

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN



SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SABER Country Report
2015

Policy Goals

1. **Autonomy in Planning and Management of the School Budget**

The Ministry of Education (MoE) supplies the majority of the operational budget for schools and manages some items directly. A portion of the school operational budget is prepared at the school level by the principal using a form from the central MoE. The regional Directorate of Education approves the operating budget form submitted by the principals. Schools have the authority to raise additional funds from other sources. Principals are not required to consult parents or community members in the preparation or execution of the school budget.

2. **Autonomy in Personnel Management**

The initial recruitment and appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff is conducted at the central level, while their deployment is managed at both the central and regional levels by the MoE and the regional Directorates of Education. Decisions about the selection and evaluation of school principals are managed by the Directorates of Education.

3. **Participation of the School Council in School Governance**

The Parent-Teacher Council has no role in planning the school budget; however, the Educational Council that represents school clusters has a voice in adopting budget items. Both councils have no legal right or voice on teaching and non-teaching staff management and learning inputs. Members are elected and are involved in school projects where appropriate.

4. **Assessment of School and Student Performance**

There is no school assessment in Jordan to evaluate overall school performance. Student knowledge is evaluated using standardized student assessments. Annual national examinations take place in multiple grades. Results of the national examination are evaluated centrally and disseminated to regional directorates. Schools use exam results to make pedagogical adjustments when necessary.

5. **Accountability to Stakeholders**

Guidelines exist for the use of student assessment results and for analyzing student performance, but they are not used by parents to demand accountability. No official mandates are in place to simplify and explain results of assessments, nor to hold schools and the education system accountable for their performance to parents, communities, and the public. Regulations exist for complying with rules of financial accountability, but none for oversight of school operations.

Status

Emerging

Emerging

Emerging

Emerging

Emerging



Introduction

In 2011 the World Bank Group commenced a multiyear program designed to support countries in systematically examining and strengthening the performance of their education systems. Part of the World Bank’s Education Sector Strategy,¹ the evidence-based initiative called SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) is building a toolkit of diagnostics for examining education systems and their component policy domains against global standards, best practices, and in comparison with the policies and practices of countries around the world. By leveraging this global knowledge, the SABER tools fill a gap in the availability of data and evidence on what matters most to improve the quality of education and achievement of better results. This report discusses the results of applying the SABER School Autonomy and Accountability (SAA) tool in the Kingdom of Jordan.

Country Overview

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an upper middle-income country, which has sustained economic growth with low poverty rates and low inflation relative to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The country’s economic environment has historically been vulnerable to external shocks. Most recently in 2009, the global economic crisis spread to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and Jordan suffered from a decline in foreign investment and remittances, causing growth to decline from 7.2 percent in 2008 to 2.3 percent in 2010 because Jordan has a large expatriate workforce in the GCC. By 2010 signs of a recovery were emerging, but the Arab uprising in early 2011 undermined consumer and investor confidence, and growth again stagnated. Since 2009 growth has averaged 3.1 percent (World Bank 2015).

Concurrently the Kingdom of Jordan has been exposed to demographic shocks. Exposure to regional shocks has resulted in substantial jumps in its total resident population, including from Syria since 2011. This has led to short-run frictions between the demand for and

supply of housing, social, and infrastructure services, and the demand and supply for labor. Currently youth ages 15 to 24 in Jordan account for 21.6 percent of the population. This can be viewed as both a demographic challenge and a gift as these individuals begin entering the labor force adding to the labor supply.

Jordan has high human development indicators relative to countries with similar characteristics and income levels. The population’s access to education and health services is among the highest in the MENA region, which points to high levels of “ability” among the population. This does not always readily translate into equality of opportunity. Possibilities of exclusion exist due to a range of barriers related to gender, geography, and socioeconomic status. In addition, high levels of education have not translated into dynamic labor market outcomes as unemployment rates are particularly elevated for higher educated youth and women (World Bank 2015).

I. Education in Jordan

The Kingdom of Jordan’s education system begins at age four with preschool, followed by basic education for grades 1–10 and secondary education, which consists of 11th and 12th grades. Some students continue studies at the tertiary level after graduation (Table 1). Education indicators have improved consistently since the mid-1990s. The illiteracy rate in 2010 was seven percent, among the lowest illiteracy rates in the Arab world. Net enrollment in primary education was 99 percent in 2012, and the transition rate to secondary school has increased from 63 percent in 2000 to 99 percent in 2012, increasing pressure on the secondary schooling institutional infrastructure substantially. The transition rate to higher education varied between 79 and 85 percent of secondary school graduates between 2005 and 2009. Jordan also ensures a high level of gender parity in access to basic services. As a result, it has achieved 90 percent parity in literacy, full parity in primary and secondary enrollment, and increased life expectancy for both sexes.

¹ The World Bank Education Sector Strategy 2020: Learning for All (2011), which outlines an agenda for achieving “Learning for All” in the developing world over the next decade.

Level	Ages	Grades
Pre-Primary	4–5	Preschool
Basic education	6–15	1–10
Secondary	16–17	11–12
Tertiary	18+	Colleges and universities

Source: Kingdom of Jordan, Ministry of Education 2015.

In the years between 1999 and 2015, Jordan also made significant gains on international surveys of student achievement, with a particularly impressive gain of almost 30 points on the science portion of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) over that period. Jordan has a strong public education system. Public education expenditures, excluding higher education, amounted to approximately 3.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and 9.7 percent of total public expenditures (Table 2). By comparison, the corresponding average for the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2009 shares are 4.4 percent of GDP and 9.8 percent of total public expenditure (OECD 2012).

