable for achieving their stated objectives and, by generating and using evaluation information in the policy-making process, to improve policies and ultimately education outcomes. System evaluation has gained increasing importance in recent decades across the public sector, in part because of growing pressure on governments to demonstrate the results of public investment and improve efficiency and effectiveness (Schick, 2003[2]).

In the education sector, countries use information from a range of sources to monitor and evaluate quality and track progress towards national objectives (see Figure 5.1). As well as collecting rich data, education systems also require "feedback loops" so that information is fed back into the policy-making process (OECD, 2017[3]). This ensures goals and policies are informed by evidence, helping to create an open and continuous cycle of systemic learning. At the same time, in order to provide public accountability, governments need to set clear responsibilities – to determine which actors should be accountable and for what – and make information available in timely and relevant forms for public debate and scrutiny. All of this constitutes a significant task, which is why effective system evaluation requires central government to work across wider networks (Burns and Köster, 2016[4]). In many OECD countries, independent government agencies like national audit offices, evaluation agencies, the research community and sub-national governments, play a key role in generating and exploiting available information.

A national vision and goals provide standards for system evaluation

Like other aspects of evaluation, system evaluation must be anchored in a national vision and/or goals, which provide the standards against which performance can be evaluated. In many countries, these are set out in an education strategy that spans several years. An important complement to a national vision and goals are targets and indicators. Indicators are the quantitative or qualitative variables that help to monitor progress (World Bank, 2004[5]). Indicator frameworks combine inputs like government spending, outputs like teacher recruitment, client outcomes like student learning, and societal outcomes like trust in government. While client and societal outcomes are notoriously difficult to measure, they are a feature of frameworks in most OECD countries because they measure the long-term results that a system is trying to achieve (OECD, 2009[6]). Goals also need to balance the outcomes a system wants to achieve with indicators for the internal processes and capacity throughout the system that are needed to achieve these outcomes (Kaplan and Norton, 1992[7]).

Reporting against national goals supports accountability

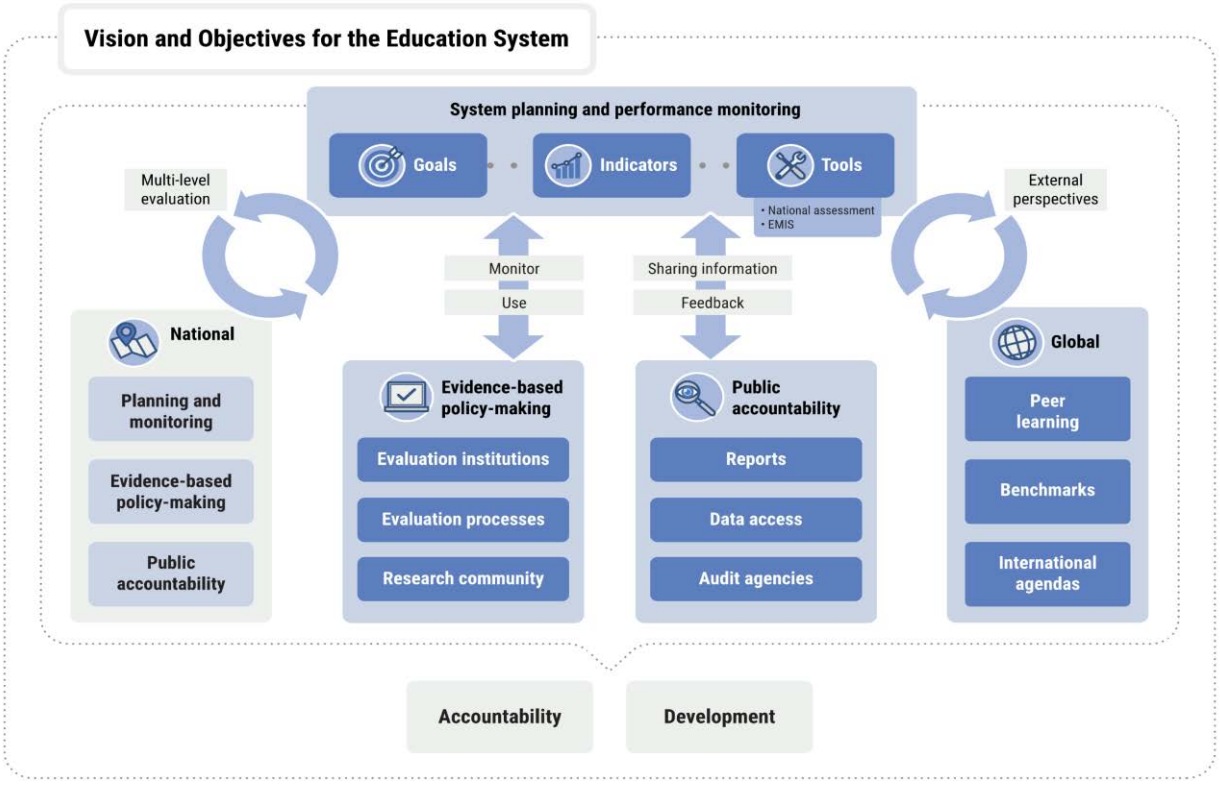
Public reporting of progress against national goals enables the public to hold the government accountable. However, the public frequently lacks the time and information to undertake this role, and their motivation tends to be driven by individual rather than national concerns (House of Commons, 2011[8]). This means that objective and expert bodies like national auditing bodies, parliamentary committees and the research community play a vital role in digesting government reporting and helping to hold the government to account.

An important vehicle for public reporting is an annual report on the education system (OECD, 2013[1]). In many OECD countries, such a report is now complemented by open data. If open data is to support accountability and transparency, it must be useful and accessible. Many OECD countries use simple infographics to present complex information in a format that the public can understand. Open data should also be provided in a form that is re-usable (e.g. other users can download and use it in different way so the wider evaluation community like researchers and non-governmental bodies can analyse data to generate new insights) (OECD, 2018[9]).

National goals are a strong lever for governments to direct the education system

Governments can use national goals to give coherent direction to education reform - from the different units within central government to sub-national governance bodies and individual schools. For this to happen, goals should be specific (i.e. including timelines, actions and responsible persons), measurable (i.e. including performance indicators and targets), ambitious but feasible and, above all, relevant to the education system and society at large. Having a clear sense of direction is particularly important in the education sector, given the scale, multiplicity of actors and the difficulty in retaining focus in the long-term process of achieving change. In an education system that is well-aligned, national goals are embedded centrally in key reference frameworks, encouraging all actors to work towards their achievement. For example, national goals that all students reach minimum achievement standards or that teaching and learning foster students' creativity are reflected in standards for school evaluation and teacher appraisal. Through the evaluation and assessment framework, actors are held accountable for progress against these objectives.

Figure 5.1. System evaluation



Tools for system evaluation

Administrative data about students, teachers and schools are held in central information systems

In most OECD countries, data such as student demographic information, attendance and performance, teacher data and school characteristics are held in a comprehensive data system, commonly referred to as an Education Management Information System (EMIS). Data are collected according to nationally and internationally standardised definitions, enabling data to be collected in an integrated manner, used across the national education system and reported internationally. An effective EMIS also allows users to analyse data and helps disseminate information about education inputs, processes and outcomes in a continuous and dynamic manner.

National and international assessments provide reliable data on learning outcomes

Over the past two decades, there has been a major expansion in the number of countries using standardised assessments. The vast majority of OECD countries (30), and an increasing number of non-member countries, have regular national assessments of student achievement (OECD, 2015[10]). This reflects the global trend towards greater demand for outcomes data to monitor government effectiveness, as well as a greater appreciation of the economic importance of all students mastering essential skills.

The primary purpose of a national assessment is to provide reliable data on student learning outcomes that are comparative across different groups of students and over time (OECD, 2013[1]). Assessments can also serve other purposes such as providing information to teachers, schools and students to enhance learning and supporting school accountability frameworks. Unlike national examinations, they do not have an impact on students' progression through grades. When accompanied by background questionnaires, assessments provide insights into the factors influencing learning nationally and across specific groups. While the design of national assessments varies considerably across OECD countries, there is consensus that having regular, reliable national data on student learning is essential for both system accountability and improvement.

An increasing number of countries also participate in international assessments like the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). These assessments provide countries with periodic information to compare learning against international benchmarks as a complement to national data.

Evaluation and thematic reports provide information about the quality of teaching and learning processes

Qualitative information helps to contextualise data and provide insights into what is happening in a country's classrooms and schools. For example, school evaluations can provide information about the quality of student-teacher interactions and about how a principal motivates and recognises staff. Effective evaluation systems use such findings to help understand national challenges – like differences in student outcomes across schools.

While policy evaluation is rarely systematic, a growing number of OECD countries are starting to use evaluation. Different approaches include evaluation shortly after implementation, and *ex ante* reviews of major policies to support future decision-making (OECD, 2018[11]). Countries are also making greater efforts to incorporate evidence to inform policy design, for example by commissioning randomised control trials to determine the likely impact of a policy intervention.

