



Policy Goals for Independent Private Schools

Status

1. Encouraging Innovation by Providers

Policies allow independent private schools to make their own decisions on appointing, deploying, and dismissing teachers; schools determine teacher salary levels; schools set class size standards and determine the curricula. The only restriction placed on independent private schools requires them to follow centrally-mandated teacher certification standards to maintain active registration.



2. Holding Schools Accountable

Standardized exams are administered to select grades on an annual basis. However, no current policy stipulates that the results of these exams should be disaggregated. No standardized exams are administered at the primary level. Public and private schools are to be inspected on a “periodic basis.” As captured by current policy, schools are not required to submit improvement plans following an inspection.



3. Empowering All Parents, Students, and Communities

Although Ghana administers standardized exams at the junior and senior high school levels, there are no policies in place to guarantee parents access to the results of these exams. Likewise, parents are not provided information on the results of school inspections. Currently, students are interviewed as part of the school inspection protocol, but parents’ feedback is not included. The government does provide tax relief to parents for children to attend independent private schools.



4. Promoting Diversity of Supply

All types of providers—community, not-for-profit, for-profit and faith-based organizations—can operate private schools. There are neither standardized school fee schedules nor explicit restrictions on tuition; however, fees must be approved by the Ministry. Current policy allows the government to provide tax relief and/or subsidies to duly registered private education institutions. Public and private schools must meet relatively equivalent operating standards.



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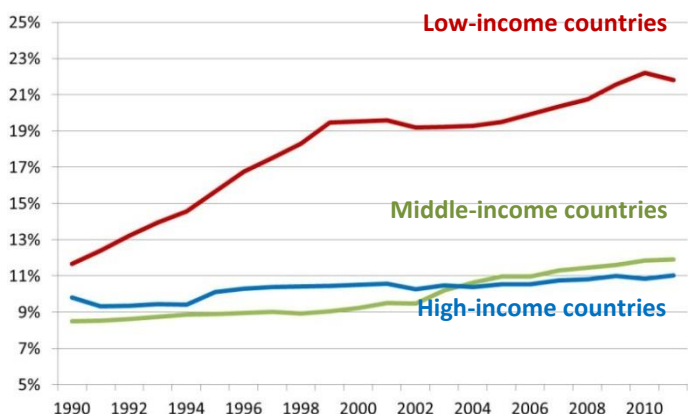
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Introduction

In recent years, private sector engagement in education—which includes a vibrant mix of non-profit, for-profit and faith-based organizations—has grown significantly around the world. **In the last two decades, the percentage of students in low-income countries attending private primary schools doubled, from 11 percent to 22 percent** (figure 1). This growth in private provision is closely connected to the boom in access that has taken place in low-income countries over the same two decades: primary net enrolment increased from 55 percent to 80 percent between 1990 and 2010.

As countries redouble their efforts to achieve learning for all at the primary and secondary levels, the private sector can be a resource for adding capacity to the education system. By partnering with private entities, the state can provide access to more students, particularly poor students who are not always able to access existing education services (Pal and Kingdon 2010; Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio, and Guáqueta 2009; Hossain 2007). Additionally, evidence shows that governments have been successful at improving education quality and student cognitive outcomes in many countries through effective engagement with private education providers (Barrera-Osorio and Raju 2010; French and Kingdon 2010; Barrera-Osorio 2006).

Figure 1. Private enrolment as a percentage of total primary enrolments, by country income level



Source: Baum et al (2014).

This report presents an analysis of how effectively policies in Ghana engage the private sector in basic (primary and secondary) education. Given that data collection for this report took place in 2013, potential policy options may either have diminished or have varying relevance, depending on current circumstances

in Ghana and the education sector. The analysis draws on the Engaging the Private Sector (EPS) Framework, a product of the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). SABER collects and analyzes policy data on education systems around the world, using evidence-based frameworks to highlight the policies and institutions that matter most for promoting learning for all children and youth.

SABER-EPS research in Ghana has found that enrollment rates for primary and secondary education have increased significantly. At both the primary and secondary levels, quality and equity remain challenges. The private sector plays an increasingly significant role in education at both levels. Based on a review of existing policies, SABER-EPS offers the following recommendations for Ghana to enhance private sector engagement in education and meet the challenges of access, quality, and equity:

- 1) Strengthen policies to ensure independent private schools are more accountable for learning outcomes.
- 2) Provide greater incentives to support a diverse number of private school providers while ensuring equitable access.
- 3) Encourage innovation in schools by ensuring greater flexibility in managing schools, services, and staff.

The rest of the report provides an overview of the SABER-EPS tool, followed by a description of the basic education system in Ghana that focuses on the private sector and government policies related to the private provision of education. The report then benchmarks Ghana's policy environment utilizing the SABER-EPS Framework and offers policy options to enhance access and learning for all children in primary and secondary school.

Overview of SABER-Engaging the Private Sector

In many countries, the extent and activity of the private sector in education is largely undocumented and unknown. SABER-EPS is working to help change that. SABER-EPS assesses how well a country's policies are oriented toward ensuring that the services of non-state providers promote learning for all children and youth.

The aim of SABER-EPS is not to advocate private schooling. The intention is to outline the most effective evidence-based policies specific to each country's current approach toward non-state provision of education. SABER-EPS assesses the extent to which policies facilitate quality, access, and equity of private education services. Data generated by SABER-EPS can further the policy dialogue and support governments in engaging private providers to improve education results.

Four policy goals to engage the private sector

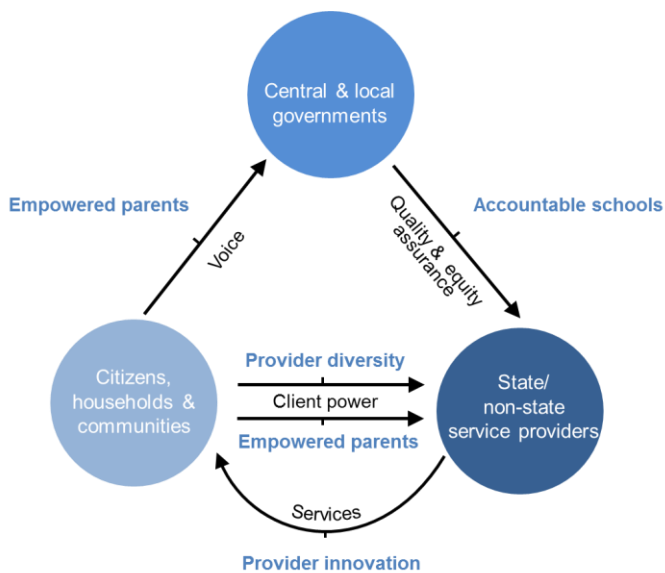
SABER-EPS collects data on four key policy areas that international evidence has found effective for strengthening accountability mechanisms among citizens, policymakers, and providers (box 1). These policy goals were identified through a review of rigorous research and analysis of top-performing and rapidly improving education systems.