Public Expenditure on Education (2013)	
As % of GDP	3.5
As % of total government expenditure	9.7
Teacher/pupil ratio in primary (2014)	16
Percentage of repeaters in primary (2012)	0.6
Primary to secondary transition rate (2010)	99.1

Source: World Bank Ed Stats and World Bank 2015.

The Kingdom has invested in comprehensive education reforms since the early 1990s. In 2001 His Majesty King Abdullah II introduced the National Vision and Mission for Education. His goal was to transform Jordan into an active player in the global economy and a regional hub for technology. The vision was adopted and endorsed in 2002. In 2003 the Kingdom of Jordan launched the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project (ERfKE) with the support of multiple donors, including the World Bank. The project period was 2003–2009, and the project was viewed as successful in achieving many of its intended goals. It sought to support the National

Vision and Mission, primarily by ensuring that all centrally mandated directives and reforms were implemented in all schools.

ERfKE's second phase (2009–2015) is now almost complete. It focuses on transforming regional field directorates and schools and engaging the community through five country-led components (MoE 2015):

1. Establishment of a National School-Based Development System;
2. Policies, planning, and organizational change;
3. Teaching and learning resources development;
4. Development of special focus programs for pre-primary, technical and vocational education, and special education; and
5. Improving the quality of physical learning environments.

Component 1 is the creation of a National School-Based Development System that seeks to improve school autonomy and accountability in a variety of ways, notably by transferring more responsibilities to schools, such as the development of school plans and more autonomy over school budgets.

Building on the experience of ERfKE I and drawing on international best practice, the National School-Based Development System is meant to provide a school-based development process as the main vehicle to deliver to all young people in the Kingdom a quality education focused on developing the abilities, skills, attitudes, and values associated with a knowledge-based economy. The goal is to create a school self-evaluation process in each school that will lead directly to the production of the school's own school development plan, and to empower the local school and community to be part of the process.

II. The Case for School Autonomy and School Accountability

School autonomy and accountability are key components of an education system that ensure educational quality. The transfer of core managerial responsibilities to schools promotes local accountability; helps reflect local priorities, values, and needs; and gives teachers the opportunity to establish a personal commitment to students and their parents (Box 1). Benchmarking and monitoring indicators of school autonomy and accountability allow any country to rapidly assess its education system, setting the stage for improving policy planning and implementation.

Box 1: What Are School Autonomy and Accountability?

School autonomy is a form of school management in which schools are given decision-making authority over their operations, including the hiring and firing of personnel, and the assessment of teachers and pedagogical practices. School management under autonomy may give an important role to the School Council, representing the interests of parents, in budget planning and approval, as well as a voice/vote in personnel decisions. By including the School Council in school management, school autonomy fosters accountability (Barrera et al. 2009; Di Gropello 2004, 2006).

In its basic form **accountability** is defined as the acceptance of responsibility and being answerable for one's actions. In school management, accountability may take other additional meanings: (i) the act of compliance with the rules and regulations of school governance; (ii) reporting to those with oversight authority over the school; and (iii) linking rewards and sanctions to expected results (Heim 1996; Rechebei 2010).

School autonomy is a form of a decentralized education system in which school personnel are in charge of making most managerial decisions, frequently in partnership with parents and the community. More local control helps create better conditions for improving student learning in a sustainable way, since it gives teachers and parents more opportunities to develop common goals,

increase their mutual commitment to student learning, and promote more efficient use of scarce school resources.

To be effective, school autonomy must function on the basis of compatible incentives, taking into account national education policies, including incentives for the implementation of those policies. Having more managerial responsibilities at the school level automatically implies that a school must also be accountable to local stakeholders as well as national and local authorities. The empirical evidence from education systems in which schools enjoy managerial autonomy is that autonomy is beneficial for restoring the social contract between parents and schools and instrumental in setting in motion policies to improve student learning.

The progression in school autonomy in the last two decades has led to the conceptualization of **School-Based Management (SBM)** as a form of decentralization in which the school is in charge of most managerial decisions but with the participation of parents and the community through school councils (Barrera et al. 2009). *SBM is not a set of predetermined policies and procedures, but a continuum of activities and policies put into place to improve the functioning of schools, allowing parents and teachers to focus on improvements in learning.* As such, SBM should foster a new social contract between teachers and their community in which local cooperation and local accountability drive improvements in professional and personal performance by teachers (Patrinos 2010).

The empirical evidence from SBM shows that it can take many forms or combine many activities (Barrera et al. 2009) with differing degrees of success (see Box 2). Unless SBM activities contribute to system closure, they are just a collection of isolated managerial decisions. Therefore, the indicators of SBM that relate to school quality must conform to the concept of a system, in which the presence or absence of some critical components within the system allow or preclude system closure.

Box 2: Different Paths to School-Based Management Are Fine as Long as They Allow for System Closure

In many countries the implementation of SBM has increased student enrollment, student and teacher attendance, and parent involvement. However, the empirical evidence from Latin America shows very few cases in which SBM has made a significant difference in learning outcomes (Patrinos 2010), whereas in Europe substantial evidence shows a positive impact of school autonomy on learning (Eurydice 2007). Both the grassroots-based approach taken in Latin America, where the institutional structure was weak or service delivery was hampered due to internal conflict, and the operational efficiency approach taken in Europe, where institutions were stronger, coincide in applying managerial principles to promote better education quality, but are driven by two different modes of accountability to parents and the community. One in Latin America where schools render accounts through participatory school-based management (Di Gropello 2004) and another in Europe where accountability is based on trust in schools and their teachers (Arcia et al. 2011). In either case, school autonomy has begun to transform traditional education from a system based on processes and inputs into one driven by results (Hood 2001).