Effective evaluation systems requires institutional capacity within and outside government

System evaluation requires resources and skills *within* ministries of education to develop, collect and manage reliable, quality datasets and to exploit education information for evaluation and policy-making purposes. Capacity *outside* or at arm's length of education ministries is equally important, and many OECD countries have independent evaluation institutions that contribute to system evaluation. Such institutions might undertake external analysis of public data, or be commissioned by the government to produce annual reports on the education system and undertake policy evaluations or other studies. In order to ensure that such institutions have sufficient capacity, they may receive public funding but their statutes and appointment procedures ensure their independence and the integrity of their work.

System evaluation in Georgia

Georgia has successfully established several components that are integral to perform system evaluation (Table 5.1). For example, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture

and Sport (MoESCS) has developed a national vision for its education system and action plans to direct the implementation of its strategic goals. Several independent bodies collect valuable data and the Education Information Management System (EMIS) stores information related to students, teachers and schools. Nevertheless, many of these components and processes are not fully developed and, more importantly, not oriented towards system evaluation. As a result, research and analysis that could support system improvement is not performed systematically and policy is sometimes made without being strongly informed by evidence.

Table 5.1. System evaluation in Georgia

References for national vision and goals	Tools	Body responsible	Outputs
• Unified Strategy for Education and Science 2017-21 • Georgia 2020 socio-economic development strategy	Administrative data	Education Management Information System (EMIS)	• Unpublished, ad-hoc reports from Education Management Information System (EMIS) • Annual statistical releases
	National assessment	National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC)	• Mathematics (9th grade) • Biology, Physics and Chemistry (9th grade) • Georgian as a second language (7th grade)
	International assessments	National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC)	• Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) • Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) • Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA): mathematics, science and reading
	School evaluations	National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)	• Under discussion
	Policy evaluations	No established process	• -
	Reports and research	Department of Strategic Planning and International Relations	• Monitoring Report of the Unified Strategy of Education and Science
		National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC)	• Ad-hoc internal reports on assessment and examination results

Sources: MoES (2018[12]), *Georgia Country Background Report*, Ministry of Education and Science, Tbilisi; MoES (2017[13]), *Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021*; Government of Georgia (n.d.[14]), *Social-economic Development Strategy of Georgia - Georgia 2020*, www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-geo-2014-2018-sd-01.pdf (accessed on 23 January 2019).

High-level documents express the national vision for education

Georgia's Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-21 provides a comprehensive vision for education at all levels. This document sets out specific goals that aim to expand access to quality education and ensure that students acquire the necessary competences to support Georgia's sustainable development (MoESCS, 2017[13]) (see chapter 1). The strategy complies with the overarching government strategy "Georgia

2020", and seeks greater alignment to European Union policies and practices, such as the Bologna Process requirements for higher education (Government of Georgia, n.d.[14]; MoESCS, 2017[13]).

Few national stakeholders are aware of the national strategy

The Unified Strategy was developed by the MoESCS Department of Strategic Planning and International Relations with the support of other governmental bodies and donor agencies, including the European Union, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the World Bank and the United States Agency for International development (USAID). The document was created somewhat hurriedly in response to international pressure (MoESCS, 2017[15]), which contributes to stakeholders' limited knowledge or ownership of its goals. The OECD review team met with school principals and teachers in Georgia and, when asked, few were aware of the strategy and its contents. This is problematic because without a single, shared vision, stakeholders cannot work together to achieve system-wide strategic goals.

New priorities and reforms have been introduced in parallel to the strategy

In 2018, the new Minister introduced priority actions for reforming all levels of Georgia's education system between 2018 and 2023 (MoES, 2018[16]). One of the main goals of this "Vision of Reform" is to implement the "Model of a New School", which, among other goals, will introduce new management approaches, a unified teaching electronic platform, new teaching methods and will lead to an increase of teacher and school leader salaries. In addition, the plan mentions that the current examination system is to be assessed with the goal of implementing a new model in 2020.

Tools to collect and monitor information exist but are not systematically used

Georgia has a well-established information gathering system. However, hard-to-use monitoring and data tools limit the analysis that can be performed on the available information. Also problematic is that some important data collection instruments, such as the national assessment, might not remain in place in coming years due to a lack of funding, which would mean that even less data on education outcomes would be available.

An action plan and monitoring report accompany the Unified Strategy, but lack specific targets

The Unified Strategy is accompanied by a detailed action plan that specifies the activities, expected outcomes, responsible entities and estimated budget for each goal (MoESCS, 2017[15]). Progress through the action plan and the Unified Strategy in general is tracked using the Monitoring Report of the Unified Strategy of Education and Science. This report is produced by the Department of Strategic Planning and International Relations and is available online via the Ministry's website.

While these tools complement the Unified Strategy, they do not establish specific indicators that can be used to measure progress towards system-level targets (OECD, 2013[1]). For example, in the plan, a stated objective is to promote vocational education and increase its attractiveness and an associated activity is to encourage the introduction of vocational education components in schools. However, no clarification is provided regarding how this would take place, nor does the action plan identify a target number of schools or students it would like to reach. Nevertheless, the Monitoring Report states that this goal was achieved (MoES, n.d.[17]).

EMIS collects and manages data, but stakeholders have difficulty analysing information

In 2012, MoESCS established EMIS as an entity at arm's length from the Ministry. EMIS is responsible for collecting and storing information about Georgia's education system, including data on students, the teaching staff and school infrastructure, as well as strengthening information and communications technology in Georgian schools (MoESCS, 2018[12]).

According to reports from national stakeholders, it is easy to input and update school and individual data in the EMIS online portal, E-school. As a result, virtually all stakeholders provide information directly from EMIS, which limits parallel data collections and creates greater data consistency. Nevertheless, stakeholders reported having trouble using the information collected by EMIS. For example, school principals might want to know the attendance rate at their schools over time, or disaggregated by boys and girls. While the EMIS database holds raw data about attendance and gender, the E-School portal does not provide users with tools to analyse the data and produce the desired results. At present, to arrive at such results, E-school users must manually download the raw data and then manipulate it in software such as Microsoft Excel, which requires technical capacity and time that few have and might also induce errors due to the need for manual manipulations.

Public access to EMIS data is limited

E-school allows account-holding users to access information, albeit in a non-analytical manner. Anyone without credentials to access E-School who wishes to view educational data, even anonymised and aggregated data, cannot do so via an online portal and must submit a formal written request to EMIS. The request is processed and the information issued up to ten days later (EMIS, n.d.[18]). The lack of automated and immediate data reporting creates additional work for EMIS staff and delays for users. In addition, there is no user-friendly interface specifying which information is available. This requires that information requestors communicate at length with EMIS to determine what information can be transferred and in what format before EMIS can even begin compiling the requested information.

Student data is not integrated across Georgia's databases

Within EMIS, student data is identified using students' government-issued identification numbers, which allows data to be aligned across all public institutions (e.g. health and labour) (MoESCS, 2018[12]). This structure is efficient, eliminates concerns about incorrectly identifying students and facilitates cross-institutional research.

Although student data are aligned via their identification numbers, MoESCS's various databases are not integrated with each other, which makes merging data difficult. For instance, while student and teacher demographic data are housed in EMIS's systems, their examinations data are located in NAEC's systems and the two systems are not linked. This means that researchers cannot immediately access the data they need to answer important questions (e.g. student attendance vis-à-vis test scores). While the data can be requested and manually merged, these procedures represent an administrative burden and require significant technical capacity to be completed.

Georgia conducts regular national assessments but does not have a long-term strategy

Most OECD education systems have regular sample or census-based assessments to collect information on learning outcomes across different groups of students, at different stages of education and over time. In Georgia, NAEC has undertaken – with funding from MCC - regular sample-based student assessments for maths and sciences in Grade 9, and a census-based assessment for Georgian as a second language in non-Georgian schools in Grade 7 (MoESCS, 2018[12]). These assessments have no impact on students' progression and are used to monitor system-level performance.

The structure of these assessments only allows for data collection in selected grades and competencies, which gives a limited understanding of students' skills and development. For instance, students are not assessed in their mother tongue, which is a fundamental skill, until Grade 12. Furthermore, while these assessments reflect performance at the national level, they do not produce reliable information at the regional or school levels that could help identify at-risk groups and other gaps in the system.

Georgia has recently begun to develop a long-term strategy for its national assessments. The review team was told that MoESCS is considering testing students in grades 4, 6 and 10. The assessments will serve diagnostic, formative purposes, but the exact subjects and other features of the assessments' design have not been determined.

Georgia participates regularly in international assessments

Several countries participate in international assessments to compare their outcomes to other countries' and use the results to inform policy-making. Georgia has participated in TIMSS (2007, 2011 and 2015) and PIRLS (2006, 2011 and 2016) as well as the OECD's PISA (2009 and 2015). As part of this process, NAEC has developed extensive experience in administering international assessments (MoESCS, 2018[12]). The OECD review team was told that ad-hoc analysis of international assessment data is performed, primarily by NAEC, but that the results of this analysis are not systematically used in the policy-making process, nor are they made public.

Evaluation and thematic reports

There are no annual, analytical reports about the education system

Regular reporting is a common feature of most OECD education systems. By bringing together a wide range of information on student outcomes and demographics as well as contextual information on student participation, regular reports highlight the system's main challenges and play a key role in system evaluation by disseminating information (OECD, 2013[1]). Despite having strong technical capacity in-house and across affiliated agencies, the MoESCS produces neither regular nor thematic analytical reports about the education system.