The four policy goals enable a government to increase innovation and strengthen accountability among the critical actors in an education system (figure 2). Empowering parents, students, and communities enhances the ability of parents to express their voice and hold policymakers accountable for results. Additionally, when parents are empowered, in most contexts, they can have greater influence over provider behaviors. Increasing school accountability strengthens the quality- and equity-assurance mechanisms between the state and education providers. Encouraging innovation and promoting diversity of supply can allow providers to respond to local needs. Increasing school-level autonomy in critical decisions improves the services provided to students. Allowing a diverse set of providers to enter the market can increase client power and enable citizens to choose from a wider range of models. By developing these policy goals, a government can improve the accountability of all providers in an education system and, subsequently, have a positive impact on educational outcomes.

Box 1. Key Private Sector Engagement Policy Goals

1. **Encouraging innovation by providers.** Local decision making and fiscal decentralization can have positive effects on school and student outcomes. Most high-achieving countries allow schools autonomy in managing resources (including personnel) and educational content. Local school autonomy can improve the ability of disadvantaged populations to determine how local schools operate.
2. **Holding schools accountable.** If schools are given autonomy over decision making, they must be held accountable for learning outcomes. Increases in autonomy should be accompanied by standards and interventions that increase access and improve quality. The state must hold all providers accountable to the same high standard.
3. **Empowering all parents, students, and communities.** When parents and students have access to information on relative school quality, they can have the power to hold schools accountable and the voice to lobby governments for better-quality services. For empowerment to work equitably, options for parents and students should not depend on wealth or student ability.
4. **Promoting diversity of supply.** By facilitating market entry for a diverse set of providers, governments can increase responsibility for results, as providers become directly accountable to citizens as well as to the state.

Figure 2. Relationships of accountability for successful service delivery



Source: Adapted from the World Bank (2003).

SABER-EPS recognizes that the four policy goals outlined in box 1 can assist governments in raising accountability for the education services provided in their countries. The tool allows governments to systematically evaluate their policies and implement practices that are effective across multiple country contexts.

Four types of private provision of education

Across the world, governments can implement numerous strategies to improve educational outcomes by supporting non-state education provision. SABER-EPS benchmarks key policy goals across the four most common models of private service delivery:

1. Independent private schools: schools that are owned and operated by non-government providers and are financed privately, typically through fees.
2. Government-funded private schools: schools that are owned and operated by non-government providers, but receive government funding.
3. Privately managed schools: schools that are owned and financed by the government, but are operated by non-government providers.
4. Voucher schools: schools that students choose to attend with government-provided funding; these schools can be operated by the

government or non-government providers or both, depending on the system.

SABER-EPS analyzes laws and regulations to: (1) identify the types of private engagement that are legally established in each country and (2) assess each education system's progress in achieving the four policy goals. **The aim of the SABER-EPS Framework is to provide policy guidance to help governments establish strong incentives and relationships of accountability among citizens, governments, and private education providers, with the goal of improving education results.**

Benchmarking Education Policies: The SABER-EPS Methodology

The World Bank has developed a set of standardized questionnaires and rubrics for collecting and evaluating data on the four policy goals for each type of private school engagement established in a given country.

The policy goals are benchmarked separately for each type of private engagement. A point of emphasis here is that **these tools only assess official and established policies governing private education provision. Additional tools determine on-the-ground implementation of these policies.** The SABER-EPS information is compiled in a comparative database that interested stakeholders can access for detailed reports, background papers, methodology, and other resources; the database details how different education systems engage with the private sector.

For each indicator associated with the respective four policy goals, the country receives a score between 1 and 4 (figure 3), representing four levels of private sector engagement: 1 (latent), 2 (emerging), 3 (established), or 4 (advanced).

Figure 3. SABER Rubric Benchmarking Levels



Source: Baum et al. (2014).

The overall score for each policy goal is computed by aggregating the scores for each of its constituent indicators. For example, a hypothetical country receives the following indicator scores for one of its policy goals:

- Indicator A = 2 points
- Indicator B = 3 points
- Indicator C = 4 points
- Indicator D = 4 points

The hypothetical country's overall score for this policy goal would be: $(2+3+4+4)/4 = 3.25$. The overall score is converted into a final development level for the policy goal, based on the following scale:

- Latent: 1.00 – 1.50
- Emerging: 1.51 – 2.50
- Established: 2.51 – 3.50
- Advanced: 3.51 – 4.00

The ratings generated by the rubrics are not meant to be additive across policy goals. That is, they are not added together to create an overall rating for engaging the private sector.

Use of the SABER-EPS tool

SABER-EPS is not intended to be used as a prescriptive policy tool, but rather, as a tool to generate an informed assessment of a country's policies vis-à-vis current knowledge about effective approaches. The results of this benchmarking exercise serve as a good starting point to discuss potential policy options that could be considered, based on the nuances of the local context and national education system. Education systems are likely to be at different levels of development across indicators and policy goals. While intuition suggests it is probably better to be as developed in as many areas as possible, **the evidence does not clearly show the need to be functioning at the advanced level for all policy goals.** National education priorities lay at the center of recommended policy options; countries may prioritize higher levels of development in areas that contribute most to their immediate goals.

For more information on the global evidence underlying EPS and its policy goals, see the SABER framework paper, "What Matters Most for Engaging the Private Sector in Education" (Baum et al. 2014).

Education in Ghana

Ghana is a lower-middle-income country in Sub-Saharan Africa. GDP per capita is US\$ 1,570 (current US\$). The country's average annual economic growth from 2001 to 2011 was 4 percent, although growth in 2011 reached over 14 percent (World Development Indicators). To sustain this impressive growth and further the goal of poverty reduction, Ghana recognizes the need to improve access to and the quality of basic education.

Education in Ghana is regulated by the Education Act of 2008 (Act 778), which requires all children to complete a free and compulsory cycle of basic education: two years of kindergarten, six years of primary, and three years of junior secondary schooling. In 2011 there were more than 3.8 million children enrolled in primary schools and more than 2.1 million in secondary schools in Ghana (Edstats).

The country raised its primary net enrollment rate from 61 percent in 1999 to 84 percent in 2011. Between 1990 and 2010, average years of schooling for those over the age of 15 increased by nearly one-and-a-half years: from 5.9 to 7.3 mean years of schooling (Barro and Lee 2012). In the same time period, the secondary net enrollment rate increased from 34 to 46 percent.