As components of a managerial system, SBM activities may behave as mediating variables: they produce an enabling environment for teachers and students, allowing for pedagogical variables, school inputs, and personal effort to work as intended.

When do SBM components become critical for learning? The improper functioning of a school or a school system can be a substantial barrier to success. The managerial component of a school system is a necessary but insufficient condition for learning. One can fix some managerial components and obtain no results or alter some other components and obtain good results. What combination of components is crucial for success is still under study, but the emerging body of practice points to a set of variables that foster managerial **autonomy**, the **assessment** of results, and the use of the assessment to promote **accountability** among all stakeholders (Brunts et

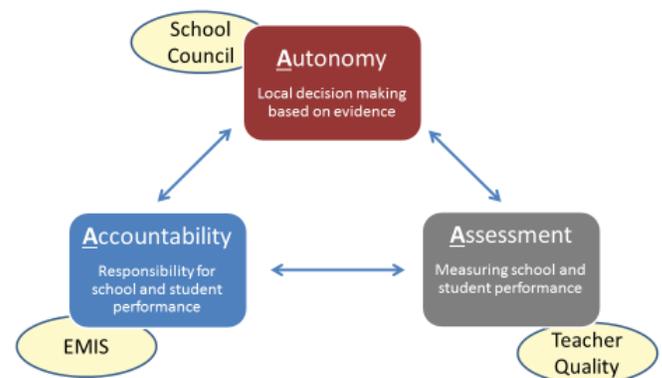
al. 2011). When these three components are in balance with each other, they form a “closed system.”

Defining a managerial system that can achieve closure is conceptually important for school based management, since it transforms its components from a list of managerial activities to a set of interconnected variables that when working together can improve system performance. If an SBM system is unable to close, are partial solutions effective? Yes, in a broad sense, in which schools can still function, but their degree of effectiveness and efficiency would be lower than if the system closes. In this regard, ***SBM can achieve closure when it enforces enough autonomy to evaluate its results and use those results to hold someone accountable.***

This last conclusion is very important because it means that *SBM can achieve system closure when autonomy, student assessment, and accountability are operationally interrelated through the functions of the school councils, the policies for improving teacher quality, and education management information systems* (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

School Autonomy & Accountability The 3 A'S



Source: Demas and Arcia 2015.

Note: EMIS = education management information system.

In managerial terms it is clear that the point of contact between autonomous schools and their clients is primarily through the school council (Corrales 2006). Similarly, school assessments are the vehicles used by

schools to determine their needs for changes in pedagogical practices and to determine the training needs of their teachers. Both pedagogical changes and teacher training are determinant factors of teacher quality (Vegas 2001). Finally, the role of EMIS on accountability has been well established, and it is bound to increase as technology makes it easier to report on indicators of internal efficiency and on standardized test scores (Bruns et al. 2011).

Results on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) suggest that, when autonomy and accountability are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better student performance (OECD 2011). The experience of high-performing countries² on PISA indicates that:

- Education systems in which schools have more autonomy over teaching content and student assessment tend to perform better.
- Education systems in which schools have more autonomy over resource allocation and that publish test results perform better than schools with less autonomy.
- Education systems in which many schools compete for students do not systematically score higher on PISA.
- Education systems with standardized student assessment tend to do better than those without such assessments.
- PISA scores among schools with students from different social backgrounds differ less in education systems that use standardized student assessments than in systems that do not.

As of now, the empirical evidence from countries that have implemented school autonomy suggests that a certain set of policies and practices are effective in fostering managerial autonomy, assessment of results, and the use of assessments to promote accountability. Benchmarking the policy intent of these variables using

² Examples of high-performing countries that have implemented school-based management policies and frameworks include Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand among others.

SABER can be very useful for any country interested in improving the performance of its education system.

SABER School Autonomy and Accountability: Analyzing Performance.

The SABER School Autonomy and Accountability tool assists in analyzing how well developed the set of policies are in a given country to foster managerial autonomy, assess results, and use information from assessments to promote accountability. There are five policy goals for school autonomy and accountability. Below are the main indicators that can help benchmark an education system’s policies that enable school autonomy and accountability:

1. School autonomy in the planning and management of the school budget
2. School autonomy in personnel management
3. Role of the School Council in school governance
4. School and student assessments
5. Accountability

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

Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
●○○○	●●○○	●●●○	●●●●
Reflects policy not in place or limited engagement	Reflects some good practice; policy work still in progress	Reflects good practice, with some limitations	Reflects international best practice

A *Latent* score signifies that the policy behind the indicator is not yet in place or that there is limited engagement in developing the related education policy. An *Emerging* score indicates that the policy in place reflects some good practice but that policy development is still in progress. An *Established* score indicates that the program or policy reflects good practice and meets the minimum standards, but there may be some limitations in its content and scope. An *Advanced* score indicates that the

program or policy reflects best practice, and it can be considered on par with international standards.

III. Kingdom of Jordan's Performance: A Summary of Results

Summary results of the benchmarking exercise for Jordan are shown below, followed by a breakdown by policy goal.