As mentioned previously, the Department of Strategic Planning and International Relations produces a Monitoring Report. While this document monitors progress towards strategic objectives, such as completion rates, it does not analytically evaluate the state and performance of the Georgian education system. In addition, the report is extremely long and hard to access for readers.

External organisations have produced reports about Georgia's education system

International and non-government organisations have undertaken valuable analysis of Georgia's education system that has contributed to system evaluation. In 2014, for example, the World Bank published a sector-wide policy review (World Bank, 2014[19]) and Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) Reports (World Bank, 2014[20]) have provided valuable recommendations on professional development and teacher policies. This work provided technical advice on how to support and build the capacity required at the Ministry to develop a Unified Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

Evaluation institutions

Georgia does not have an agency that is responsible for the research and evaluation of the entire education system. There are several bodies with research capacity, such as NAEC and EMIS, but these organisations do not have a remit to look at the entirety of the system and instead analyse only their own data. Some bodies, such as the Department for Strategic Planning and International Relations, are mandated to guide the activities of the entire system, but they do not have research capacity. Without rigorous study of the system, their strategic planning tends to occur based on the priorities of individuals and not based on sound evidence.

Agencies such as NAEC and EMIS have the potential to make a significant contribution to system evaluation, but there are few mechanisms to ensure regular co-operation between them. Many of the agencies report directly to the Minister and have little horizontal communication and engagement with each other. This lack of coordination is problematic because it isolates the various agencies and compels them to focus on their own internal processes. For system evaluation to occur, these organisations need to be oriented towards the same important priorities, as identified by the Unified Strategy, so their programmes of work support each other and the national vision.

Policy issues

An important challenge to developing system evaluation in Georgia is the lack of recognition around the importance of conducting research into the system and using that research to inform policy. This leads to an unstable policy environment in which individuals' concerns and beliefs can take priority over long-term, evidence-based reforms. This review recommends that a research and evaluation unit be established in MoESCS and that this unit be responsible for overseeing system evaluation activities. This unit will draw attention to the need for basing decision-making on a careful review of the evidence and provide the capacity to help the government do so. A second priority for Georgia is to make the education data it collects easier to use for research and instructional purposes. Because data capacity in Georgia is relatively high, a small amount of extra investment in this area could produce notable results. Finally, Georgia needs to design a national assessment system that is aligned with key system goals. This assessment system must be stable and adequately resourced in order to monitor student learning over time. It will be important, however, that Georgia addresses important questions related to the assessment's formative and accountability functions before introducing new measures.

Policy issue 5.1. Building a culture of research, evaluation and improvement of the education system

Reviews of education systems reveal common practices related to research and evaluation that contribute to successful system evaluation. These include:

- analysing available information is conducted to produce a rich body of information about the system
- establishing procedures that position evidence review at the centre of policy-making
- evaluating policies to determine their effect and to inform future decision-making.

In Georgia, there is a presently a lack of the foundations upon which a culture of research evaluation can be developed. There is no unit responsible for guiding the national-level evaluation and research agenda and, as a result, there is limited analytical information produced about the education system as a whole. Without consistent reporting about the system, policies are created without reviewing key evidence that could inform their development, and resources are spent in support of unsubstantiated initiatives.

Recommendation 5.1.1. Establish a formal research and evaluation unit

Many countries have a unit that is dedicated to guiding research and evaluation into the education system and using research results to inform planning. Some may conduct research themselves, while others coordinate the work of external researchers in accordance with government priorities. These units are also responsible for ensuring that the research that is produced is used in the policy-making process. Box 5.1 describes the composition and roles of two mature research and evaluation units from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Box 5.1. Education research and evaluation units in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

The Department of Education in the United Kingdom has created a strategy unit within the Department that works with senior leadership to shape the government's overall education strategy. It has, among others, the following responsibilities:

- Strategic projects – deliver high quality strategic policy projects.
- Thought leadership – bring new, interesting and challenging thinking about education policy into the Department.
- Supporting priorities – help develop and set priorities for the Department.
- Social mobility – lead the Department's work on social mobility, such as improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The Strategy Unit is led by a unit head and composed of project leads and analysts. Projects that are led by the Strategy Unit undergo an extensive research process that includes collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The outputs of the Strategy Unit are submitted to government leadership for their consideration in the policy-making process.

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) have established the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO). This organisation does not conduct its own research, but is responsible for coordinating the research agenda of the Ministry by soliciting and reviewing external requests to perform research. A Steering Group that consists of representatives from education practice, education policy and the research community leads NRO.

Source: NWO (n.d.[21]), *Netherlands Initiative for Education Research*, www.nro.nl/en/ (accessed on 7 January 2019).

In Georgia, research and evaluation responsibilities are loosely divided between NAEC and EMIS. This configuration has limitations, as both bodies mostly work with their own data and neither is responsible for the evaluation of the entire system. Their position at arm's length from the ministry also prevents them from being looked to for policy advice. Though their data can be linked via common data keys, research that draws upon both sources, in conjunction with others, is rarely conducted. Consequently, Georgian policy-makers do not have information that presents a general overview of the system and could inform decision-making. Creating a research and evaluation unit at the centre of MoESCS that is explicitly responsible for study of the entire system would greatly improve the country's capacity to perform system evaluation.

Clearly define the role and position of the research and evaluation unit

MoESCS's unit would be responsible for improving and centralising data access, evaluating the effectiveness of education policy, measuring progress towards strategic goals and promoting the use of evidence to inform policy-making and budgeting. The unit would not necessarily perform research and evaluation work itself, but could prioritise and commission it from other actors (see Box 5.1 for a description of how a similar unit in the Netherlands commissions research and evaluation work). Such an approach would

strengthen demand for evidence and promote the development of education research capacity in general.

For the research unit to achieve its objectives, it must be prominently situated within MoESCS and not contained within a department. Therefore, the OECD review team recommends that the unit report directly to the Minister. This governance structure would provide the research unit with the mandate and recognition needed to guide different parts of MoESCS in a common direction. One of its first priorities might be to ensure that an analytical report about the system is published regularly and that the results are discussed in detail (see Recommendation 5.1.2).

The unit might initially be staffed by two to three individuals with experience in quantitative analysis, use of evidence in policy-making and delivery of policy. Funding to support the unit would have to originate from a dedicated budget line such that other items do not take financial priority over the unit. Given the importance of data to the work of the research and evaluation unit, Georgia should consider integrating EMIS into the unit. It is rare across OECD countries to have EMIS separate from the ministry. As the unit gains prominence and capacity, it would be well-positioned to lead EMIS, which would further centralise the importance of data in policy-making.

Develop a research agenda for the research and evaluation unit

Given the role of the research and evaluation unit, its work will need to be guided by a research agenda that explains what it wishes to do and why (World Bank, 2014[19]). This agenda should be formed based on the strategic issues defined by the Ministry and its major stakeholders. This process should be part of the strategic planning process – where strategic issues are identified based upon an analysis of the Ministry's mission and values and the external environment (see Recommendation 5.1.3) (Bryson, 2018[22]).

While the research agenda should focus on issues related to established system goals, like equity (see Recommendation 5.1.3), it could also include items related to the feasibility of new policy proposals. For example, increasing teacher salaries is a priority of MoESCS. Several complex factors need to be taken into account when determining the feasibility and desirability of different options. These include:

- projections on retirement
- the long-term fiscal impact of more teachers moving up the salary scale
- how the new salary structure can best incentivise improvements in practice and reinforce other initiatives (such as the New School Model)
- the trade-offs between salary increases and other investments that could support system goals.

At present, it seems that decisions regarding teacher salary structures are being made without consulting adequate information (see chapter 3). Given the importance of this issue and the considerable financial resources involved, the research and evaluation unit should make reviewing this topic a key priority.

Recommendation 5.1.2. Encourage the dissemination and usage of research and evaluation activities

A core function of research and evaluation units in most OECD countries is the production of regular reports about the state of the system and periodic analytical reports about specific

themes (OECD, 2013[1]). Such reports help hold the government accountable in addition to providing information about how policy and practice can be improved. Research and evaluation units can also be responsible for encouraging the use of these reports for policy-making purposes, as is the case with the Strategy Unit from the United Kingdom (see Box 5.1).

In Georgia, the Monitoring Report most closely approximates a report about the state of the system, but at 135 pages, it is difficult to read and interpret. It is more descriptive in nature and does not study the system in-depth to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The absence of regular, meaningful reporting is also one of the factors that has impeded the development of transparent, evidence-informed policy-making in Georgia. Policy-makers rarely meet to review important research findings and discuss policy solutions to the issues that the research identifies. There is also no clear expectation within government that such review takes place.

Annually release an analytical report about the education system

Most OECD countries regularly publish an analytical report on education, the content of which is guided by national priorities and goals (OECD, 2013[1]). An annual analytical report would contain information related to the key indicators of the national action plan. In addition, the analytical report would study the inputs, processes and outputs that are related to the indicators (OECD, 2013[1]).

