



Cambodia

TEACHER POLICIES

SABER Country Report
2011

Policy Goals

1. Setting clear expectations for teachers

Expectations for students and teachers are clear, but teachers do not have adequate time to fulfill their duties

Established



2. Attracting the best into teaching

Career pay (aside from starting salary), benefits, and working conditions are appealing, and there is a selection process into initial teacher education; it is unclear which attractive career opportunities exist

Established



3. Preparing teachers with useful training and experience

Standards for teacher training programs do not exist nor do they include enough practical professional experience; there are no induction programs in place to help smooth the transition into teaching

Latent



4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs

There are not enough monetary incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools and there are no incentives to teach critical shortage subjects

Emerging



5. Leading teachers with strong principals

Strong entry requirements for school leadership exist, and principals are provided with performance-based incentives; however, they have limited authority over teacher firing and promotion

Established



6. Monitoring teaching and learning

Student assessments occur annually for all students in selected grades, and teacher performance evaluations along multiple criteria are required every year

Established



7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction

Teacher performance and student learning data are not used to inform teaching and learning; professional development is available but not required for primary or secondary teachers

Emerging



8. Motivating teachers to perform

There are minimum accountability mechanisms in place and some performance-related incentives exist; sanctions for low-performance are weak

Emerging



The Importance of Teacher Policies¹

Research suggests that teacher quality is the main school-based predictor of student achievement and that several consecutive years of outstanding teaching can offset the learning deficits of disadvantaged students (Hanushek & Rivkin 2006; Nye, et al. 2004; Park & Hannum 2001; Rivkin, et al. 2005; Rockoff 2004; Sanders 1998; Sanders & Rivers 1996; and Vignoles, et al. 2000). However, it is not yet clear exactly which teacher policies can raise teacher effectiveness (Goldhaber 2002 and Rivkin, et al. 2005). Thus, devising effective policies to improve teaching quality remains a challenge.

There is increasing interest across the globe to attract, retain, develop and motivate great teachers. While the World Bank has ample experience in supporting teacher policy reforms in developing countries, until recently there was no systematic effort to offer data and analysis that can provide policy guidance on teacher policies.

A new tool, **Systems Approach for Better Education Results** (SABER)-Teachers, fills this gap by collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, and disseminating comprehensive information on teacher policies in primary and secondary education across a range of different education systems. In this report, we discuss the findings from the application of SABER-Teachers in Cambodia. Our goal is to enable policymakers to learn about how other countries address the same policy challenges related to teacher management and thus how to make well-informed policy choices that will lead to improved learning outcomes.²

¹ In order to offer guidance to policy makers in client countries on how to raise education quality, the Education Unit at the World Bank's Human Development Department has launched Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), an initiative that seeks to collect information about different education systems' policy domains, analyze it to identify common challenges and promising solutions, and make it widely available to inform countries' decisions on where and how to invest in order to improve education quality. SABER - Teachers is one such policy domain.

² The focus of the initiative is the design of teacher policies as opposed to their implementation on the ground. A number of complementary activities will be looking at implementation in a sample of countries as this will involve a different methodological approach and will require more financial and human resources.

Overview of SABER-Teachers

SABER-Teachers collects data on 10 core teacher policy areas in order to offer a comprehensive overview of teacher policies in each education system. These policy areas are listed in Box 1. It is important to highlight that SABER-Teachers' main focus is on the policies formally adopted by education systems. While in some cases the data collected also address how the teacher policy goals are achieved in practice, the nature of our data collection approach (based on interviews with key informants and official document review) do not allow for a thorough assessment of policy implementation. Therefore, complementary research will be useful in most settings.

Box 1: Key Teacher Policy Areas

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

To analyze these data and offer informed policy guidance, SABER-Teachers analyzes progress on eight teacher policy goals. SABER-Teachers used three criteria to select these teacher policy goals. They are: (i) linked to performance through evidence provided by research and studies; (ii) a high priority for resource allocation; and (iii) actionable. The 8 teacher policy goals are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Teacher Policy Goals



The eight teacher policy goals exclude other objectives that countries might want to pursue to increase the effectiveness of teachers. These were excluded because there is to date insufficient empirical basis on which to make specific policy recommendations, either because evidence on policy interventions in that area remains unclear or because the top-performing education systems take very different approaches to reach these objectives.³ For a more detailed report on the eight teacher policy goals and the evidence supporting this selection, please see Vegas, et al. (2010).