Summary: Budgetary autonomy is *Emerging*. Part of the school operational budget is prepared and executed at the school level with approval and support coming from the Directorate of Education at the regional level and the central Ministry of Education (MoE). The MoE supplies the majority of the operational budget for schools and manages some items directly such as payment of utilities. Schools have the authority to raise additional funds from other sources. No specific requirements exist for school principals to consult parents or community members in the preparation or execution of the school budget.

Autonomy in personnel management is *Emerging*. The appointment of teaching and nonteaching staff is conducted at the central level, while their deployment is managed at both the central and regional levels by the MoE and the regional Directorates of Education. Decisions about the selection and evaluation of school principals are managed by the Directorates.

The role of the Parent-Teacher Councils and Educational Councils in school governance is *Emerging*. The Parent-Teacher Council has no role in planning the school's operating budget. Educational Councils have a voice in adopting operational budget items through consultation with school principals. Both councils have no legal right or voice on matters related to management of teaching and nonteaching staff and learning inputs.

School and student assessment is *Emerging*. No school assessment is set up in Jordan to evaluate overall school performance. Student knowledge is evaluated using standardized student assessments. Annual national examinations take place in multiple grades. Results of

the National Examination are evaluated centrally and disseminated to the regional Directorates. Schools use exam results to make pedagogical adjustments when necessary. Schools are mandated to receive the results of the National Exam.

Accountability to stakeholders is *Emerging*. There are guidelines for the use of student assessment results and for analyzing student performance, but they are not used by parents to demand accountability. There are no official mandates to simplify and explain results of assessments, nor specifically to hold schools and the education system accountable for their performance to parents, communities, and the public. Regulations are in place for promoting accountability in complying with rules for financial accountability, but none for oversight of school operations.

1. Autonomy in the Planning and Management of the School Budget Is Emerging

This policy goal focuses on the degree of autonomy that schools have in planning and managing their operating budgets. In order to evaluate policy intent, the scoring rubric makes clear which areas should be backed by laws, regulations, and/or official rules in the public record. School autonomy in the planning and management of the school budget is considered desirable because it can increase the efficiency of financial resources, give schools more flexibility in budget management, and give parents the opportunity to have more voice on budget planning and execution.

In Jordan, legal authority for the management of a portion of the operational budget³ rests at the school level with support from the MoE and the Directorates of Education at the regional level. A small part of the operating budget is prepared at the school level. This is done within the guidelines from the central authority and using a specified form that allows the school director to prepare a budget from the allocation he or she receives from the Ministry. Big items like utilities are paid by the central authority. Policy provides the school director with the authority to manage the remaining operating budget. According to the Budget Preparation

³ Operating budget is the budget that is used for day-to-day operation of schools excluding salaries for teachers and nonteaching staff and large capital costs such as school construction. In Jordan

the central level also pays the utility expenses of schools directly. The school manages the remaining operating costs.

Form, as stated in the formal letter issued by MoE No. 40692/1/48 on 7/8/2008, the MoE creates and sends a budget preparation form to schools. School principals are responsible for identifying the operational needs of their school and completing the budget preparation form.

In schools that participate in the School and Directorate Development Program (SDDP), the School Development Team⁴ assists the principal in identifying the operational needs and filling out the budget form. All schools that provide basic education have now been covered by the SDDP project. They submit the budget form to the Directorate of Education at the regional level. The Directorate of Education is then responsible for approving the operational budget of schools (Article No. 16 of School Donation Regulations No. 35/1994). In Jordan the MoE supplies the majority of the operational budget, and three percent of the schools’ annual cafeteria profit is allocated to the school’s operating budget (No. 6/38/24759 Date: 20/7/1997).

School principals are ultimately responsible for executing the school’s operating budget. If needed, schools can request additional funds from the Directorate of Education. They are also authorized to seek additional funding from outside sources such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. Schools do not request funds from parents, however, parents may provide donations in-kind.

There are no specific guidelines for the consultation of parents or community members in preparing or executing the school’s operating budget. However, the school principal may work with the School Development Team and the School Finance/Donations Committee—both from within the school—to identify the operational needs, plans, and budget of the school. The Finance/Donations Committee signs the checks and oversees spending and procurement. The Parent-Teacher Council, which consists of the school principal, teachers, and two parents, is not mandated to be involved in this process. In addition, the school principal may choose to consult the Educational Council⁵ or supervisors at the regional level if desired.

⁴ The School Development Team consists of the school principal and at least four teachers.

⁵ The Educational Council is a body that represents a cluster of five to 10 schools and includes school principals, teachers, parents, and

In Jordan all teaching and nonteaching staff are considered part of the civil service, and their salaries are managed at the central level. A salary scale is linked with the job pay grade and category, according to Article No. 20 /A&B/2013 of the civil service system. The Council of the Civil Service chaired by the Minister of Public Sector Development, the Director of the Civil Service Bureau and a number of ministries define the salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff.

1. Legal authority over planning and management of the school budget is Emerging.		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Legal authority over management of the operational budget	Established ●●●○	Legal authority over management of part of the operational budget rests with the school level.
Legal authority over the management of non-teaching staff salaries	Latent ●○○○	Nonteaching staff salaries are managed at the central level based on the civil service system.
Legal authority over the management of teacher salaries	Latent ●○○○	Teacher salaries are managed at the central level based on the civil service system.
Legal authority to raise additional funds for the school	Established ●●●○	Schools have authority to raise additional funds from sources such as NGOs and the private sector.
Collaborative budget planning and preparation	Latent ●○○○	Provisions allow for the school level using a centralized form to propose an expenditure plan for the school budget.