In Georgia, the research and evaluation unit would be responsible for developing the annual report. Data and additional research capacity could be provided by EMIS (unless it is integrated within the unit) and NAEC, or requested externally. This report would differ significantly from the extant monitoring report in that it would be more analytical and delve "deeper" into key strategic issues. For example, the monitoring report might explain the current levels of student enrolment, connecting this indicator to changes in population patterns and school resource allocation. The report might also discuss future policies or activities intended to address these challenges. These are common features of analytical reports in OECD countries (Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Annual analytical reports on the education system in the Czech Republic and Portugal

In the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports produces an annual report that evaluates the overall education system (the Status Report on the Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic). The report summarises the main organisational and legislative changes that occurred in the given year and presents statistical indicators describing the situation and development in pre-primary, basic, secondary and tertiary education. The report also contains information about educational staff in the system, the funding of schools and the labour market situation of school leavers. These data constitute a basis for the development of education policies. Furthermore, the report typically includes an area of specific focus (e.g. in 2007 and 2008, the implementation of the curricular reform). Individual regions within the Czech Republic also produce their own reports to assess progress towards long-term policy objectives.

In Portugal, the National Education Council publishes the annual State of Education report, which provides an analysis of key data on the education system. The first issue, the State of Education 2010 – School Paths, offered a detailed investigation of student pathways in the education system and the second issue, The State of Education 2011 – The Qualifications of the Portuguese Population, provided an in-depth examination of the current qualifications of the population. The report also offers policy advice on how to improve the quality of basic and secondary education and evaluates policy initiatives. In 2011, these covered school evaluation, the funding of public schools, education for children aged three years and under, the reorganisation of the school network and specific education programmes.

Sources: Santiago et al., (2012[23]), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Czech Republic 2012*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264116788-en;
Santiago et al., (2012[24]), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Portugal 2012*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264117020-en.

Release ad-hoc reports about thematic issues

A majority of OECD countries produce ad-hoc reports on specific themes (OECD, 2013[1]). These might range from observed achievement gaps to evaluating national initiatives to improve science and mathematics education. Ad-hoc reports are formulated based upon the national research agenda defined through strategic planning processes. Guided by the agenda, a national Ministry of Education, through its research bodies or external bodies, would conduct research into specific issues from the agenda (see Box 5.1). The resulting report would be used to shape future policy and be referenced by the annual analytical report from that year. An example of how an ad-hoc research report motivated educational change in Wales is described in Box 5.3.

Box 5.3. Research driven change in Wales

In 2011, following the release of PISA 2009 results, the government of Wales embarked upon an ambitious education improvement programme to raise student-learning outcomes. As part of this process, the Welsh government worked with the OECD to study how schools in Wales can be improved. A report was published in 2014 that identified key challenges in the Welsh education system and recommended specific improvements (OECD, 2014[25]). The media highlighted the report's findings, in particular the need for a stable, long-term vision (Jones, 2014[26]).

In 2017, the OECD studied changes in the Welsh education system. The OECD published a rapid policy assessment and found that the original 2014 report had become a centrepiece in policy conversations. Several recommendations made had already been implemented by the Welsh government, including improving teacher professional development, facilitating peer learning between schools and updating the curriculum to support a modern vision of education (OECD, 2017[27]). The media also highlighted this report, noting that while progress had been made, further improvement could still be made (BBC, 2017[28]).

Sources: OECD (2017[27]), *The Welsh Education Reform Journey*, www.oecd.org/education/The-Welsh-Education-Reform-Journey-FINAL.pdf (accessed on 23 January 2019);
OECD (2014[25]), *Improving Schools in Wales: An OECD Perspective,* www.oecd.org/education/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf (accessed on 23 January 2019);
Jones (2014[26]), *OECD: Welsh government lacks education 'long-term vision'*, BBC, www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-26962501 (accessed on 23 January 2019);
BBC (2017[28]), *OECD report backs radical reform of Welsh curriculum*, www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-39105175 (accessed on 23 January 2019).

In Georgia, thematic reporting is not conducted systematically and, therefore, information about key educational issues is not produced regularly. When such analysis is done, such as with respect to the teacher performance scheme, international partners usually undertake it, which potentially limits the appropriation of key findings. The OECD recommends that the proposed research and evaluation unit also be responsible for overseeing the development of ad-hoc reports about strategic issues that appear in the Unified Strategy and take on a more proactive role in the commissioning of studies by third parties (see Recommendation 5.1.3). Given the educational context in Georgia, examples of thematic reports that would be important to develop include the education of ethnic minorities and resource allocation to rural schools.

Establish regular meetings between policy-makers during which evidence is shared and discussed

Research on effective policy-making emphasises the importance of informing decisions with evidence and analysis (OECD, 2017[29]). Evidence-informed policy-making means that before policy and major legislation is introduced, available evidence is studied and possible policy options openly discussed (Sanderson, 2002[30]; Senge, 2014[31]). The European Commission also urges that robust evaluation methodology (e.g. randomised control trials) be used to study the effects of policies after they are implemented in order to identify which policies are most effective (European Commission, 2007[32]).

Presently, policy conversations that are centred on evidence occur infrequently in Georgia. Within the MoESCS, heads of departments indicated that there are no regular meetings between themselves and the Minister of Education. Similarly, meetings do not frequently

occur between heads of departments, resulting in departments that tend to work independently rather than collaboratively.

Ensuring that departments and agencies work together, meet frequently and discuss strategic issues is crucial to embedding the use of evidence in policy-making (Bryson, 2018[33]). Georgia should stimulate this collaboration by organising frequent meetings, coinciding with the release of key research, with all heads of department as well as the Minister. During these meetings, the participants could discuss the findings of recent studies and collectively decide what actions to take in response. Box 5.4 discusses steps that countries can take to ensure that policy is better informed by evidence. In most OECD countries, legislative and parliamentary processes reinforce such practices by requiring, for example, that the government present "white papers" that explain the evidence underpinning major proposals or establish independent commissions to inform decisions on key reforms.

Box 5.4. Evidence-informed policy-making

The OECD and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre studied which key capacities and institutional structures are necessary to facilitate evidence-informed policy-making. Some identified structures include:

- a strategic, long-term approach to evidence-informed policy-making
- clear assignment of responsibilities and mandates to apply evidence-informed policy-making
- strong co-operation between researchers and policy-makers
- structured dialogue between all stakeholders.

The study also identified interventions that might be effective in facilitating evidence-informed policy-making. These include:

- prioritising better regulation, impact assessment, regulatory scrutiny and stakeholder engagement
- facilitating access to evidence, through communication strategies and evidence repositories
- fostering changes to decision-making structures by formalising and embedding use of evidence within existing processes (e.g. through evidence-on-demand services).

Several countries have developed innovative approaches to strengthening the use of evidence in policy-making.

- Finland has created a "Developer Network" that holds regular meetings for stakeholders who are active in the knowledge-policy environment.
- The United Kingdom, through the Alliance for Useful Evidence, has created courses for decision-makers who want to become more confident users of research.
- New Zealand has created Chief Advisor roles in its national government, such as a Chief Science Advisor, to imbue the government with external capacity for evidence use.

Source: OECD and European Commission (2018[34]), *Building Capacity for Evidence Informed Policy Making: Towards a Baseline Skill Set*, www.oecd.org/gov/building-capacity-for-evidence-informed-policymaking.pdf (accessed on 7 February 2019).

Engage external entities to become research and evaluation partners

While the research and evaluation unit would be centrally responsible for guiding research and promoting its use, having a wide network of researchers is vital to producing extensive evidence and ensuring successful system evaluation. MoESCS already has research capacity in EMIS and NAEC, and the unit could help coordinate these organisations to focus on common strategic issues.

Further, an informal network of education researchers has already been established in Georgia. The OECD spoke to researchers from higher education institutions, local non-governmental organisations and international organisations. This is a positive development, as it suggests transparency of the system and accessibility of data.

Nevertheless, this network could be more formally engaged, under the direction of the research and development unit, to contribute to system evaluation. The unit might encourage researchers to submit proposals for government-funded research into topics of national interest and contribute to the annual and ad-hoc reports it produces. This review identifies a number of areas for research, such as an evaluation of the consecutive initial teacher education programme.

There is also scope for the unit to encourage organisations with expertise to undertake more research into areas of mutual concern. For example, through the allocation of research grants the unit could encourage non-governmental organisations that serve ethnic minority populations to carry out research into the factors related to lower access rates and outcomes. The results of this research could then become focal points of policy discussions at MoESCS.

Consider developing an independent evaluation institute

This chapter has focused on building urgently needed research capacity and coordinating research efforts within the ministry in order to improve the use of evidence in policy-making. In the future, however, Georgia should consider creating an institute dedicated to research and evaluation, which is a common practice in many countries. In the United States, the Institute for Education Sciences is well developed and is tasked with collecting statistics and carrying out rigorous research and evaluation-related to education (US Department of Education, n.d.[35]).

Recommendation 5.1.3. Use system evaluation to enhance the value of system planning

The introduction of a Unified Strategy is a positive development as it represents a concerted effort to set a system-wide educational agenda. However, the Unified Strategy was developed quickly in response to European Union requirements, which resulted in the plan not being widely known and understood. To effectively embed the Unified Strategy and enhance the value of system planning in general, strategic planning processes need to be informed by evidence produced through system evaluation so that strategy documents and goals reflect the national context. If national priorities are more relevant to educators, then educators will be more aware of them and will be more likely to align their practices.