Ghana has made substantial progress in expanding access to basic education services due, in part, to the country's financial commitments to education. In 2011, the country spent 8.2 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), or 24 percent of total government expenditures, on education (Edstats). This is substantially higher than the OECD average of 6.2 percent (OECD 2012).

However, despite considerable investment and progress, Ghana still faces a long path towards equitable learning for all children and youth. Although there have been major gains in improving access to education in the country, over 300,000 school-age children are not in school (Darvas and Balwanz 2014). Children from poor households, living in the northern regions, or who are orphaned or living with a relative or guardian are most likely to be out of school (UNICEF 2010).

The primary net attendance rate for pupils from the wealthiest households is 85 percent, compared to 61 percent for students from the poorest households. The difference at the secondary level is even greater, with

students from the wealthiest households nearly three times as likely to attend senior high school, compared to their peers in the lowest wealth quintile—63 percent versus 22 percent (GSS 2011). While significant gains have been made, late initial attendance in primary school, especially in rural areas, continues to be a challenge. Official primary-school-entrance (P1) age in Ghana is six years old. However, almost 60 percent of children that age in rural areas and 45 percent in urban areas are not in school (UNICEF 2010). Children who enroll late are more likely to be from poor families, demonstrate lower learning achievement, and have a higher primary dropout rate (World Bank 2010). Improving “age in grade” has a significant effect on primary completion and learning (Akyeampong et al. 2007; Lewin 2011; Darvas and Balwanz 2014).

Every year an estimated 350,000 to 400,000 pupils (65 percent of sixth-grade students) leave primary school without reaching proficiency in English or mathematics. The majority of these pupils are from Ghana's northern regions and deprived districts, poor and rural households, or ethnic and linguistic minorities (Darvas and Balwanz 2014).

There is also an inequitable distribution of resources in the country in terms of per pupil spending and teacher allocation across regions. In the Western, Upper East, Northern, and Brong Ahafo Regions, around 40 to 50 percent of the teaching force is comprised of trained teachers, compared to 70 to 90 percent in the Ashanti, Volta, Eastern, and Greater Accra Regions (Ghana MOE 2012). In terms of per child expenditure (PCE), the bottom one-third of districts receive 72 percent of the average PCE across Ghana at the primary level and 68 percent at the junior secondary level (World Bank 2010).

In 2005, the government of Ghana began providing capitation grants to cover the school fees of all students in public primary and junior high schools. This program dramatically increased enrollments in public schools, but placed a disproportionate strain on the education system's infrastructure. The result was an unequal distribution of educational access and decreased school quality (Dawuda 2012; Ghana MOESS 2006). Furthermore, students in public schools are still required to pay fees for food, uniforms, textbooks, and examinations (Akaguri and Akyeampong 2010).

The government has implemented several programs to promote equity in the system, including both demand-

and supply-side interventions. Demand-side interventions include the Ghana School Feeding Program and the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty Program. The programs distribute either money or food to support the school attendance of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Supply-side interventions include complementary basic education, the Capitation Grant Scheme and District Grant (which targets children in rural and marginalized areas to improve their access to quality basic education), and the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education and the Trained Teacher-Community Assistant Programs (which aim to expand the number of qualified professionals in the system).

The National Literacy Accelerated Program (NALAP) is a transitional bilingual literacy program in 11 Ghanaian languages for implementation in grades KG–P3. The NALAP curriculum and materials focus on improving literacy through mother-tongue instruction in kindergarten through third grade, with an early transition to English.

Many of these programs have been hampered by inconsistent resource targeting to the poorest students. For example, in the case of the school feeding program, only 21 percent of the outlays benefit the poor (Wodon 2011). Supply-side programs have also suffered from program management issues (Darvas and Balwanz 2014).

A number of research studies find that poor accountability in the public sector is a substantial barrier to student learning. This includes problems such as teacher tardiness, absenteeism, and limited instructional time (Fobih, Akyeampong, and Koomson 1999; CARE International 2003; World Bank 2004). As part of a 1993 decentralization, school management committees (SMCs) were introduced. However, these bodies focus on overseeing the use of capitation grants, not on educational issues such as teacher absenteeism and pedagogy. Recent efforts to implement school report cards, school performance improvement plans, and school performance assessment meetings show promise, but evaluation of their effectiveness has not yet

been completed (World Bank 2010). The complexity of the financial sources and delivery systems of the education system further complicate efforts to improve accountability (Darvas and Balwanz 2014¹).

¹ This source (World Bank's *Basic Education beyond the Millennium Development Goals in Ghana: How Equity in Service Delivery Affects*

Educational and Learning Outcomes) provides a comprehensive discussion of Ghana's education system.

Private Education in Ghana

The private sector is playing an increasingly significant role in basic education service delivery in Ghana. Private enrollments at the primary level increased from 7 percent in 1991 to 19 percent in 2011. At the secondary level, private enrollments increased from 7 percent to 15 percent over the same period (Edstats). In a 2005 study of private schools in Ga, one of Ghana's roughly 140 districts at the time, Tooley and Dixon (2005) found that 65 percent of students were enrolled in private schools.

In 2011 there were 5,292 private and 14,431 public known primary schools in Ghana (Ghana MOE 2011b). Between the 2010 and 2011 school years, the number of private primary schools in Ghana increased by 11.6 percent, while the number of public primary schools increased by 4.3 percent. Trends are similar for junior high schools. Between 2010 and 2011, there was 16 percent growth in private schools versus 6 percent growth in public schools at the junior high school level.

The distribution of students enrolled in private schools varies across Ghana. Private enrollment as a share of total primary enrollment stood at 30 percent and 27 percent in the Greater Accra and Ashanti Regions, respectively, compared to less than 7 percent in the Northern Region. The Education Sector Performance Report of 2012 notes that the private sector share of enrollment in kindergarten, primary, and junior high schools in deprived districts is half the national average (Ghana MOE 2012). However, education management information system data may not capture all private institutions in operation, particularly if they are new and yet to be certified.

Evidence suggests that private schools in the country may not be providing services only to the wealthiest students. Data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey-Round Five in 2005–2006 shows that 14 percent of poor and 8 percent of extremely poor students were enrolled in private schools (Akyeampong and Rolleston 2013). Additionally, 13 percent of all school enrollment in rural areas is in private schools. This is not to suggest, however, that private schooling is an affordable option for all students. On the contrary, findings from Akaguri (2010) suggest that the poorest families in Ghana may spend up to 30 percent of their household income on private school costs, compared to 16 percent on public school costs. In areas of Ghana with rapidly growing populations, parents may also choose a private school

out of necessity if available places at public institutions have not kept pace with demand.