³ For example, *SABER-Teachers* collects information on teacher organizations (as part of the policy area of “teacher representation and voice”) and will make it publicly available. Yet no clear trend has emerged regarding whether (and if so, how) governments should engage with these organizations in policy formulation or consultation. To be sure, many studies have looked at the impact of unionization on schools’ productivity (Argys and Reese, 1995; Eberts and Stone, 1986; and Hoxby 1996), student learning (Kingdon and Teal, 2008; Kleiner and Petree, 1988; Kurth, 1987; Register and Grimes, 1991; and Steelman et al, 2000), teachers’ wages (Ballou and Podgursky, 2002; Baugh and Stone, 1982; Bee and Dolton, 1995; and Dolton and Robson, 1996), working conditions (Eberts, 1984; Murillo et al, 2002; and Zegarra and Ravina, 2003) and education policy (Goldschmidt and Stuart, 1986 and Woodbury, 1985). But even top-performing countries differ widely in how much they engage, to what extent they regulate, and how they organize teachers’ unions. Data collected by *SABER-Teachers* will offer guidance on how to approach these issues in the future.

Cambodia’s Teacher Policy System Results

Goal 1: Setting clear expectations for teachers

Established



Setting clear expectations for teachers is important for several reasons. First, expectations for student and teacher performance influence how potential entrants perceive the profession. The clearer these expectations, the more likely an education system is to get the type of teacher it seeks. Second, expectations guide teachers’ work. The more specific they are, the better teachers can organize their time and resources to meet them. Finally, expectations can help align the goals of different key aspects of the profession (e.g., pre-service training, professional development and teacher appraisals). The more institutionalized these expectations are, the more likely all of these aspects will be working towards a common purpose and thus the more likely it will be achieved. *SABER - Teachers* considers three policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:

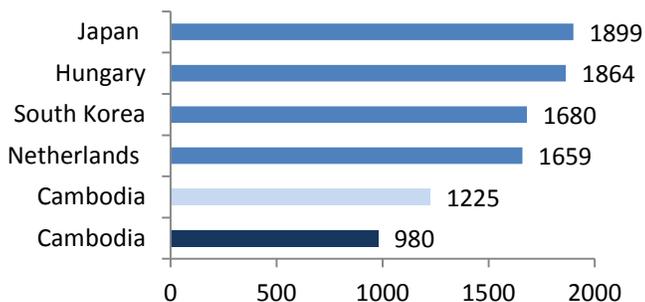
- Are there clear expectations for what students should know and be able to do?
- Are there clear expectations for what teachers are supposed to do?
- Do teachers have enough time to fulfill their duties?

In Cambodia, there are clear expectations for students and teachers, and performance goals for teachers have been established. Expectations for the tasks that teachers are supposed to do are explicitly laid out in legal regulations, and teachers are guided by performance goals. Cambodia has a national curriculum, which sets the contents in detail, informing teachers of required subject content that should be taught to students at different grades. In addition, national standards, or measurable indicators of learning, have been defined for what students should know and be able to do.

Working time is between 1000 and 1520 hours per year for primary and secondary school teachers, fewer hours than the required time in high-performing systems (Figure 2). However, similar to top education systems, the school year consists of 800 hours or more at both primary and the secondary levels. Teachers’

working time is defined as the number of hours spent at school, which recognizes at least some of the non-classroom tasks that teachers are required to carry out, including lesson planning and other administrative tasks. However, data are not available on how much time school teachers are expected to devote to teaching as a share of total working time, making it difficult to evaluate how much time is available for other necessary activities.

Figure 2: Average teacher working hours per year, selected countries



Source: SABER-Teachers.