2. School Autonomy in Personnel Management Is Emerging

This policy goal measures policy intent in the management of school personnel, which includes the principal, teachers, and non-teaching staff. Appointing

community members. Every school is part of a school cluster and has representatives that participate in the Educational Council.

and deploying principals and teachers can be centralized at the level of the MoE, or it can be the responsibility of regional or municipal governments. In decentralized education systems schools have autonomy in teacher hiring and firing decisions. Budgetary autonomy includes giving schools responsibility for negotiating and setting the salaries of its teaching and non-teaching staff and using monetary and non-monetary bonuses as rewards for good performance. In centralized systems, teachers are paid directly by the MoE or the Ministry of Finance under union or civil service agreements. As a result, in centralized systems schools have less influence over teacher performance because they have no financial leverage over teachers. Inversely, if a school negotiates teachers’ salaries, as private schools routinely do, it may be able to motivate teachers directly with rewards for a job well done.

In the Kingdom of Jordan, managerial decisions about teaching and non-teaching staff are made at the central and regional levels. The central level has the authority to appoint teachers (Article No. 41/2014 of the Civil Service Law). Each year the MoE asks the Civil Service Bureau to fill vacancies. Four persons are nominated for each position and are then required to pass a competitive exam. Teacher appointments are subject to final review at the central level by the Managing Directorate of Human Resources and the Managing Directorate of Planning and Educational Research in the MoE.

Both the central and regional levels are involved in teacher deployment. The MoE deploys new teachers to the regional Directorates of Education. Then each Directorate of Education deploys teachers according to the school needs within their respective regions. Each Directorate is responsible for teacher transfers between schools within their own region. The MoE becomes involved only when a teacher is transferred outside of the regional directorate to another region.

Management of non-teaching staff follows a similar pattern as teaching staff (Articles No. 41/42 of Civil Service System Law). The appointment of non-teaching staff is the responsibility of the central government, and they are ultimately deployed at the regional level.

Principals are appointed and deployed by the Directorates of Education, which are also responsible for the evaluation of principals and have the authority for

determining their tenure and transfer, according to Article No. 73/2014 of the Civil Service System Law. Decisions over the removal of a school principal are made at the central level.

The newly established accountability unit will be the mechanism through which the removal of a school principal for poor performance can be justified. If a school assessment report highlights severe problems that remain unaddressed in the follow up period, the Ministry would be able to take action and transfer the principal to a different role.

2. School Autonomy in Personnel Management Is Emerging.		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Autonomy in teacher appointment and deployment decisions	Emerging ●●○○	Initial recruitment and appointment of teachers is made at central level. Deployment happens in two stages—from the MoE to the regional Directorates of Education, and then from the Directorates of Education to schools.
Autonomy in non-teaching staff appointment and deployment decisions	Emerging ●●○○	The central level is responsible for appointment of non-teaching staff, and the regional level is responsible for deployment.
Autonomy in school principal appointment and deployment decisions.	Established ●●●○	Appointment and evaluation of school principals is the responsibility of the regional level – Directorates of Education.

3. Participation of the School Council⁶ in School Governance Is Emerging

The participation of the School Council in school administration is very important because it enables parents to exercise their real power as clients of the education system. If the council has to cosign payments, it automatically has purchasing power. The use of a detailed operational manual is extremely important in this area, because it allows Council members to adequately monitor school management performance, help the principal with cash flow decisions, and become a catalyst for seeking additional funds from the community. The use of such manuals by the Parent Council is thus a good vehicle for promoting increased accountability and institutionalizing autonomy.

It is important to note that change management studies also have provided evidence that bringing stakeholders together to plan and implement meaningful activities also contributes to behavioral change in institutions, including schools. Collective school planning activities can provide a mutual vision and shared accountability of what parents and school staff can commit to in terms of support to the school. These processes provide an enabling environment for better governance.

In the Kingdom of Jordan, each school establishes a Parent-Teacher Council, according to the Instructions of Parent-Teacher Councils in Public and Private Schools, Article No. 9/2007. Parent-Teacher Councils consist of the school principal, three teachers, and three parents who are elected by a general assembly as stated in Item 6 of Article No. 9/2007. Parent-Teacher Councils largely play advisory and supportive roles to school principals rather than actively participate in budget planning and financial oversight for which there are no specific guidelines regarding the role of Parent-Teacher Councils. Their roles include fostering an environment of safety and trust between parents and teachers, providing a place for parents and teachers to exchange opinions, informing parents about the current teaching staff, their roles, the nature of services provided by the educational institution, and coordination between parents and teachers to improve the learning conditions in the school and community, among others.

Parent-Teacher Councils also play a role in planning activities at the school (Article No. 11 of Parent-Teacher Councils in Public and Private Schools Item, 7/2007). They can plan and present lectures on topics related to health and education, and they can invite members of the community to give lectures and presentations on local activities related to the school.

Procedural guidelines are in place for open election of Parent-Teacher Council members at the school level. The Council members are nominated and elected by a general assembly, and they are not allowed to nominate themselves. Members of the Parent-Teacher Council serve one-year terms (Item No. 6 of Article No. 9/2007).

In Jordan, there are also Educational Councils that serve school clusters (including kindergarten, primary and secondary schools). Schools in each region are organized into clusters, and every cluster has an Educational Council. Each principal of the schools in the cluster is a member of the Educational Council, and other members include an elected education councilor, three elected local community members, the presidents of the students' parliamentary councils in the schools cluster, three to five members of the Parent-Teacher Councils within a school cluster, and a rapporteur (the principal of the central school in the cluster).