Identify the core strategic issues of the Georgian education system, in particular equity of outcomes

Strategic issues are the key challenges an organisation faces that inhibit it from achieving its mandate, mission and values. The identification of strategic issues, which results from an analysis of evidence, is an inherent part of strategic planning and the final set of issues typically appears in high-level strategic documents (Bryson, 2018[33]). Explicitly mentioning the issues in this manner clarifies to all stakeholders, especially researchers, what the government thinks are the main challenges and how it proposes to address them. Otherwise, the research and evaluation community does not know where it should focus its efforts, risking misalignment between what is studied and what matters most. Box 5.5 describes how two high-level strategy documents from very different contexts communicate their strategic issues.

Box 5.5. Communicating strategic issues through high-level strategy documents

The Strategic Plan (2017/18 – 2021/22) of the Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture dedicates a section to carefully explaining the evidence analysis that was performed to determine the country's strategic issues. This section reveals that a situation analysis was undertaken to assess the environment prior to the development of the plan, during which data was examined and stakeholders were consulted. The resulting strategic issues, found in a separate section, are further summarised into twelve categories, include developing a plan for infrastructure and improving data management.

At a local level, Garrett County Public Schools in the United States analysed evidence and identified strategic issues as part of a larger process to create a new strategic plan. A separate report was published that describes the procedures undertaken to determine the strategic issues, which include addressing disciplinary issues, large class sizes and student transportation. The document is organised around the strategic issues, each of which is explained, substantiated with data and associated with actions that will be taken to address the issue.

Sources: Ministry of Education (2017[36]), *Strategic Plan (2017/18 - 2021/22)*, www.moe.gov.na/files/downloads/b7b_Ministry%20Strategic%20Plan%202017-2022.pdf (accessed on 8 January 2019);
Baker (2018[37]), *Preliminary Report: Identification of Strategic Issues, Garrett County Public Schools*, www.garrettcountyschools.org/resources/public-information/pdf/Strategic-Issues-Follow-Up-Report-4.10.18.pdf (accessed on 8 January 2019).

In Georgia, the Unified Strategy is the highest-level strategic document that guides education activities. While it includes several core elements of a strategic plan, it is unclear from the document what the most pressing strategic issues are for the Georgian education system. There is a section called "Strategic Directions," but the content is very general. For example, it explains that education is the cornerstone of sustainable development and that the Unified Strategy applies to all levels of education. The document then describes at length the goals and objectives of the system, but does not identify the issues that motivated the development of those goals and objectives. One strategic objective, for instance, is "Ensuring equal universal access to high quality education." However, there is no description of what evidence was analysed to determine that access is not universal, nor according to which population dimensions and to what extent the disparities exist. Explicitly including such information would help in setting more specific, measurable priorities, and in identifying meaningful indicators and targets.

As Georgia prepares future high-level strategy documents, the OECD recommends that strategic issues be included in them. In consideration of the evidence that was analysed as part of this review, the review team also recommends that equity of outcomes be emphasised as a strategic issue in MoESCS's future strategic planning. International and national data suggest that students from rural areas and linguistic minority groups perform less well compared to their peers and, worryingly, that these trends are worsening over time (see chapter 1). Undertaking this analysis of the strategic issues facing the system would be an important function of the research and evaluation unit (see Recommendation 5.1.1).

Set balanced goals according to the evidence-based needs of the system

After strategic issues have been identified, goals will need to be set to direct the system towards addressing these issues. These goals should be specific and measurable, so that they focus attention and enable accountability. They must also be balanced – thinking of both the outcomes a system wants to achieve as well as the internal processes and capacity throughout the system that are needed to achieve these outcomes (Kaplan and Norton, 1992[7]). For example, if a goal is to construct 500 new schools, thought must be given to the financial resources required to construct these schools and the capacity of the relevant organisations to build the schools in the time allotted. Securing the funding and developing capacity, therefore, must then also become goals. Balancing goals in this manner is important to ensure the feasibility of desired outcomes and to guide actions towards achieving the outcomes.

Goal setting in Georgia has tended to neglect these core elements of capacity and processes. Inadequate attention dedicated to the means of implementation has prevented good intentions achieving their desired impact. In the Unified Strategy, one national goal is to use the national assessments to improve teaching and learning. However, only 10 000 GEL was allocated towards this goal in the Action Plan, even though MCC funding for the assessments themselves is phasing out (see Policy issue 5.3). This goal will need to be balanced by considering the financial resources that will be necessary to continue developing and administering the assessments. It will also have to consider the capacity that NAEC will require to not only continue administering the assessments, but also study the results in order to improve student learning.

A popular tool for creating balanced goals is the Balanced Scorecard (Balanced Scorecard Institute, n.d.[38]), which has been used internationally to create goals in higher education and other educational institutions (Yüksel and Coşkun, 2013[39]; Beard, 2009[40]). The Balanced Scorecard is a framework that compels policy-makers to take into account different perspectives when defining goals, not just desired outcomes, but also internal processes and organisational capacity. Adopting this or a similar tool would help Georgia to develop a more holistic approach to strategic planning and allocate sufficient priority to the means, not just the ends, of reform.

Policy issue 5.2. Making information about the education system more accessible and usable

Georgia's information systems are modern, widely used and are highly trusted. EMIS collects data from all schools throughout the country and NAEC stores assessment and examination data for students and teachers. Both organisations identify individuals using their government identification number, and simple demographic information is drawn directly from government sources instead of being re-entered.

Nevertheless, while education data are collected and managed effectively, accessing the information, particularly in an analytical manner, remains a challenge. User-friendly analytical tools have not been developed and individuals have neither the time nor the capacity to retrieve and analyse the data manually. As a result, educators and MoESCS officials do not systematically use data to help guide students' education and inform strategic planning, which risks that systematic needs are not noticed and not addressed.

To address these concerns, the OECD recommends that analytical functions be introduced into EMIS tools (i.e. into E-school) and that a digital monitoring system be developed.

These are relatively low-cost actions that could produce a significant impact with respect to enhancing accountability improving the quality of policy-making.

Recommendation 5.2.1. Introduce analytical and reporting functions for EMIS tools

Georgia's EMIS systems are trusted as the central source of education data. However, while the systems are equipped to store information, they lack the functionality to analyse information. To analyse data in EMIS, the principal would have to export the data from E-school as a dataset and then analyse the data themselves using external software. This process discourages school staff from using data to inform their instruction, prevents MoESCS staff from using evidence to inform their decision-making and makes it difficult for the public to hold the government accountable.

Create a feature for generating analytical reports

Reporting is an integral feature of an EMIS system and is how the system transforms from being a receptacle of data to a provider of information (Abdul-Hamid, 2014[41]). Through reporting, users are able to specify what information they are interested in (i.e. data points), how they want the information to be processed (e.g. dividing male enrolment by total enrolment to obtain the percentage of the school that is male) and how they want the information to be displayed (e.g. in a list or as part of a paragraph).

In Georgia, E-school is the EMIS portal through which the MoESCS and school staff manage student and school data. Its analytical and reporting functions, however, are limited. For instance, principals cannot easily compute what the average grades are according to gender, nor can teachers quickly create a list of students who have been frequently absent.

Instead of expecting users to export the data and analyse it themselves, analysis of this nature can be facilitated through introducing reporting functionality into E-school. This would entail allowing users to create report templates by inserting empty fields onto blank pages and specifying what information should populate those fields. For example, a principal might want to know the attendance rate of students according to the students' grade levels. To create this report, the principal would specify that they wish to create a two-column table in which the first column lists grade levels and the second column indicates the attendance rate of students from that grade. Advanced functionality would allow this data to be filtered by time period and generate graphical charts to depict the results. Every time this report is "run," E-school would populate the defined objects with the most recent data (Abdul-Hamid, 2014[41]). Given that E-school was developed in-house, EMIS has the capacity to add this type of functionality and could begin by creating simple templates that would be applicable to all school situations (e.g. attendance and basic indicators according to gender and special education status).

Build a web portal that allows public access to EMIS data

Real-time access to data through a public web portal (accessible by anyone, not just those with Ministry of Education credentials) is a common international method of extracting information from EMIS databases and presenting it in an accessible manner. At the most fundamental level, users will be able to learn how many students attend a school and how they perform on a national assessment. More sophisticated systems, such as EdStats in the United States (Box 5.6), aid external research and analysis by facilitating comparison

across schools, aggregation at different levels (e.g. regional or national) and providing a set of data visualisation tools (Abdul-Hamid, Mintz and Saraogi, 2017[42]).

Box 5.6. EdStats, a data access portal from the United States

In Florida, United States, the Education Information Portal (EdStats) provides access to data from public schools from kindergarten through grade 12, public colleges and universities, a state-wide vocational and training programme and career and adult education. Through an online interface, any individual can view data that are aggregated at school-, district- and state-levels. Comparisons can be made across different schools and districts.