A recent survey of parents and youth in Ghana found that they differ in their consideration of the long-term educational impacts when choosing schools. Parents were concerned with the instrumental and intrinsic benefits of education, while youth emphasized the experience of schooling and the need to have a stronger process-based understanding among the parental generation (Fennell, Agbley, and Irfan 2010).

Public primary schools in Ghana have much higher proportions of trained teachers (i.e., teachers who have been trained and certified in teacher-training colleges) than private primary schools: 63 percent compared to 11 percent in 2011. However, private primary schools have, on average, smaller class sizes. In 2011, pupil-teacher ratios were 34:1 in public and 26:1 in private primary schools. At the junior high school level, 78.4 percent of public and 20.3 percent of private school teachers were trained. And in 2011, pupil-teacher ratios were 17:1 in public and 13:1 in private junior high schools (Ghana MOE 2011b).

Research on the comparative quality differences between the public and private education sectors in Ghana is sparse. On the 2011 National Education Assessment, private schools outperformed public schools and National Literacy Accelerated Program schools (Ghana MOE 2012). One study comparing achievement differences between public and low-fee private schools in rural Mfantseman District found no systematic differences in student performance, after controlling for student background characteristics (Akaguri 2011). A Tooley and Dixon (2005) study reported higher raw test scores for students in private schools in the Ga District. However, these results failed to account for any differences in student characteristics between sectors. As such, they do not present reliable estimates of the true achievement difference between public and private schools. Despite the lack of substantial hard evidence of a private sector achievement advantage, parents in Ghana cite school quality as the primary motivation for sending their children to private schools (Heyneman, Stern, and Smith 2011). The government's "Towards a Ghana Education Coordination Strategy Retreat" in 2010 also recommended greater monitoring of private sector learning outcomes, particularly in deprived districts (Government of Ghana

and USAID 2010). More research is needed to investigate the quality effects of private schooling in Ghana. Such research could also investigate the operating and financial models of private providers to determine both their effectiveness and efficiency.

Ghana's private education policies

Ghana's Education Act of 2008 establishes the role of private providers in the education system and states that tax relief or subsidies may be provided to "duly registered private education institutions." However, no policy is outlined that defines under what circumstance private schools are to receive these subsidies. The Education Act also specifies that the education minister is responsible for the regulation of schools that are owned by a community and for "private participation in education," although the term "private participation" is not specifically defined.

Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010–2020 outlines the importance of the private sector in supporting the government provision, and more particularly, the financing of education services:

"The ESP identifies several areas where increased efficiency, cost sharing, and decentralization provide cost-savings to the Government of Ghana.... Increased need to secure finance[ing] via fundraising at decentralized levels, cost sharing at government-funded public schools (especially at the post-basic levels), and increased growth of private schools will likely be features of a system, realizing significant enrollment expansion in all sub-sectors over the next decade." (Ghana MOE 2010).

As part of its efforts to tap into the financial resources of the private sector, the ESP specifies that support will be provided "to primary and JH [junior high] schools by providing non-salary inputs (e.g. textbooks) and in-service training" (Ghana MOEYS 2004).

The Ghanaian government also subsidizes fees for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in private as well as public schools. This exam is used to determine which students are eligible to proceed from junior to senior high school. In 2012, the combined cost of these public and private subsidies was US\$ 4.2 million (Ghana MOF 2013).

Private education policies in Ghana establish a legal basis for independent private schools, i.e., those that are

owned, operated, and financed completely by non-government providers. The policy context is less clear, however, regarding the policy intent and institutional arrangements for government financing of private schools.

While policies establish the ability of the government to provide tax subsidies, textbooks, and in-service training to private schools, no stipulations determine which schools should or should not receive support. In addition, no legal standards require schools that receive financial and/or material support from the government to act any differently than unfunded schools. In short, policies do not officially recognize any government-funded private schools. Given this lack of policy distinction between funded and unfunded private schools, this report classifies all private education providers in Ghana as independent private schools.

Benchmarking Ghana's Independent Private School Policies

This section of the report presents the results of SABER-Engaging the Private Sector analysis of laws, policies, and regulations governing independent private schools.² The report discusses the benchmarking results against the established recommended practices. For more information on the global evidence underlying these policy goals, see the SABER framework paper, "What Matters Most for Engaging the Private Sector in Education" (Baum et al. 2014).

The main policies, laws, and official documentation used to benchmark Ghana's private education sector include:

- Education Act 778 of 2008
- Ghana Education Service Act of 1995
- Education Strategic Plan 2010–2020
- Quality Indicators for Evaluating School Performance at the Pre-Tertiary Education Level in Ghana (National Inspectorate Board, Ministry of Education)
- Guidelines for School Inspection and Code of Conduct for School Inspectors (National Inspectorate Board, Ministry of Education)

Goal 1: Encouraging innovation by providers

The highly particular and contextualized nature of education delivery necessitates decision making at the school level. To be aware of and adapt to changing student needs, school leaders require autonomy over the most critical managerial decisions.

The methodologically rigorous studies assessing the impacts of local school autonomy on student learning outcomes generally find a positive relationship (Hanushek and Woessmann 2010; Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos 2011). A few studies find evidence that local autonomy for school leaders is associated with increased student achievement, as well as reduced student repetition and failure rates (King and Özler 2005; Jimenez

and Sawada 2003; Gertler, Patrinos, and Rubio-Codina 2012).

Box 2. International Best Practice – Encouraging Innovation by Providers

The following decisions/processes are made at the school level:

- Establishment of teacher qualification standards.
- Appointment and deployment of teachers
- Teacher salary levels
- Teacher dismissals
- The way in which the curriculum is delivered
- Class-size decisions
- Management of the operating budgets

Development level:



In Ghana, education policies allow independent private schools a high degree of school-level autonomy. Based on current policies, laws, and other official documentation, an overall score of **established** is achieved, reflecting that current policies meet the standards of good practice.

Policies allow independent private schools to make their own decisions on appointing, deploying, and dismissing teachers; determining teacher salary levels; setting class size standards; and delivering the curriculum.

The most critical regulation is Education Act 778, which accommodates independent private schools. Its sole restriction is that independent private schools are required to follow centrally mandated teacher certification standards in order to maintain an active registration. According to this regulation, at least one-third of the teaching staff of a private school must be professionally certified, that is, they must have an official teacher training diploma. It is worth noting that although this regulation does restrict the autonomy of private schools, it is less rigid than the requirement mandating that *all* teachers in public schools be professionally certified.