Goal 2: Attracting the Best into Teaching

Established



Getting talented people to go into teaching is essential for several reasons (Guarino, Santibáñez & Daley 2006). First, more able individuals make better teachers (Boyd, et al. 2008). The better the quality of the teaching force, the more likely an education system is to have effective teachers. Second, top candidates maximize the impact of teacher training (whether traditional or abridged). If the quality of student teachers is too low, training is likely to focus more on making up for their deficits in knowledge and skills and less on turning them into effective teachers. Finally, luring top talent into teaching has a “multiplier” effect: if teaching attracts qualified people, competitive candidates who had not considered teaching might be drawn to it. SABER - Teachers considers four policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal.⁴

⁴ One issue that is not included in this list because of lack of clear guidance from available evidence on how to tackle it is that of the “flexibility” of the profession. Several studies find

- Are entry requirements set up to attract talented candidates?
- Are pay and benefits appealing for talented candidates?
- Are working conditions appealing for talented candidates?
- Are there attractive career opportunities?

In Cambodia, there are entry requirements to initial teacher education and pre-service training is available.

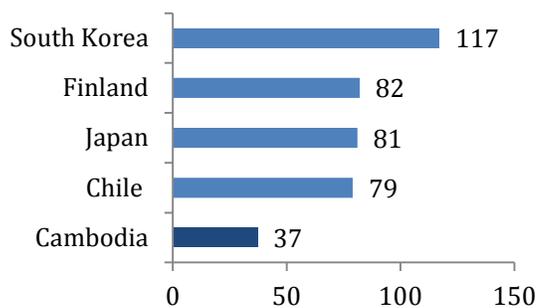
Over 90 percent of primary and secondary school teachers meet requirements to become a teacher. Pre-service training exists, but the share of teachers who enter these programs out of the applicant pool is not known, making it difficult to evaluate the extent to which candidates are competitively selected into these programs. Concurrent models of teacher training are available for both primary and secondary school teachers, and consecutive models are also offered for secondary school teachers. Therefore, prospective secondary school teachers have the option to first learn content and then receive training in pedagogy in a second phase, or learn both content and pedagogy at the same time.

Most pay and benefits are appealing for talented candidates, but starting salaries are very uncompetitive.

Starting salaries are less than 50 percent of GDP per capita, which is lower than at least 60 percent of GDP per capita in top-performing systems (Figure 3). However, teacher pay can potentially change moderately over a teacher’s career and the salary schedule varies based on the results of teacher performance evaluations. In addition, pay is differentiated for teachers who teach in hard-to-staff schools or certain geographic areas, giving incentives to teach in these environments. Teachers are entitled to retirement but not health benefits, and salaries are paid on time 10 months or more every year.

that some women prefer to teach because they can take leaves of absence to take care of their families without incurring wage penalties when they come back (Flyer & Rosen 1997; Stinebrickner 1999a, 1999b, 2001a, 2001b). Yet, it is unclear that education systems want to attract these candidates any more than other groups.

Figure 3: Starting Teacher Pay as a Share of GDP Per Capita, Selected Countries (percent)



Source: SABER-Teachers and EdStats.

Teachers' working conditions are appealing, but there are many primary school students per teacher. About 74 percent of schools comply with infrastructure standards and the secondary student-teacher ratio is 27, similar conditions to top-performing systems. However, there are 49 primary school students per teacher, which may detract some teachers from the profession.

Promotion opportunities are linked to performance. However, data are unavailable on potential promotion opportunities.

Goal 3: Preparing Teachers with Useful Training and Experience



Equipping teachers with the skills they need to succeed in a classroom is crucial. First, few (if any) individuals are born effective teachers. Teachers need subject matter knowledge, classroom management skills and lots of practice in order to be successful in a classroom. In addition, preparation puts all teachers on an equal footing, giving them a common framework to work and improve their practice. SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:⁵

⁵ One aspect not included in this framework because no data on this indicator was collected is that of teacher certification. Although the definition of teacher certification varies by country (and sometimes, within one country), studies have found that a certification status is generally associated with higher teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond 1999a, 1999b; Darling-Hammond, Barnett & Thorenson 2001; E. J. Fuller 1999; Goldhaber & Brewer 2000; Hawk, Coble & Swanson 1985).