The Educational Council has a voice on adopting school budget items. They may also play a supporting role in helping plan and execute school activities and organizing community volunteers.

Members of the Educational Council are elected to serve two-year terms. The Educational Council has a president and vice-president. These positions are nominated and selected among the school principals across the school cluster. Community members and the education councilor who serve on the Educational Council are also nominated and elected by the participating school principals in accordance with criteria provided by the Directorate of Education (Item 4/A of Article No. 1/2014 of the Instructions of School Councils of School Cluster and Education Development Council in the Directorates of Education).

⁶ In the Jordanian school system the equivalent of a "school council" would be the Parent-Teacher Council. There is also a body called an

"Educational Council," but this is different, because it is organized to represent a cluster of schools within a district.

3. Role of the School Council in School Governance Is Emerging.		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Participation of the School Council in budget preparation	Emerging ●●○○	The Parent-Teacher Council has no role in planning the school budget; however, the Educational Council has a voice in adopting items of the school's operating budget.
Participation in financial oversight	Emerging ●●○○	The Parent-Teacher Councils and Educational Councils have legal standing as organizations but no oversight on budget issues.
Participation in personnel management	Latent ●○○○	The Parent-Teacher Councils and Educational Councils have no legal right or voice on matters of teacher appointment, transfers, and removals.
Community participation in school activities	Established ●●●○	There are instructions for organizing Parent-Teacher Councils and Educational Councils to plan, implement, and oversee activities that are within the school development plans.
Community participation in learning inputs	Latent ●○○○	The Parent-Teacher Councils and Educational Councils have no say in learning inputs.
Transparency in community participation	Advanced ●●●●	There are provisions for regularly scheduled elections of School Council members and defined term limits. There are guidelines for calling general assemblies.

4. Assessment of School and Student Performance Is Emerging

School assessment can have a big impact on school performance because it encourages parents and teachers to agree on scoring rules and ways to keep track of them. Measuring student assessment is another important way to determine if a school is effective in improving learning. A key aspect of school autonomy is the regular measurement of student learning, with the intent of using the results to inform parents and society, and to make adjustments to managerial and pedagogical practices. Without a regular assessment of learning outcomes school accountability is reduced and improving education quality becomes less certain.

Schools in the Kingdom of Jordan are not assessed following officially established performance evaluation criteria set by the MoE, but educational supervisors and heads of divisions are assigned by the Director of the Directorate of Education to carry out inspection visits when necessary. Inspection results from the district are not a key contributor to pedagogical, personnel, or operational adjustments to improve the learning environment. School performance is not assessed in terms of educational outcomes. School learning outcomes are only indirectly evaluated through the system for national student assessments. There is no policy yet for school self-evaluation, but guidelines have been established, and capacity building has been supported through the ERfKE project. The current benchmark on school assessment is reflective of the lack of policy at the point in time of data collection, but this is rapidly changing.

The MoE is in the process of establishing the Education Quality and Accountability Unit at the central level. This unit will be chaired by the Minister of Education, and it will be part of a broader accountability system used for improving schools. The Education Quality and Accountability Unit according to its regulations will be tasked with preparing school evaluation and measurement tools for the evaluation process. It will also analyze the results of assessments for the purpose of making pedagogical and personnel adjustments. Educational supervisors and heads of divisions appointed by the Director of the Directorate of Education will be responsible for preparing technical reports on the status of schools in their regions.

Student performance is evaluated using both national and international assessments. At the national level there are five types of examinations: the General Secondary Examination, which all students take in the 12th grade; a newly introduced achievement test in mathematics taken by all students in the 6th grade; the National Exam to control the quality of teaching taken by all students in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades; and the National Assessment for the Knowledge Economy (NAFKE) taken by students in the 5th and 9th grades. These exams are administered annually. In addition, the Kingdom of Jordan participates in both the TIMSS and PISA exams.

Schools are obligated to use the National Examination to make pedagogical adjustments, but no mandate is in place to use results for making operational and personnel adjustments. Schools are required to make remedial pedagogical plans to treat weaknesses based on the results and reports of the National Examination, which the MoE submits to the Directorates of Education and schools.

Although no official policy exists to analyze the results of student assessments, the results of the National Examination are typically analyzed in the MOE's Division of Statistical Analysis through the Department of Tests and Examination. A National Examination report is disseminated to the technical department in the MoE to provide their remarks and recommendations on its contents. The National Center for Human Development analyzes the results of the national exams and disseminates them. National Examination and General Secondary Examination results are sent to the

Directorates of Education and schools to prepare their remedial plans and to offer their comments and recommendations. According to the report of the National Examination to control the quality of education issued by the Department of Tests and Examinations in the MoE's center for the scholastic year 2013–2014, schools are mandated to receive the results of student assessments.

4. School and Student Assessment Is Emerging.		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Existence and frequency of school assessments	Latent ●○○○	Schools are not assessed following officially established performance evaluation criteria.
Use of school assessments for making school adjustments	Latent ●○○○	There is no formal school assessment, but MOE is currently working on developing the accountability system, which will be utilized for school improvements.
Existence and frequency of standardized student assessments	Established ●●●○	Examinations occur for grades 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 12. These examinations are organized annually.
Use of standardized student assessments for pedagogical, operational, and personnel adjustments	Established ●●●○	The MoE and National Center for Human Development analyze student test scores in standardized tests and send results and recommendations to Directorates of Education. Schools must use the information to make pedagogical adjustments when necessary.
Publication of student assessments	Established ●●●○	Results of the student assessments are made available to central, regional/municipal levels of the MoE and to schools.