² This report presents an analysis of how effectively policies in Ghana engage the private sector in basic (primary and secondary) education. Given that data collection for this report took place in 2013, potential policy options may either have diminished or have varying relevance, depending on current

circumstances in Ghana and its education sector. This report offers a snapshot in time that the team believes still has relevance today and can inform policy dialogue.

To encourage innovation by providers, the **suggested policy option** for Ghana's private schools is:

- Encourage innovation in schools by ensuring greater flexibility in managing services and staff.

Ghana's policies currently meet the standards of international good practice for encouraging provider innovation. The country's independent private providers have a high level of autonomy in critical decision-making processes. A number of studies find evidence that local autonomy for school leaders is associated with increased student achievement, as well as reduced student repetition and failure rates (King and Özler 2005; Jimenez and Sawada 2003; Gertler, Patrinos, and Rubio-Codina 2012). This local autonomy needs to extend to staffing and resourcing decisions. International evidence suggests that teacher credentials—including years of experience, certification, and education—have no consistently significant effects on student achievement (Goldhaber and Brewer 2000; Goldhaber and Anthony 2007; Hanushek 1997; Hedges, Lane, and Greenwald 1994; Dobbie, Fryer, and Fryer 2011). By easing the current restriction on teacher qualification standards, the country could further enhance the ability of providers to determine their own teacher standards to best meet the needs of their individual school circumstances. A school leader's role in a school would then to act as an instructional leader, providing direction and support to improve instructional practice at the school level. In addition, capable school leaders can help attract and retain competent teachers (Boyd et al. 2009; Ingersoll 2001a, 2001b).

Table 1. Goal 1: Encouraging Innovation by Providers

Item	Score	Justification
Who has legal authority to set teacher standards?	Latent ●○○○	Central government has legal authority to set minimum standards for teachers
Who has legal authority to appoint and deploy teachers?	Advanced ●●●●	The school has the legal authority to appoint teachers without government review
Who has legal authority to determine teacher salary levels?	Advanced ●●●●	The school has the legal authority to determine teacher salary levels without government review
Who has legal authority to dismiss teachers?	Advanced ●●●●	The school has the legal authority to dismiss teachers without government review
Who has legal authority to determine how the curriculum is delivered?	Advanced ●●●●	The school has the legal authority to determine how the curriculum is delivered without government review
Who has legal authority to determine maximum class size?	Advanced ●●●●	The school has the legal authority to determine class sizes without government review

Goal 2: Holding schools accountable

On average, students perform better in schools with higher levels of accountability to the state (Abdulkadiroğlu et al. 2011; Carnoy and Loeb 2002; Woessmann et al. 2007; Hanushek and Raymond 2005). For non-state providers, when government funding is tied to accountability standards, schools are incentivized to perform more efficiently (Barrera-Osorio and Raju 2010; Patrinos 2002). A strong accountability system requires that the government, parents, and educational professionals work together to raise outcomes. The government must play a role in ensuring that superior education quality is delivered by schools. SABER-EPS assesses multiple policy indicators to determine non-state provider accountability. A list of the key indicators is provided in box 3.

Box 3. International Best Practice – Holding Schools Accountable

- The central government sets standards regarding what students need to learn, including deadlines for meeting these standards.
- Students are required to take standardized examinations; exam results are disaggregated by school, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.
- Schools are required to report on the use of public funds as a condition of continued funding.
- The central government or an external agency performs school inspections as determined by school need.
- Schools produce school improvement plans.
- School performance is tied to sanctions and/or rewards.

Development level:



Ghana's policies for holding independent private schools accountable demonstrate some instances of good practice, receiving a score of **emerging**. The score is a result of the benchmarking of policies, laws and other official documentation.

Ghana's policies pertaining to standardized exams and school inspections demonstrate good practice. Standardized exams are administered to select grades on an annual basis. The National Education Assessment is carried out by the National Education Assessment Unit within the Ghana Education Service; the exam measures student competency in math and English in primary classes 3 (class 4 in 2016) and 6. The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) determine student eligibility to advance to upper secondary and tertiary education levels. All students in the final grades of junior and senior high school sit for these exams annually, in both public and private institutions. As such, these exams have the potential to act as strong accountability mechanisms for schools. However, no current policy stipulates that the results of these exams be disaggregated by important characteristics, such as school, socioeconomic background, gender, and other types of student disadvantage.

As captured in the Education Act 778 of 2008, public and private schools are to be inspected on a "periodic basis" by the National Inspectorate Board, an independent inspection agency within the ministry of education. Inspections should outline the strengths and weaknesses

of a school, thus providing the basis for critical school-specific interventions required to improve quality. The current policy details that schools are not required to submit improvement plans following an inspection.

In terms of school accountability, Ghana's education policies presently show little engagement in setting standards for student learning or applying sanctions for school underperformance, regardless of ownership type.

Informed by the results of the benchmarking procedure, the following **suggested policy options** could help Ghana increase the accountability of independent private schools:

- Establish and enforce standards on what students need to learn and by when.
- Continue to strengthen the National Inspectorate Board to ensure schools are reviewed for school leadership, teaching and learning, and student outcomes.
- As part of the inspection process, require schools to submit improvement plans outlining their strategy for addressing recognized weaknesses.
- Establish standards for disaggregating standardized exam results by important characteristics, such as school, socioeconomic background, gender, and other types of student disadvantage.
- Establish appropriate sanctions on independent private schools for underperformance on standardized exams and/or school inspections.

Table 2. Goal 2: Holding Schools Accountable

Item	Score	Justification
Does the government set standards on what students need to learn and by when?	Latent ●○○○	The government does not set standards on what students need to learn and by when
Are students required to take standardized exams, with results disaggregated?	Established ●●●○	Standardized exams are administered annually, but policy does not require disaggregation of results
Are school inspections performed as determined by school need?	Established ●●●○	The government requires schools to undergo inspections, but according to a standard term instead of need
Does the inspection report outline the strengths and weaknesses of a school?	Established ●●●○	Inspection reports include strengths and weaknesses of a school, as well as specific priorities for improvement, but policy does not require schools to submit an improvement plan
Are sanctions administered based on either school inspection results or performance on standardized exams?	Latent ●○○○	There are no sanctions in place for underperformance

Goal 3: Empowering all parents, students, and communities

Empowering parents, students, and communities is one of the foundations for creating quality learning opportunities for all students. Poor and marginalized children, together with youth, disproportionately lack access to quality education services. To overcome this obstacle, governments need to increase providers' accountability to all clients, particularly underserved groups. Educational access and the performance of schools and students can be substantially impacted by openly disseminating comparable school performance information (Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja 2009; Pandey,

Goyal, and Sundararaman 2009; Björkman 2007; Reinikka and Svensson 2005); increasing parental influence in the school (Skoufias and Shapiro 2006; King and Özler 2005; Jimenez and Sawada 1999; Gertler, Patrinos, and Rubio-Codina 2012; Di Gropello and Marshall 2005); and implementing demand-side interventions, such as scholarships, vouchers, or cash transfers, to help the most vulnerable students (Orazem and King 2007; Filmer and Schady 2008; Lewis and Lockheed 2007; Patrinos 2002; Barrera-Osorio 2006). Effective policy practices for non-state providers include some of the indicators listed in box 4.