EdStats is powerful in that it allows data to be organised not only to the level of governance (e.g. state, district, or school), but also subject matter. This means that users who navigate EdStats can choose to view all data according to a single domain and make further contextualised comparisons according to the domain. This saves users from having to navigate through different schools or districts in order to find the same indicator for each one of those entities.

Along with providing access to data, EdStats provides simple tools for users to perform their own analysis. Users can format the data into tables that they define themselves (some standard tables are already provided). Custom reports that contain several tables can then be generated according to users' specifications. EdStats also has a strong data visualisation component. Different types of graphs and charts can be created based on the data. District-level analysis can even be plotted as maps that display indicators according to the geographic location of the districts within the state.

Source: Florida Department of Education (n.d.[43]), *FL Department of Education - Education Information Portal*, https://edstats.fldoe.org/SASPortal/main.do (accessed on 12 July 2018).

In Georgia, families access EMIS through a web interface (E-Catalogue) in order to search for how many enrolment spaces exist in each school in the country. The only information they can see, however, are how many total places the school has, how many places remain and the language of instruction of the school. They cannot view information related to school quality.

MoESCS should create an online platform that allows public access to more EMIS data through a user-friendly graphical interface. All users of the platform would be able to browse national education data and select schools and municipalities for comparison based upon chosen criteria (for example, location or language of instruction). The platform should also contain features to create dynamically generated charts and figures and export data for further analysis. Parents and students could use the portal to make important decisions and help hold the system accountable. Researchers would be able to use this portal to study the education system and contribute to system evaluation efforts (Recommendation 5.1.2).

Recommendation 5.2.2. Create an easier-to-use monitoring system

System monitoring has an accountability function, which determines if goals are being reached, and a learning function, which determines if defined strategies and policies are up-to-date in the current environment. It is not a stand-alone process, but part of an on-going, cycle (Bryson, Berry and Kaifeng Yang, 2010[44]; George and Desmidt, 2014[45]).

Without a means to monitor the system continuously, countries risk creating a monitoring tool that contains an abundance of potentially out-of-date information, but is not relevant for policy-making.

At present, MoESCS's primary tool for monitoring the education system is the comprehensive Monitoring Report. In addition to being hard to interpret, a critical disadvantage to the report is that, as a static document, information is only available when the document is released. Policy-makers are unable to acquire up-to-date information in between publication dates. As a result, the OECD review team was told that Georgia's monitoring report is hardly downloaded and is not regarded as an important resource in the policy-making process.

Complement the monitoring report with a digital performance dashboard

A performance dashboard is a visual representation of the progress of selected indicators. By being linked directly to a system's databases, the dashboard will always display the most recent information to users without the need to wait for a report to be authored (Eckerson, 2011[46]). Box 5.7 describes some of the procedures and tools that the United States follows and uses to monitor its education system.

To make system monitoring easier to accomplish and more widely used, Georgia should develop a digital performance dashboard to accompany its static monitoring report. Georgia's digital performance dashboard would be linked to MoESCS databases, like EMIS and NAEC, and databases from outside of MoESCS, such as labour statistics. The dashboard would visually represent the progress of user-selected indicators, such as participation and assessment outcomes, both on average across the country and disaggregated by population groups and regions. Moreover, the dashboard should be balanced and show indicators not only related to intended outcomes, but also the processes that need to be in place in order to support the outcomes (e.g. levels of funding).

Box 5.7. System monitoring in the United States

In 1993, the United States created the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), which required government agencies to adopt performance management with the aim of increasing trust in government (General Services Administration, n.d.[47]). In 2011, the act was updated (now called the Government, Performance, Results and Modernization Act, though still commonly referred to as GPRA) to mandate that agencies produce their strategic plans in machine-readable formats to facilitate digital analysis, as well as identify core strategic issues.

To comply with GPRA, the Department of Education annually releases performance reports and performance plans for upcoming years (US Department of Education, 2018[48]). It has also created dynamic tools, linked to the most recent data, to help monitor educational performance. These tools include the College Scorecard (Department of Education, n.d.[49]), which provides information about university enrolment, program offerings and fees, and the Nation's Report Card (Department of Education, n.d.[50]), which shows assessment results across the country at national-, state- and district-levels. The public to receive instant information about the status of the education system can use these services at any time.

Sources: General Services Administration (n.d.[47]), Performance.gov, www.performance.gov/ (accessed on 7 January 2019);
US Department of Education (2018[48]), *Annual Plans and Reports*, www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/index.html (accessed on 7 January 2019);
Department of Education (n.d.[49]), *College Scorecard*, https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/ (accessed on 7 January 2019);
Department of Education (n.d.[50]), NAEP Report Cards, www.nationsreportcard.gov/ (accessed on 7 January 2019).

Release the performance dashboard with a tutorial that shows how it should be used to monitor the performance of the system

While different performance dashboards can be created to fit the needs of different stakeholders (Eckerson, 2011[46]), in Georgia the primary users of the dashboard would first be senior managers and policy-makers at the Ministry as they have the most critical need for immediate monitoring information. The dashboard should help these leaders easily assess to what extent a defined strategy is being implemented, if capacity is being developed and the desired results are being produced, as well as what changes might be needed.

As policy-makers are used to consuming monitoring information in the form of a large, static report, they will need guidance in how to use a performance dashboard. This can be accomplished by introducing the performance dashboard with a tutorial, created by the developers of the dashboard, that illustrates to policy-makers how they can interpret the information in the dashboard and use it to achieve their desired goals (Eckerson, 2009[51]). For example, the review team was told that improving student attendance in upper secondary education is a system priority. Policy-makers should be made to understand that, with a performance dashboard, attendance data would be available continuously, which would offer policy-makers the opportunity to react immediately to changes in the indicator. If an individual notices that attendance in the current month is declining compared to attendance in the previous month, they could follow-up more closely with the relevant ERC

(see Recommendation 5.2.1) to determine why this is occurring and if it is occurring in some schools more than others. The policy-maker could then communicate the findings to those schools and work with them to develop suitable interventions.

Policy issue 5.3. Developing and implementing a national assessment strategy that supports system goals

Research shows that having externally validated measures of student performance helps monitor performance and collects data to inform system-level policy (OECD, 2013[1]). Results from these assessments can also be used to communicate to students' their levels of learning and acts as a reference for teachers' classroom marking.

In Georgia, there is no established system of monitoring of student learning outcomes before Grade 12, and what instruments there are do not cover key outcomes (such as literacy) and are administered on a sample basis. Existing standardised assessments survey sciences and mathematics in Grade 9, and Georgian language in ethnic minority schools in Grade 7 assessment. Ad-hoc, pay-for assessments are also available, but none of these assessments is administered to all students. Importantly, MCC funding, which is largely supporting these assessments, is phasing out and there is no guarantee that such important work will continue. A recent proposal concerning a national assessment strategy suggests that diagnostic assessments be administered at the beginning of Grades 4, 6 and 10, but this strategy is not finalised.

Recommendation 5.3.1. Define a concept for the national assessments

Through balanced goal setting (see Recommendation 5.1.3), Georgia will need to plan for the resources and capacity that will be necessary to continue the administration of its national assessments. Given the importance of having consistent external measurement of student performance, Georgia should also take the opportunity to improve upon the assessments and determine how the assessments should be structured to best support national goals.

Establish a steering committee to determine the purpose of the assessments

Carefully defining the purpose of national assessments to reflect the country's teaching and learning needs is critical in order to guide the subsequent design of the assessments (Gabrscek and Bethell, 1996[52]). Determining the purpose of the national assessments should be done by a steering committee comprising a diverse group of stakeholders representing different backgrounds and interests nationally (Greaney and Kellaghan, 2007[53]). The steering committee should also include technical expertise on the development and use of national assessments.

In Georgia, the steering committee will need to consider not only the goals of the education community, but also those of the political administration and reconcile these aspirations with what is practical in the country. At present, proposals with respect to the design of the future national assessment appear to be made very quickly without full consideration of how the assessment will support system goals or relate to other policies, such as school evaluation. The establishment of a steering committee can help to ensure decisions on the national assessment take a system-wide view. International experts can be enlisted to lend a global perspective to the steering committee's deliberations. Specific decisions that need to be made by the steering committee are discussed further below.

Consider making formative feedback to educators a core function of the assessment

According to a recent proposal, Georgia intends to use the national assessments for diagnostic and formative purposes, in addition to using the results to help monitor the system. In other words, the assessments would provide data that can be used for improving student learning and for school quality (OECD, 2013[1]). The OECD supports this approach and the review team recommends that Georgia's national assessments be guided by these purposes.

Using the national assessments formatively would help to address key teaching and learning challenges in Georgia. For example, national outcomes vary across regions and sub-populations (see chapter 1). Classroom assessment practices are used more to categorise students rather than help them learn (see chapter 2). At the same time, Georgia has also introduced a new curriculum that aims to shift teaching and learning towards competency development across different stages of education. International experience shows that teachers require significant guidance to assess students according to such a curriculum (chapter 2).

Against this backdrop, Georgia requires meaningful assessment results about student learning that can help teachers better determine where students are in their learning according to the curriculum, tailor teaching to students' individual needs and guide them to improve their own classroom assessment practices. The national assessment can provide such results and alongside other resources that this review recommends help to build teachers assessment literacy and develop their understanding of national learning standards.