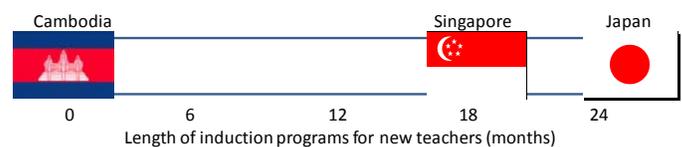
- Are there minimum standards for pre-service teaching training programs?
- Are individuals required to have classroom experience to be allowed to teach?
- Do teachers have a smooth transition from pre-service training into their first job?

In Cambodia, there is an accreditation process for pre-service teacher training programs, but no specifications on subject content have been established. High performing countries tend to have clear specifications with a balance of both content and pedagogy, as research shows that subject matter knowledge can positively impact teacher performance (Darling-Hammond 1999a, 1999b; Guyton & Farokhi 1987; Monk 1994; Rowan, et al. 1997).

Teacher trainees are required to have only minimal classroom experience. Teacher trainees are required to have up to three months of classroom experience, which may be too short to have a positive impact on teacher effectiveness. The more teachers try out their pedagogical theories, subject matter knowledge and classroom management skills on a group of students, the better prepared they will be for their job.

In addition, there are no systems in place to facilitate new teachers' transition into teaching for primary or secondary school teachers. In high-performing systems, comparable programs for both primary and secondary school teachers are usually longer than seven months. These programs have the potential to make teachers more effective in the classroom and reduce teacher turnover (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Length of induction programs for new teachers, selected countries



Source: SABER-Teachers.

Goal 4: Matching Teachers' Skills with Students' Needs

Emerging



Ensuring that teachers work in schools where their skills are most needed is important for promoting equity and efficiency. First, it is a way of ensuring all students in an education system have an equal opportunity to learn: without purposeful incentives, teachers tend to gravitate towards schools with better working conditions, which often serve better off students (Boyd, et al. 2005a; Hanushek, et al. 2004). Second, it is a way of ensuring teachers are distributed efficiently—i.e., to minimize the number of surplus teachers at a given grade, subject or geographic area. Finally, ensuring teachers are a good match for their school can also increase their effectiveness and reduce turnover rates (Boyd, et al. 2002, 2005b; Jackson 2010).⁶ SABER - Teachers considers two policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:

- Are there incentives for teachers to work at hard-to-staff schools?
- Are there incentives for teachers to teach critical shortage subjects?

In Cambodia, there are monetary incentives for teaching in hard-to-staff schools, but teaching experience is considered when deciding transfer priorities (Figure 5). Using seniority as a basis for approving transfer requests may motivate the most seasoned and potentially best teachers to leave hard-to-staff schools. Attracting effective teachers to work in these schools, which may serve students from disadvantaged populations, is a challenge for many countries, and often requires incentives such as differentiated pay.

Figure 5: Incentives to take up posts in hard-to-staff schools, selected systems

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Source: SABER-Teachers and OECD.

Cambodia has identified critical shortage subjects, but has not created monetary incentives for teachers to focus on them. In high-performing and top-improving systems, various incentives exist to attract talented professionals, particularly from high-demand fields, to teaching critical shortage subjects.

⁶ Much research has been devoted to the issue of turnover. Several studies have noted that it is not always the most effective teachers who leave (Boyd, et al. 2007; Hanushek, et al. 2005; West & Chingos 2008). Yet, these studies also concede that there is still considerable room for schools to enact targeted policies aimed at retaining only the most effective performers.

Goal 5: Leading Teacher with Strong Principals

Established



The quality of school heads is second only to classroom teaching as a predictor of student learning (Eberts & Stone 1988; Leithwood, et al. 2006). Quality principals attract and retain quality teachers (Boyd, et al. 2009a; Ingersoll 2001a, 2001b; Papa Jr., Lankford & Wyckoff 2002). Also, capable principals can spearhead much-needed change at the school level, so having strong leaders is important not only to ensure acceptable levels of performance but also to drive improvements.