Box 4. International Best Practice—Empowering All Parents, Students, and Communities

- Information on standardized tests and school inspections is made available by multiple sources.
- Parents and students are included in the inspection and improvement-planning processes.
- Admission processes for entry into publicly funded schools are not based on student background; a lottery is used in cases of oversubscription.
- School choice is not hindered by mandatory financial contributions.
- Tax subsidies, scholarships, or cash transfers are available to families whose children attend independent private schools.

Development level:



In Ghana, the policies in place to empower parents, students, and communities are **emerging**—they exemplify some good practice, but additional policy strategies could increase the client power of parents and allow them to hold providers accountable for results.

Although the country administers standardized exams at the junior and senior high school levels, no policies are in place that guarantee parents access to the results of these exams. Likewise, parents are not provided information on the results of school inspections. Currently, students are interviewed as part of the school inspection protocol, but the voices of parents remain unheard in this quality assurance instrument. Lastly, the government does provide tax relief for parents whose children attend independent private schools, but does not provide targeted cash transfers.

Table 3. Goal 3: Empowering all Parents, Students, and Communities

Item	Score	Justification
Are standardized exam results and inspection reports provided regularly to parents?	Latent ●○○○	No policies guarantee parents access to standardized exam results or inspection reports
Are parents and students interviewed as part of the inspection process?	Established ●●●○	Students (but not parents) are interviewed as part of the inspection process
Does the government provide tax subsidies or cash transfers to families whose children attend independent private schools?	Established ●●●○	The government does provide tax relief, but not targeted cash transfers

Informed by the results of the benchmarking exercise, the following **suggested policy options** could help empower parents and students:

- Guarantee parents access to comparable information on the quality of schooling, such as standardized exam results and school inspection reports. Exam results should be disaggregated by school, socioeconomic background, gender, and other types of student disadvantage. This could be done through school report cards.
- Interview parents as part of the school inspection process.
- Offer targeted cash transfers to low-income families for their children to attend private schools.

Goal 4: Promoting diversity of supply

By opening education to a more diverse set of providers, governments can increase client power and make providers directly accountable to students and parents for results. Although the public sector will always remain an important (and, in most cases, the predominant) provider of education services, educational choice can be used as part of a package of reforms to improve education access and quality in both the public and private sectors (Hoxby 2003; Levin and Belfield 2003; De la Croix and Doepke 2009; Carnoy and McEwan 2003; Himmler 2007; Angrist et al. 2002; World Bank 2003). In

order to facilitate quality improvements through increased school competition and choice, governments can (i) allow multiple types of providers to operate; (ii) promote clear, open, affordable, and unrestrictive certification standards; and (iii) make government funding (and other incentives) available to non-state schools. This policy goal aims to increase the ability of diverse providers to provide education services. In order to do so, a number of policy indicators are suggested, as outlined in box 5.

Box 5. International Best Practice—Promoting Diversity of Supply

- The central government allows different types of providers to operate schools.
- Certification standards do not prohibit market entry.
- Information on market-entry requirements is available from multiple sources.
- Regulatory fees do not prohibit market entry.
- Publicly funded non state schools and public schools receive equivalent student funding; funding is increased to meet specific student needs.
- The central government provides incentives for market entry, such as access to start-up funding, public land, and public buildings.
- Schools are able to plan budgets six months in advance of the academic year.
- Privately managed schools are not restricted by student numbers, school numbers, or location.
- The central government does not restrict tuition levels at private independent schools.

Development level:



In Ghana, the policies in place to promote diversity of supply are **established**, representing systematic good practice. Overall, government policy supports the market entry and relatively unburdened operation of multiple providers.

All types of providers—community, not-for-profit, for-profit and faith-based organizations—are allowed to operate private schools in the country. There are no standardized school fee schedules and no explicit restrictions on tuition; however, fees must be approved by the education minister. Education Act 778 allows the government to provide tax relief and subsidies to duly registered private education institutions. Public and private schools experience relatively equivalent

operating standards. Official policy specifies a few minimal operating requirements, such as legal incorporation, minimum curricular standards, safe facility requirements, and submission of an annual report to the Minister. These operational guidelines are not made publicly available, but can be obtained upon individual request or through private school associations. Private schools are subject to less stringent teacher certification standards: only one-third of teachers are required to be professionally qualified in these schools (as opposed to all teachers in public schools). However, each private school must provide an annual report on the school's program and activities to the Minister, which is not required of public schools.

Table 4. Goal 4: Promoting Diversity of Supply

Item	Score	Justification
Does the government allow multiple types of providers to operate a school?	Advanced ●●●●	The government allows community, not-for-profit, faith-based, and for-profit providers to operate schools
Are private schools able to set their own tuition fees?	Established ●●●○	Schools set their own tuition fees, but these are subject to government review
Are operating standards less stringent for private than for public schools?	Established ●●●○	Private and public schools are subject to equivalent operating standards
Are guidelines that outline requirements for school registration clearly publicized by multiple sources?	Established ●●●○	Guidelines for establishing a school are clear and made available upon request from a single source
Are schools able to operate without paying fees?	Advanced ●●●●	Schools are able to operate without paying fees

Informed by the results of the benchmarking exercise, the following **suggested policy options** could help promote a more diverse supply of independent private schools in Ghana:

- Ensure that school registration guidelines are readily available, preferably online, and also available from multiple sources.
- Allow schools to set their own tuition fees without review or approval by the Ministry.

From Analysis to Action: Policy Options for Ghana

Ghana has made great progress towards providing equitable access to education. However, there are still large disparities in service delivery that lead to inequitable learning outcomes. The private sector is playing a growing role in providing education services in Ghana, enrolling approximately 15 percent of primary students nationally, with much higher enrollment rates—sometimes as high as 65 percent—in specific localities. A number of policy options are suggested here:

1. Strengthen policies to ensure independent private schools are more accountable for learning outcomes.
2. Provide greater incentives to support a diverse number of private school providers while ensuring equitable access.
3. Encourage innovation in schools by ensuring greater flexibility in managing schools, services, and staff.