Recommendation 5.3.2. Determine the design features of the national assessments

Once Georgia has decided the assessments' primary purpose(s), their design will need to be determined. Table 5.2 illustrates several design components about national assessments that will need to be agreed upon in the Georgian context. In general, it is recommended that Georgia make its decisions in order to support to formative purposes of the assessments and in consideration of the specific monitoring needs of the country.

Table 5.2. Key decisions regarding national assessments

Component	Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Subjects	Many	Broader coverage of skills assessed	More expensive to develop, not all students might be prepared to take all subject
	Few	Cheaper to develop, subjects are generalisable to a larger student population	More limited coverage of skills assessed
Testing population	Sample	Cheaper and faster to implement	Results can only be produced at high, aggregate levels
	Census	Results can be produced for individual students and schools	More expensive and slower to implement
Grade level	Lower	Skills can be diagnosed and improved at an early stage of education	The length of the assessment and the types of questions that can be asked are limited
	Upper	More flexibility with respect to the length of the assessment and the types of questions that are asked	Skills cannot be evaluated until students are in later stages of education
Scoring type	Criterion-referenced	Results are comparable across different administration	Results require expertise to scale and are difficult to interpret
	Norm-referenced	Results are easier to scale and interpret	Results are only comparable within one administration of the assessment
Item type	Closed-ended	Cheaper and faster to implement, items are more accurately marked	Can only measure a limited amount of skills
	Open-ended	A broader set of skills can be measured	More expensive and slower to implement, marking is more subjective in nature
Testing mode	Paper	The processes are already in place and the country is familiar with them, requires no additional capital investment	Results are produced more slowly, seen as more old-fashioned
	Computer	Results are produced more quickly, more cost effective in the long-term, seen as more modern	New processes have to be developed and communicated, requires significant initial capital investment
Administration time	Beginning of the year	More aligned with a formative approach as teachers can use the results for diagnostic purposes	Results cannot be used to help evaluate improvements made in student learning that school year
	End of the year	Supports the use of results as part of accountability procedures as results capture student performance after a year of schooling	Results cannot be used by teachers to help their students improve

Sources: Adapted from Department for International Development (DFID) (2011[54]), *National and international assessment of student achievement: a DFID practice paper*, www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67619/nat-int-assess-stdnt-ach.pdf (accessed on 13 July 2018);
OECD (2011[55]), *Education at a glance, 2011: OECD indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2011-en.

Consider administering school-level diagnostic assessments starting in grade 2 and national assessments in grades 6 and 9 (and possibly in grade 10 later)

The review team supports earlier assessment of students, as suggested by MoESCS's recent proposal to test students in grades 4, 6 and 10. However, the OECD recommends that diagnostic assessment of students be performed at the school-level at the beginning of

academic year starting in grade 2, while the national assessments be administered to students at the end of the academic year in grades 6 and 10.

Develop diagnostic assessments materials and encourage their use in schools starting in grade 2

A diagnostic assessment is a type of formative assessment that is administered at the beginning of a study unit to determine a student's level and help develop a learning programme for the student (OECD, 2013[1]). These assessments would be especially important to use in Georgia, because data from international assessments reveal that gaps in learning between student populations have widened over time. Administering diagnostic assessments in grade 2 instead of grade 4 can help teachers identify learning needs and address gaps in achievement before they grow.

Conducting a national diagnostic assessment would standardise results of student learning. However, research shows that in high-stakes testing environments such as Georgia's, externally marked assessments might be interpreted as having summative consequences, despite the government's intent (Kitchen et al., 2017[56]). Since Georgia wishes to alleviate the testing burden on its student population, the review team does not recommend nationally administering diagnostic assessments. Taking such a test at the beginning of the academic year might make students and parents think that the results will affect a student's standing in school, which would lead to the type of distorted educational practices that Georgia is trying to eliminate (see chapter 2).

To diagnose student learning without giving the impression of summative judgement, the OECD recommends that MoESCS, through the Teacher Professional Development Centre, develop diagnostic instruments that will help teachers identify their students' levels of learning according to the national curriculum. Schools should be required to administer these assessments internally to students, towards the beginning of the school year, starting in grade 2. Using centrally developed resources is advantageous because the instruments have already been tested and approved. Over time, after teachers have become more familiar with diagnostic assessments, they should be encouraged to develop their own instruments (see chapter 2). Of critical importance to the formative value of the assessment will be the support provided to teachers on how to adapt their instruction to different student learning levels. Guidance on pedagogical responses should be introduced along with any new diagnostic tools.

Administer the national assessment in grades 6 and 9

While helpful for informing individual instruction, school-level assessments are unreliable for monitoring student learning nationally. Therefore, the OECD recommends that a national assessment be administered in addition to the aforementioned school-level diagnostic assessments. The results of these assessments can be used for system monitoring, conducting research and informing policy-making (see Policy issue 5.1).

The new curriculum defines the first two stages of learning as ending in grades 6 and 9. Therefore, the OECD suggests that MoESCS administer the national assessments in these grades to produce valuable information about student learning at key moments in students' education. Administering the assessment in grade 4 is not recommended because grade 4 is in in the middle of a curricular stage, diagnostic information is already being collected starting in grade 2 and because MoESCS wants to avoid over-testing students.

The OECD further suggests that the national assessments be administered at the beginning of the school year instead of the end. This would produce diagnostic information about student performance that can be used by teachers to guide their instruction during the same school year.

Change the grade 9 administration to grade 10 if compulsory education is extended

The OECD recommends that the national assessment in grade 9 be moved to grade 10 if compulsory education is expected to include grade 10 (as announced in recent reform plans). Administering a national assessment at the end of compulsory education would provide more reliable information about what all students know and can do upon finishing their required studies, as well as help students to make an informed decision about their next step in education or work. It would also enable the assessment to contribute to the certification requirement for successful completion of compulsory education. This would lend more value to the certification, encouraging students to apply themselves and enhancing the signalling function, especially for those who prefer to enter the labour market or seek professional training.

Assess mother tongue and mathematics

Focusing on a limited number of subjects would be consistent with the national focus to relieve testing pressure on students and schools (see chapter 2). Among OECD countries with national assessments at the primary level, roughly one-third assess only mathematics and literacy in the national language (OECD, 2015[10]). Georgia could also test these two subjects in grade 4, which would collect information about students' essential competencies without over-testing them. This is especially true for Georgian language, which is currently not externally assessed until grade 12 on the Secondary Graduation Examination (SGE).

In grade 9, additional domains, such as science or national history, may be added to the core subjects in order to increase subject matter coverage, as is done in several OECD countries (OECD, 2015[10])). For students whose first language is not Georgian, Georgian as a second language could be added (this might eliminate the need for the current grade 7 assessment in Georgian as a second language) given the variance of student outcomes according to ethnic groups. Caution should be taken when adding subjects, as each additional subject will add to the cost of administering the national assessment and will require greater implementation capacity.

Implement census-based testing

Currently, all national testing before the SGE is sample-based, except the Georgian as a second language assessment in grade 7. While sample-based testing can provide national-level results, it does not provide individual-level results and, therefore, most students in Georgia do not receive an externally validated measure of their learning until around age 17. Furthermore, school-level results cannot be calculated, as most schools would not have enough sampled students to produce reliable data. This makes it difficult for principals and teachers to use national assessment data to improve their students' learning, as they do not know if national-level results reflect their specific contexts.

Establishing census-based testing would give each student nationally comparable results. Students, their families and teachers could use those results to plan how to improve individual students' learning. Census testing also allows for the creation of school-level

and even regional-level results. This information could be used for school improvement purposes, within parameters that are designed to be formative (see Recommendation 5.3.3), and to aid research and evaluation efforts (see Recommendation 5.1.1).

Strongly consider computer-based testing instead of paper-based testing

In most OECD countries, the delivery of the national assessment is through a paper-and-pencil format. Nevertheless, this trend is changing and computer-based administration is becoming more common, particularly in countries that introduced a national assessment recently (OECD, 2013[1]). Administering assessments via the computer can save considerable costs as delivery and marking would be streamlined. It also improves accuracy by reducing the possibility of human error during these processes.

Georgia is well-positioned to adopt a digital strategy for administering its national assessments. Much standardised testing is already administered via computer, such as the SGE and the voluntary, ad-hoc tests. Therefore, little additional infrastructure would need to be built to accommodate digital testing. Additionally, previous experience in Georgia suggests that the credibility of the testing and marking process is a high priority. This means that computer-based testing's capacity to return results quickly makes it more attractive than paper-based testing, which would establish trust in the new national assessments. Quickly generated results also help support the formative, diagnostic purposes of the assessment, which have been expressed as an objective.

Develop several item types to assess a broad range of student skills

In OECD countries, the most common types of items that appear on national assessments are multiple-choice responses and closed-format, short answer questions (e.g. providing a numeric solution to a mathematics problem) (OECD, 2013[1]). These item types are easier and quicker to develop and the marking of these types of items are more reliable (Hamilton and Koretz, 2002[57]; Anderson and Morgan, 2008[58]). Less frequently used item types include open-ended writing, performing a task, oral questions and oral presentations. These item types, however, are increasing in usage due to their ability to assess a broader and more transversal set of skills than closed-ended items (Hamilton and Koretz, 2002[57]).