5. School Accountability to Stakeholders Is Emerging

Accountability is at the heart of school-based management. The systemic connection between budgetary and personnel autonomy, parent participation in the financial and operational aspects of schools, and the measurement of learning outcomes are all aimed at reinforcing accountability. Only by being accountable to parents can educational quality be sustainable. The following indicators below address aspects of accountability that can be implemented within the framework of school-based management.

In the Kingdom of Jordan, guidelines exist for the use of results of student assessments. The MoE issues directions concerning the National Examination to Control Education Quality as well as directions pertaining to TIMSS, PISA, and NAFKE tests. These examinations are supervised by the National Center for Human Resources Development at the central level. Guidelines are in place at the school level for the National Examination. Results of the national examination are analyzed and compared among schools in the related subjects and then a report is prepared for each school. Finally a soft and a hard copy of the reports are submitted to the Directorates of Education (Report on National Examination to Control Education Quality 2013/2014). Exam guidelines are available to the public, but they are not used by parents to demand accountability.

There is no formal policy for comparative analysis of student assessment results. However, despite the lack of formal policy, the National Center for Human Development routinely conducts comparative analyses of the National Examination. There is also no policy requiring comparative analysis of examination results to be distributed to parents. Results of the National Examination are routinely analyzed and compared among schools. Then a report is prepared for each school. Finally a soft and a hard copy of the report are submitted to the Directorates of Education but not to parents (Report National Examination to Control Education Quality 2013/2014).

There are regulations in place throughout the MoE for complying with the rules of financial management and transparency and reporting to those with oversight authority, but not for linking rewards and sanctions to

compliance at the central, regional, or school level. In contrast, regulations are not in place for enforcing accountability in school operations, including compliance with the rules of school operations, reporting to those with oversight authority, and linking rewards and sanctions to operating performance.

In terms of learning accountability, the National Center for Human Resource Development produces a report on student assessment results, no mandate exists to simplify and explain results to the public.

5. Accountability to Stakeholders Is Emerging.		
Indicator	Score	Justification
Guidelines for the use of results of student assessments	Emerging ●●○○	There are guidelines for the use of results of student assessments at the national, regional, and school levels. But parents do not use the guidelines to voice accountability.
Analysis of school and student performance	Emerging ●●○○	Comparative analysis of student results for different types of schools, across regions, and for previous years at the national and regional levels are carried out. The summary analyses are not required to be distributed to parents or the public.
Degree of financial accountability at the central, regional, and school levels	Established ●●●○	Regulations are in place for complying with rules of financial management, transparency, and reporting to those with oversight, but not to link rewards and sanctions to compliance.
Degree of accountability in school operations	Latent ●○○○	No regulations are in place for ensuring accountability in school operations.
Degree of learning accountability	Latent ●○○○	The National Center for Human Resource Development produces a report on student assessment results, but no mandate exists to simplify and explain results to the public.

IV. Enhancing Education Quality: Policy Recommendations for the Kingdom of Jordan

It is clear from the benchmarking section that the Kingdom of Jordan has made progress in the implementation of its decentralization strategy, in particular through the emphasis on the National School-based Development System and also by effectively implementing ERfKE phases one and two.

To ensure better learning outcomes through school-based management with accountability, the Kingdom of Jordan could strengthen its SBM policies in a few key areas. Specific measures should be taken vis-à-vis the local authority to plan and manage school budgets, the composition and functions of the Parent-Teacher Council and Educational Council, participation of school communities, and school evaluation and use of the results to improve learning.

1. Autonomy over planning and management of the school budget. A portion of the operational budget is managed at the school level, primarily by the school principal. The Kingdom of Jordan could consider expanding the operating budget items that the school level has autonomy to plan, manage, and execute. Now that 100 percent of schools have received support through the SDDP project, the MoE could continue to support and ensure the collaboration of the Principal with the School Development Team in completing the Ministry's annual Budget Preparation form.

Another way of providing more autonomy with accountability includes involving parents and community members in the planning and management process. Currently parents are not included in the School Development Team. The MoE should consider adding a parent representative from the Parent-Teacher Council to the School Development Team or requiring school principals to consult with Parent-Teacher Councils while completing the Budget Preparation form. Additionally, the MoE could further strengthen the objective of the National School-Based Development System to ensure more local engagement at the school level, by considering a policy that requires the School Development Team and School Donations Committee to have a parent representative(s). This would allow for

more collaborative planning and support to the school. Existing evidence highlights that involving parents and community in budget planning and preparation can have a positive influence on transparency and accountability in the budget preparation process at the school level (Mansuri and Rao 2013; Wampler 2007).

2. School autonomy in personnel management. Legal authority over appointments and management of teachers and non-teaching staff is highly centralized. New hires of teaching and non-teaching staff are made entirely at the central level in coordination with the civil service. A positive step is that significant powers are given to the regional Directorate of Education to manage teacher and non-teacher deployment after they are recruited. It is recommended that some effort be put into working on policy with the civil service to begin transferring some legal authority for recruitment to the Directorates to ensure the hiring of teaching and nonteaching staff with the appropriate knowledge and skills to benefit their region. For example, hiring of nonteaching staff may be a good starting point, thus freeing up the central Ministry to concentrate more on education policy and allowing the Directorates to handle some of the administrative tasks. Additionally, the process for teacher transfers could be managed entirely at the regional level without requiring approval from the central government.