These policy options are supported by international evidence and/or examples of countries that have used such interventions to strengthen their systems and improve service delivery. The country examples include international best practices, systems that have continued to improve from a variety of starting points, and countries that have adopted innovative approaches.

Ghana recognizes the need to encourage public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a means of leveraging both public and private resources and expertise for improving national infrastructure and public services (Ghana MFEP 2011). The Ministry of Education is currently exploring PPP options, including different types of funding and contractual arrangements, to support the government's commitment to expand access to secondary education. Partnering with the private sector is one option to support this expansion. Models could include government-funded private schools, privately managed schools (charters), or school vouchers. Programs could be targeted to marginalized groups (e.g., low-income students, girls, rural areas, etc.), with providers held accountable for learning outcomes. Increasing provider diversity will also empower parents and students to choose the school that best meets their needs. The government would still be required to provide a strong stewardship role, but need not be the sole provider.

A number of policy options can ensure that the services provided by independent private schools contribute to responding to the needs of all children and youth in Ghana.

Policy Option 1: Strengthen policies to ensure private independent schools are more accountable for student learning outcomes

Currently, the policy framework in Ghana does not adequately hold independent private schools accountable for delivering specific results. Granting schools autonomy in local decision making is insufficient to adequately deliver learning for all. Evidence suggests that the effect of autonomy on student achievement is closely tied to the level of accountability in a school system (Abdulkadiroğlu et al. 2009; Woessmann et al. 2007; OECD 2009). That is, for school autonomy to have the strongest positive effect on student performance, it must be accompanied by strong mechanisms of accountability. Local decision making works best in contexts where schools are held accountable for their results (Hanushek, Link and Woessmann 2013). In Ghana, improvements in school accountability could be achieved through the following policy approaches:

A. Set clear student standards

The government does not explicitly outline student standards for independent private schools, although as noted earlier, schools do take part in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) at the secondary level. The government could set standards for what students at private independent schools should know at each stage of the learning process, in line with expectations of public schools. These standards could be established with respect to individual grades or the end of each school level: kindergarten, primary, junior high and senior high school.

Country examples. In Namibia, following an evaluation of the adequacy of the education and training system in supporting national development goals, new learning standards were put in place to define the core knowledge and skills to be acquired at the end of each school phase. The knowledge and skills were explicitly chosen to support Namibia's goal of being a knowledge based economy by 2030 (Namibia MOE 2007).

In British Columbia, Canada, the top-performing Canadian province on international assessments, the Education Standards Order (ESO) requires all children educated by independent private providers to reach expected intellectual, human, social, and career development goals. The ESO also sets standards for education delivery for students with special educational needs. Schools are expected to implement Individual Student Education Plans to support them (British Columbia 2013).

B. Provide comparative information on school quality at all levels of the education system that parents can access and use

Based on current policies, the government of Ghana could increase the information provided to parents on school quality. Central governments should not be the only ones monitoring school performance. Access to comparative information could enable parents and students to influence school quality through direct voice to providers. This information could include school report cards, classroom assessment results, examination results, and/or inspection reports. In Ghana, public schools are required to complete school report cards (Darvas and Balwanz 2014). It is important that the parameters and indicators used to measure progress in educational access also measure progress in achieving educational equity (Rolleston et al. 2010). To ensure that school choice decisions are accurate reflections of the quality of a school's educational provision, private providers should make information available to parents, particularly those who have minimal schooling themselves. This will support parents' ability to use selection criteria (Fennell, Agbley, and Irfan 2010).

Country examples. In Punjab, Pakistan, providing school report cards to parents, communities, and teachers improved student performance by 0.15 standard deviations and reduced fees in high-quality private schools by over 20 percent. The largest learning gains (0.34 standard deviations) were for initially low-performing (below median baseline test scores) private schools (Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja 2009).

Another early adopter of school report cards was Parana state in Brazil. Between 1999 and 2002 SRCs were introduced to inform school communities and stimulate greater involvement in the school improvement process. The SRCs were disseminated to a wider range of

stakeholders including all schools, PTAs, municipal education authorities and all 70,000 state education employees including 46,000 teachers. Overall results were reported in the state education secretariat's monthly newsletter, used in teacher and PTA workshops, disseminated via press releases and press conferences (EQUIP2 2013).

In the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, a USAID-funded program – Civic Engagement for Education Reform in Central America (CERCA) — implemented a school report card that focused on indicators in four areas:

1. **Context:** basic profile information (e.g., number of students in each grade, etc.) and access to services at the school (e.g., sanitation, electricity, etc.)
2. **Inputs:** class size, access to resources (i.e., notebooks, pens, etc.), and access to social services (e.g., school meals, health programs, etc.)
3. **Processes:** student and teacher attendance, school plan implementation, and parent participation
4. **Results:** coverage and efficiency (the latter is tracked through repetition and retention rates)

The results of the school report card are used by communities to develop and monitor implementation of school action plans (CERCA 2006).

C. Continue to strengthen the National Inspectorate Board

Ghana established the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) in 2008. As noted earlier, on average, students perform better in schools with higher levels of accountability to the state (Abdulkadiroğlu et al. 2011; Carnoy and Loeb 2002; Woessmann et al. 2007; Hanushek and Raymond 2005). Previous recommendations of the World Bank fully backed the NIB, which requires full funding and autonomy in setting and overseeing standards for educational attainment and performance, as well as in conducting oversight of district inspection and supervision activities (Darvas and Balwanz 2014). The government should ensure that the NIB is an

independent body empowered to carry out its quality assurance duties.

Country example. In Thailand, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was established in 1999. ONESQA is an independent agency, ensuring its neutrality and integrity. External quality assessments measure to what degree the quality of education meets desired standards and efficiency required by learners, society, and the state.³ ONESQA itself is monitored on its performance effectiveness, quality of service, and the efficiency of its financial and budgetary administration (Thailand ONESQA 2010).

D. Require schools to implement a school improvement plan and review progress against the plan

Unlike public schools, private independent schools in Ghana are not required to submit school improvement plans. School improvement plans, if implemented effectively, are a key tool for developing capacity and addressing school needs. Changes at the school level, however, will only occur when relationships within the school are strengthened. School leaders must ensure that improvement plans are meaningful to all stakeholders and that purposeful actions are taken throughout the school (Fullan 2007). Expanding the use of school improvement plans to independent private schools would support these schools in achieving their desired goal of providing high-quality education to all students. The school inspection process and performance on standardized tests can then be used to confirm plan implementation and school progress.