Finally, good principals can facilitate teachers' work and continuous improvement. The more capable a principal is, the more he or she can support teachers, create a sense of community, make teachers feel valued and ease their anxiety about external pressures (Mulford 2003). SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:

- Are requirements to become a principal set up to attract talented candidates?
- Do principals have incentives to perform well?
- Can principals make key decisions to improve teaching?

In Cambodia, three requirements for becoming a public school principal exist, in line with best practices. Principals must possess educational qualifications equivalent to the ISCED 4A, complete certain courses, and perform satisfactorily in a supervised internship.

Principal pay is highly competitive, and there are other incentives in place to perform well. Principals are paid 170 percent of GDP per capita, which is highly competitive by international standards. Principals are evaluated by local, sub-national, and national education authorities, and there are performance-based incentives. In addition, the role of principals as instructional leaders is explicitly directed by policy, as they are required to provide guidance to teachers.

Principals have limited authority over decisions that affect teaching. While school principals have formal responsibility for hiring teachers, they do not have the authority to promote nor dismiss them (Figure 6). However, they do have substantial authority over the distribution of time during school hours. High-performing and top-improving systems often grant this type of decision-making authority to principals.

Figure 6: Principals' decision-making in teacher hiring and firing, selected systems



Source: SABER-Teachers and OECD

Goal 6: Monitoring Teaching and Learning

Established



Assessing how well teachers are teaching and whether students are learning is essential to devise strategies for improving teaching and learning. First, teacher and student evaluations help identify good practices, which can then be shared among the teaching staff to improve school performance. Second, identifying low-performing teachers and students is necessary to support them in a timely manner. Education systems need to be able to know when to provide struggling classrooms with adequate support to improve. Finally, such information is useful for accountability purposes. SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:

- Is there enough student achievement data to inform teaching?
- Is there enough teacher performance data to inform teaching?

In Cambodia, there are some student achievement data, but these data are not used to inform teaching. Cambodia conducts annual national and subnational assessments of student learning for all students in at least three grades across both primary and secondary levels. Although it is possible to track students' scores over time, student assessment data cannot be linked to individual teachers, making it impossible to use the data to inform teachers about the learning needs of their students. Cambodia has not participated in any international assessments of student achievement, thus making it difficult to assess its performance relative to other countries.

Teacher performance evaluations are regularly conducted and required for all teachers. In Cambodia, teacher performance is evaluated annually by external education authorities as well by the school. Several criteria are used to assess teacher performance, including teacher attendance, knowledge of subject matter, compliance with the curriculum, teaching methods, student assessment methods, student learning, and class participation. These evaluations are based on a self-assessment by the teacher as well as colleagues' assessment and classroom observation. It is possible to track teachers' evaluations over time, but

data are not available on how many teachers fail external evaluations, making it difficult to assess the rigor of these assessments.

Goal 7: Supporting Teachers to Improve Instruction

Emerging



Helping teachers be more effective in the classroom is vital. First, all teachers can improve—regardless of how effective they are at one point in time. Therefore, support mechanisms are necessary to help teachers reach their potential and perform at their best. Second, changes in classroom assignments and/or student populations can pose new challenges to teachers. Thus, during periods of transitions, teachers will need additional help to sustain their performance. Finally, support mechanisms can go a long way in preventing burnout and reducing turnover. Even motivated teachers may choose to leave if they are consistently ineffective, do not know how to improve and receive little support. SABER - Teachers considers two policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:

- Is teacher performance data used to improve teaching?
- Is there professional development to improve practice?

In Cambodia, teacher performance data from evaluations are used to require professional development, but they are not used to inform classroom practice or assign additional supervision. In high-performing systems, teacher performance evaluations are used to inform classroom practice, designate a supervisor for support, and assign professional development to improve teaching methods. If evaluations are not used to improve instruction, it is unlikely that teachers will improve on areas because they are not aware that they need to get better. The strategies of assigning tutors, supervisors or coaches or providing additional professional development to struggling teachers can offer them the tools and guidance they need to improve.