A consistent concern with the former SGE is that the questions only have one format and tend to encourage students to memorise a certain set of responses (Bakker, 2014[59]). Similarly, some higher education stakeholders told the review team that the UEE does not assess the skills most relevant to success at the tertiary level (see chapter 2). Therefore, a key consideration for the national assessments is to ensure that they assess critical elements of student learning.

While there are natural limitations to closed-format responses, these types of items, when developed well, do have the capacity to assess higher-order student learning outcomes (see chapter 2) (Anderson and Morgan, 2008[58]). For example, the majority of questions from both PISA and TIMSS are closed-format. Care will need to be taken to ensure that these items are measuring student learning instead of memorisation, and that proper item-writing convention is followed, such as reviewing items for potential bias and varying the placement of distractor choices (Anderson and Morgan, 2008[58]). The grade 9 national assessment can begin to incorporate more open-format questions as students at this age are more capable of responding at length.

Recommendation 5.3.3. Develop a reporting scheme that serves formative purposes and avoids punitive consequences

With regular, census-based assessments being administered, MoESCS will need to consider carefully how to report the results to students, teachers, schools and the public. External assessments, even when they have no stakes attached to them, can result in distortive practices like teaching to the test, in which classroom instruction focuses disproportionately on assessed content or repeated assessment practice (OECD, 2013[1]). This risk is particularly pronounced in Georgia, where tests are considered judgemental rather than part of a formative, educational process.

Georgia should avoid any suspicion that the results would be used to punish school staff, as this occurred before and the reaction was negative (in 2012, roughly 200 principals were dismissed based upon their schools' results on the SGE). Instead, and consistent with the aims of assessment in general (see chapter 2), results of the national assessment should be reported in a manner that informs instruction and guides decision-making.

Use assessment data to directly support struggling schools, not for high-stakes accountability

A single indicator, such as a school result on an assessment, is not an accurate indication of the effectiveness of a school or the school's teachers as it does not consider factors outside of the school's control (OECD, 2013[1]). Evaluating schools and teachers by assessment results alone would therefore result in schools with the greatest concentration of students from more advantaged backgrounds continually being considered the most effective. Furthermore, attaching high-stakes accountability measures to the results of assessments can incentivise unethical behaviour from teachers and principals, such as helping students while they are testing and manipulating the pool of students who are to take the test (Nichols and Berliner, 2005[60]). Georgia is already trying to address a large private-tutoring market that is largely inspired by testing pressure. To avoid adding further pressure, it is strongly advised that teachers and principals not be held accountable using a single assessment result.

A more fair and constructive approach is to use assessment results as part of the risk assessment framework that leads to more targeted provision of support (see chapter 4). The results should not have punitive consequences. Because of societal pressure to use test results as a ranking mechanism, there is risk that schools themselves will interpret assessment results in this way, even if MoESCS does not. It is, therefore, important to consider how results are benchmarked and what sorts of information is made available to schools. These issues are discussed next.

Identify different benchmarks against which schools can compare themselves

Census-based testing allows for the generation of school-level data and comparisons between individual schools. This level of direct comparison, however, is not always relevant as student populations vary greatly across schools in Georgia. Therefore, instead of limiting the unit of analysis to individual schools, several different benchmarks should be identified against which schools can compare themselves (Kellaghan, Grenaney and Murray, 2009[61]). For example, it might be more appropriate to compare a school's results only to other schools that have the same language of instruction or are located in the same region. Aggregate averages of schools from these categories can be produced so individual schools can measure themselves against the performance of relevant groups of schools.

These types of comparisons can also help generate pressure to provide more support to certain groups of schools that appear to be systematically struggling. On the other hand, schools who demonstrate significant improvement could be identified and their practices can be shared with other similar schools or networks of weak and strong schools created. In Australia, for example, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is administered annually to students in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9. Using the results from this assessment, schools that demonstrated substantial gains in student learning were identified and their principals were asked to share best practices from their schools (ACARA, n.d.[62]).

Create different reports designed to leverage the formative value of the assessments

In addition to school-level reports, census-based testing could generate reports at several different levels of the education system (OECD, 2013[1]). Box 5.8 describes the different types of reports that are generated from a national assessment in the United States. In Georgia, what information is presented in its national assessment reports, and how the reports are delivered, need to be decided and in accordance with the overall purpose to improve student learning. Different types of reporting that might be considered include:

- Reports for teachers should contain item-level analysis with information about how their students responded to each item and the competencies those items assessed. This information should be presented alongside contextualised comparison groups, such as gender, linguistic minorities and municipalities. To further support the assessment's formative function, the results might also analyse common errors that students made, with suggestions on to improve teaching of that content.
- School-level reports might present the performance of the individual school with benchmarks for comparisons. However, the information should not be released online in order to avoid the risk of the results being used for direct accountability.
- The MoESCS would receive an aggregate report that summarises and analyses the results of the entire country. Results must be disaggregated by demographic characteristics, such as gender, language of the school, region, if the school is in a rural or urban area and student socio-economic status. Reporting according to these factors (among many others) would represent the minimum level of analysis that would be required to inform policy-making.
- Analysis of individual questions, topics or skills would also be important for the Ministry to identify at a national level if students in Georgia tend to struggle more with certain competencies or in certain domains. This information would reveal the need to identify how teaching in certain parts of the curriculum can be improved.
- Georgia can considered whether to provide student reports based upon the determined purposes of the assessments. Assessments (or assessments in certain grades) that are designed to be used for diagnostic reasons would not need to produce reports for students, only teachers and schools. On the other hand, if the assessments serve a summative function (such as certification from a cycle of education), then student-level reports would need to be issued.

  If student reports are to be issued, they should compare a student's performance to national, municipal and other relevant benchmarks. Students and parents might be informed about individual student results as part of the regular parent-teacher meetings. Teachers might be provided national guidance on how to present the

results. For example, teachers might discuss how far the student is in terms of mastering core competencies.

Box 5.8. Student assessment reports for different stakeholders, the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in the United States

In the United States, the MAP assessments are a set of private, computer adaptive tests that are available in reading, mathematics and science for students in kindergarten through grade 12. Entire school districts have participated in testing, which provides the opportunity to produce district-, school-, class- and student-level reports. All reports are offered online.

- District reports are intended for the superintendent and educational specialists working within the district office. They summarise the results of all students in the district and disaggregated by grade. Results are compared to regional and national benchmarks.
- School reports are intended for principals and teachers. They show results from an individual school disaggregated by grade and by class.
- Class reports are intended for teachers. They summarise the results of a class and show the results of individual students from the class. If students have taken the test more than once, trend data for those students are also shown. In addition to overall performance, teachers can also see how long students took to complete the test and how they are performing on specific sub-skills.
- A student report is intended for students and parents. It shows in detail how a student performs in specific areas benchmarked against national percentiles.

Sources: NWEA (2019[63]), The MAP Suite, www.nwea.org/the-map-suite/ (accessed on 28 January 2019); Bergeron (n.d.[64]), MAP Reports and Resources for Teachers, NWEA, http://info.nwea.org/rs/nwea/images/Web-Based-MAP-Teacher-Reports-and-Resources.pdf (accessed on 28 January 2019).

Recommendations

Policy issue	Recommendations	Actions
5.1. Building a culture of research, evaluation and improvement of the education system	5.1.1. Establish a formal research and evaluation unit	Clearly define the role of the research and evaluation unit
		Develop a research agenda for the research and evaluation unit
	5.1.2. Encourage the dissemination and usage of research and evaluation activities	Annually release an analytical report about the education system
		Release ad-hoc reports about thematic issues
		Establish regular meetings between policy-makers during which evidence is shared and discussed
		Engage external entities to become research and evaluation partners
		Consider in the future developing an independent evaluation institute
	5.1.3. Use system evaluation to enhance the value of system planning	Identify the core strategic issues of the Georgian education system, in particular equity of outcomes
		Set balanced goals according to the evidence-based needs of the system
5.2. Making information about the education system more accessible and usable	5.2.1. Introduce analytical and reporting functions for EMIS tools	Create a feature for generating analytical reports
		Build a web portal that allows public access to EMIS data
	5.2.2. Create an easier-to-use monitoring system	Complement the monitoring report with a digital performance dashboard
		Release the performance dashboard with a tutorial that shows how it should be used to monitor the performance of the system
5.3. Developing and implement a national assessment strategy that supports system goals	5.3.1. Define a concept for the national assessments	Establish a steering committee to determine the purpose of the assessments
		Consider making formative feedback to educators the primary function of the assessments
	5.3.2. Determine the design features of the national assessments	Develop diagnostic assessments materials and encourage their use in schools starting in grade 2
		Assess mother tongue and mathematics
		Implement census-based testing
		Strongly consider computer-based testing instead of paper-based testing
		Develop several items types to assess a broad range of student skills
	5.3.3. Develop a reporting scheme that serves formative purposes and avoids punitive consequences	Use assessment data to directly support struggling schools, not for high-stakes accountability
		Identify different benchmarks against which schools can compare themselves
		Create different reports designed to leverage the formative value of the assessments

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