Country examples. In Brazil, the Ministry's Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola (PDE) project required schools to identify their most serious problems and develop their own school improvement plans. The PDE also required schools to focus their plans on two or three effectiveness factors (EF), one of which must be effective teaching and learning. The other EFs are chosen from a list of general areas detailed in the PDE manual. Students in PDE schools saw greater increases in grade passing

³ See ONESQA website, Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, <http://www.onesqa.or.th/en/home/index.php>. (accessed September 2013).

rates than students in non-PDE schools (Carnoy et al. 2008).

E. Interview parents as part of the inspection process

As previously noted, the school inspection process in Ghana includes interviews with students, but not parents. When students *and* parents are empowered as key actors in the school inspection and school improvement planning processes, they can identify areas of need and set priorities for improvement. The Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty of the University of Cambridge also recommends that parents be more informed on school operations and processes (Fennell, Agleby, and Irfan 2010). The inspection process should thus be revised to include parent interviews.

Country examples. In Denmark, parents are engaged in the quality assurance of schools in a number of innovative ways. Parents draw up annual evaluation plans. In some schools, parents are invited to observe lessons and can even elect an external inspector to review the school (Denmark Inspectorate of Education 2013).

In England, the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) has launched an online portal, Parent View, which asks parents for their opinion on twelve aspects of their child's school, such as the quality of teaching and dealing with poor behavior. The information provided by parents is available on the website so parents can compare schools. The data is also used to inform the sequencing and timing of school inspections.⁴

F. Impose sanctions on consistently low-performing schools

There are currently no sanctions imposed on underperforming independent private schools. As noted earlier in this report, the use of sanctions for poor school performance is a policy intervention that has helped raise the quality of education in many countries (Patrinos 2002; Barrera-Osorio and Raju 2010; Chiang 2009; Rockoff and Turner 2008). When schools face closure, re-

organization, and other sanctions as the result of underperformance, they have strong incentives to make school improvements. Any sanctions would need to take into account the local context and how to best meet the needs of students.

Country examples. In the Netherlands, if a school fails to improve after an improvement plan is implemented, school management receives an official warning. Subsequently, if the school still fails to improve, it is reported to the Minister, who can then impose administrative sanctions (Netherlands Onderwijs Inspectie 2010).

In Bogotá, Colombia, the government has successfully increased accountability for quality standards by allowing non-state organizations to manage public schools. The state mandates certain academic requirements and holds schools accountable for poor performance, imposing sanctions or even ending contracts for failure to reach determined standards (Patrinos 2002).

Policy Option 2: Provide greater incentives to support a diverse number of private school providers while ensuring equitable access

A. Allow schools to set their own tuition fee rates that respond to the market

Private independent school tuition fee rises are subject to review by the minister of education. Restricting private schools' ability to set their own tuition fees negatively impacts school autonomy and discourages new providers from entering the market. Tuition restrictions and caps may, in fact, act as a mechanism for rationing (Nechyba 2009). The government's main role with respect to non-subsidized schools is to balance the incentives for market entry by different types of providers against the need to monitor the quality of these private independent schools through standardized tests and inspections. (As noted earlier, information gained from the latter should be provided for parents to

⁴ "Parent View," n.d., webpage, OfSTED (Office for Education Standards in Education), Manchester, UK, <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/> (accessed September 2013).

make informed choices.)

Country examples. In Dubai of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), tuition rate increases are dependent on the performance of a school. The aim of this innovative framework is to regulate school fees to protect students and their parents as beneficiaries of educational services, as well as to provide a favorable environment for investors in the education sector and encourage them to improve the quality of education (Dubai KHDA 2012).

In Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines, tuition fees are determined by the market rather than decided by the government. The market is therefore allowed to determine the price, resulting in differentiated school models that meet the demands of individual citizens. The government in each country maintains a stewardship role to ensure learning for all (Patrinos 2012).

B. Offer incentives for the poorest students to attend private schools

Ghana offers tax credits to parents of children who attend private schools. However, this financial incentive is restricted to families who work in the formal sector and pay income tax. The desire to limit private school tuition is understandable, as the regulation is likely aimed at protecting families who cannot afford to pay high fees. However, other redistributive mechanisms can protect poorer students without negatively impacting the growth of the private education sector. By providing additional financial benefits, such as cash transfers, to families that enable their children to attend private schools, the state can protect marginalized groups while simultaneously promoting a diverse supply of quality providers. Governments can thus offer targeted opportunities to families that may not be able to afford private schooling, which also empowers students and parents.

The Government is already using the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) program to implement conditional cash transfers (CCTs) in deprived areas of Ghana. Lessons from LEAP will guide any future

program to target effectively and manage efficiently. Future education policy needs to target marginalized groups more purposefully and avoid further flat-rate subsidies to all households in favor of directing subsidies to the poorest families (Rolleston et al. 2010). This option has budget implications for the government and requires further analysis before a detailed policy discussion can take place.

Country examples. The Right to Education Act in India is the largest school voucher program in the world. The Act outlines that all children between the ages of 6 and 14 shall have the right to free and compulsory elementary education at a neighborhood school. There is no direct (school fees) or indirect cost (uniforms, textbooks, mid-day meals, transportation) to be borne by the child or the parents to obtain elementary education. The government will provide schooling free-of-cost until a child's elementary education is completed. In order to increase access to education, the Act outlines that 25 percent of places in private schools must be allocated to economically weaker section (EWS) and disadvantaged students.⁵

Policy Option 3: Encourage innovation in schools by ensuring greater flexibility in managing schools, services, and staff

As noted, Ghana requires at least one-third of teachers employed by independent private schools to be officially trained. International education research shows that teacher credentials—including factors such as years of experience, certification, and education—fail to predict student learning (Dobbie, Fryer, and Fryer 2011; Goldhaber and Anthony 2004; Goldhaber and Brewer 2000; Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald 1994; Hanushek 1997). Based on existing evidence and more general evidence supporting the positive potential of school autonomy to improve student learning outcomes, local school decision making is advocated over centralized teacher credential standards (Baum et al. 2013). Moreover, regulations on teaching credentials may limit the potential for private providers to operate and

⁵ "Right to Education," n.d., website, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource

Development, Government of India, New Delhi, India, <http://mhrd.gov.in/rte> (accessed September 2013).

expand, as certain schools may be unable to employ a sufficient number of qualified teachers.

Country examples. In England, private independent and privately managed schools (known as Free Schools and Academies) are able to adopt their own teaching standards. Some schools opt to use government standards, while others tailor these standards to meet the needs of the local community (U.K. Department for Education 2013).

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The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) initiative collects data on the policies and institutions of education systems around the world and benchmarks them against practices associated with student learning. SABER aims to give all parties with a stake in educational results—from students, administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, detailed, objective snapshot of how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

This report focuses specifically on policies of engaging the private sector in education.

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