3. Role of the Parent-Teacher Council in school governance. A variety of ways might be used to further involve Parent-Teacher Councils and parents in school governance. Currently, the Education Council may be consulted to adopt items for the budget, but at the school level, there is no voice provided to parents through the Parent-Teacher Council. It is recommended that the MoE consider establishing a policy that provides the Parent-Teacher Council a parent representative to the SDT and the Donations Committee or to establish a policy that gives the Parent-Teacher Council the ability to be consulted and to voice opinions on the preparation of the budget before it is completed.

A second way to enhance school governance is to involve the Parent-Teacher Councils in financial oversight of the school. Provide parent-teacher councils the ability to have voice in oversight. This way there is some check on what is happening with the work of the Donations

Committee and the school, which handles expenses and procurement.

Third, Parent-Teacher Councils and Educational Councils currently have no say in personnel management and learning inputs. Although administrative and education professionals are well placed to handle decisions on staffing and curriculum, when parents have the ability to voice their concerns, and provide support or advice in these areas, it enables the school to be more responsive to local needs and take advantage of local skills. A policy giving formal voice to parents enables them to express concerns about education service delivery. A first step could be to formally allow the parent representative to be able to recommend a teacher is transferred out of the school (for non-performance) or to request a teacher (transfer into the school) for a teaching need that is unfulfilled. Devolving more authority to the Parent-Teacher Councils could include activities such as having some input over the local school calendar or learning activities that support the curriculum.

4. School and student assessment. In Jordan there are multiple assessments of student performance, but not of schools themselves. Schools are not assessed following officially established performance evaluation criteria, but the MoE is currently working to create an accountability system, which may allow for school assessment. It is recommended that regular school assessment across the education system be mandated and a national school evaluation and inspection system be created. The inspection system needs to be capable of ensuring local management. Quality should be promoted, through standardized school performance and school self-evaluation, in order to guide allocation of human and financial resources and to promote better school-level management and pedagogical practices.

The Kingdom of Jordan has a variety of different student assessments. Annual examinations occur for grades 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 12. The new achievement test of mathematics, Arabic and English languages, and science occurred for the first time in the last academic year. The MoE should consider formally establishing a policy to regularize this exam.

The MoE and National Center for Human Development analyze student test scores in standardized tests and send results and recommendations to regional

Box 3: Why Conduct School Assessments?

- *Insufficient information.* Information on how schools are managed, how much they cost, and what they produce is often limited in scope, unreliable, out of date, and not readily accessible.
- *Lack of accountability mechanisms.* Few accountability mechanisms are used to set goals and hold students, parents, teachers, principals, and ministries responsible for results.
- *Weak demand.* Because education stakeholders are often unaware of problems and are not used to playing a direct role in improving learning, they seldom hold schools accountable or push for improvements.
- *Lack of shared vision.* Although most countries have a national curriculum, few have identified what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable performance or make clear provisions for the resources needed to reach goals.

Source: Ortega-Goodspeed 2006.

Directorates of Education. Schools may use the information to make pedagogical adjustments when necessary. It is recommended that the MoE introduce a policy to encourage schools and principals to use information for making personnel and operational adjustments. Although principals cannot do much in terms of hiring and firing staff, they could use information gained about their students' performance on national examinations to assign or reassign classes among teachers at their own schools or submit a request for subject specialists or senior teachers where the needs are greatest.

Another way to enhance accountability through student assessment is to publish school-level results of standardized tests and to make the results easily available to the public. Evidence suggests that education systems in which schools publish test results and have more autonomy over resource allocation perform better than schools with less autonomy (OECD 2011). It is recommended that the MOE require school-level results of standardized tests to be made easily accessible to the public.

5. Accountability to Stakeholders. Guidelines are in place in Jordan for the use of results of student assessments at the national, regional, and school levels. But parents do not use and currently may not be

informed about the guidelines to voice accountability. It is recommended that the MoE establish a policy for packaging and disseminating information about student assessments for school-level stakeholders. Some countries have introduced school report cards or school self-evaluations for this purpose. Often the country's education management information system pulls relevant data to inform parts of the school report cards.

In addition, it is recommended that the MoE create a policy that mandates comparative analysis of student results annually. Results should be made easily accessible to schools, and schools should be required to distribute summary results to parents. Although comparative analysis of student results for different types of schools, across regions, and for previous years at the national and regional levels are carried out, the summary analyses are not required to be distributed to parents or the public. It is further recommended that the MoE create a mandate for simplifying and explaining results of student assessments to the public. Establishing a policy to ensure that school-level results of student assessment be administered to the public has been shown to strengthen accountability links between schools and communities (Winkler and Herstein 2005).

Last, in the Kingdom of Jordan no formally established regulations are in place for ensuring accountability in school operations. Some measures commonly used to ensure accountability in school operations, include: complying with the rules of school operations, reporting to those with oversight authority; and linking rewards and sanctions to operating performance. In Jordan schools have records about school operations that they are required to keep for reporting, but no requirements exist for complying with rules of school operations. One first step to ensuring accountability is to formally require a policy or guidelines provided to schools to report on their operations.

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Acronyms

ERfKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAFKE	National Assessment for the Knowledge Economy
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment

SAA	School Autonomy and Accountability
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SBM	School-Based Management
SDDP	School and Directorate Development Program
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

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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 in the area of School Autonomy and Accountability.

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