Professional development in the form of workshops or courses is not required nor recommended. However, professional development does exist, and includes 5

kinds of activities, such as: (i) observation visits to other schools; (ii) participation in a teacher network; (iii) participation in a school network; (iv) individual or collaborative research; and (v) mentoring. Content for primary and secondary school teachers’ professional development is adequate, including 4 aspects related to teaching: (i) knowledge and understanding of subjects; (ii) understanding and teaching the curriculum; (iii) relating the curriculum to meeting the required learning standards; and (iv) knowledge and understanding of instructional practices in main subjects. In line with many top-performing systems, individual teachers are not responsible for paying for their professional development.

Goal 8: Motivating Teachers to Perform

Emerging



Incentives help education systems signal priorities. The more aligned incentives are with the behaviors and outcomes they expect from teachers, the more likely they will obtain them (Figure 7). Incentives are also a way of recognizing teachers’ work. Teaching is a challenging job and incentives can let teachers know the results they have achieved are valued so that they continue working hard to sustain them. In addition, some types of incentives can influence the profile of the teaching profession and make it more competitive, dynamic and performance-driven. The presence of incentives can affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession. SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers education systems can use to reach this goal:

- Are there minimum mechanisms to hold teachers accountable?
- Are there rewards for high-performing teachers?
- Are there sanctions for low-performing teachers?

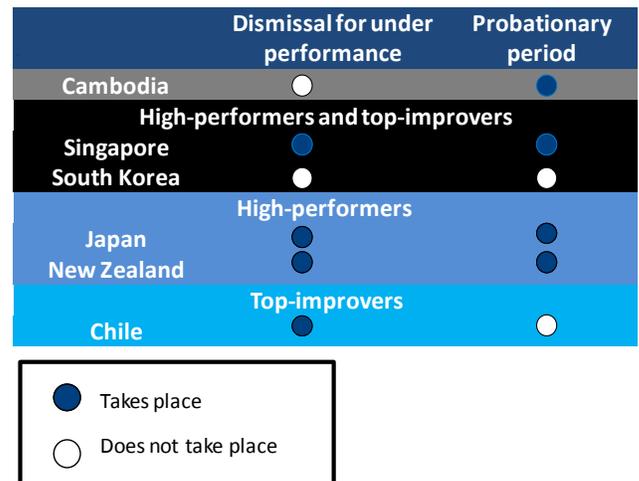
There are minimum mechanisms in place to hold teachers accountable. In Cambodia, requirements exist for primary and secondary school teachers to remain in the profession, and teachers can be dismissed for misconduct or child abuse. Teacher absenteeism is taken into account in performance evaluations, but it does not result in penalties such as salary deductions and/or dismissal. Research in both developed and developing countries indicates that teacher absenteeism can reach high levels, negatively impacting

student performance (Chaudhury, et al. 2005; Herrmann & Rockoff 2009; Miller, Murnane & Willett 2008; Rogers & Vegas 2009). Education systems can encourage teacher attendance by taking it into account in teacher evaluations, giving teachers monetary bonuses for coming to school and/or by dismissing teachers if they are consistently absent.

There are rewards for high-performing teachers. In Cambodia, high-performing teachers get higher salaries, better chances of promotion, and public recognition. However, the share of teachers’ salary (and therefore significance of this incentive) that is affected by performance is not known. Top-performing education systems often motivate teachers by rewarding outstanding performance through these channels as well.

Sanctions in place for low-performing teachers are inadequate. There is a mandatory probation period for teachers before they are granted open-ended appointments, and performance on the job factors into whether teachers receive appointments. However, there are no pay cuts for low-performing teachers, nor are job evaluations used to dismiss ineffective teachers.

Figure 7: Motivating teachers to perform, selected systems



Source: SABER-Teachers and OECD.

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The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) initiative produces comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems. SABER evaluates the quality of education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data. The SABER country reports give all parties with a stake in educational results—from administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, objective snapshot showing how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

This report focuses specifically on policies in the area teacher policies.

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