Group of National Experts on Evaluation and Assessment

OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Mexico

by Paulo Santiago, Isobel McGregor, Deborah Nusche, Pedro Ravela and Diana Toledo

The Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Mexico forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. This report is only available in PDF format and can also be downloaded from the project’s website at www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

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OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education

MEXICO

How can student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation bring about real gains in performance across a country’s school system? The country reports in this series provide, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the evaluation and assessment framework, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. This series forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes.

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Chapter 1. School education in Mexico
Chapter 2. The evaluation and assessment framework
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Foreword

This report for Mexico forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes (see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the Review is to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation frameworks that countries use with the objective of improving student outcomes. These include student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation.

Mexico was one of the countries which opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. Members of the OECD Review Team were Paulo Santiago (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Isobel McGregor (Educational Consultant, formerly with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate in Scotland; United Kingdom); Deborah Nusche (OECD Secretariat); Pedro Ravela (Director, Institute for Educational Evaluation of the Catholic University of Uruguay; Uruguay); and Diana Toledo (OECD Secretariat). This publication is the report from the OECD Review Team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the evaluation and assessment framework in Mexico, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: (1) Provide insights and advice to Mexican education authorities; (2) Help other OECD countries understand the Mexican approach; and (3) Provide input for the final comparative report of the project.

Mexico’s involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Alejandro Ramírez Torres, then Co-ordinator of Advisors, Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE), Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), from April 2010 until December 2011; and, from January 2012 on, by Florencia Martínez Becerra, Co-ordinator of Strategic Projects, Analysis and Integration of Educational Policies, Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE), Secretariat of Public Education (SEP).

An important part of Mexico’s involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on evaluation and assessment policy in a collaborative effort between the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE) and the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). The OECD Review Team is very grateful to the main author of the CBR (Valentina Jiménez Franco, Project Leader at INEE), and to all those who assisted her for providing a high-quality informative document. The CBR is an important output from the OECD project in its own right as well as an important source for the OECD Review Team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the Mexican Country Background Report. The CBR follows guidelines prepared by the OECD Secretariat and provides extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to the national context, the organisation of the educational system, the main features of the evaluation and assessment framework and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a more comprehensive view of evaluation and assessment in Mexico, should be read in conjunction.

The Review visit to Mexico took place on 7-15 February 2012. The itinerary is provided in Annex B. The visit was designed by the OECD in collaboration with the Mexican authorities. The biographies of the members of the OECD Review Team are
provided in Annex C. It should be noted that the scope for the Review of Mexico was limited to primary and lower secondary education.

During the Review visit, the team held discussions with a wide range of federal and state authorities; education officials; relevant agencies which deal with evaluation and assessment issues (at the federal and state levels); teacher representatives; parents’ organisations; representatives of schools; representatives of Indigenous education; representatives of students with special needs; teacher educators; civil society organisations; and researchers with an interest in evaluation and assessment issues. The team also visited a range of schools, interacting with school supervisors, school management, teachers and students in the Federal District, the state of Mexico and the state of Puebla. The intention was to provide a broad cross-section of information and opinions on evaluation and assessment policies and how their effectiveness can be improved. Overall, the OECD Review Team held 45 meetings (with 55 hours of discussions) and interviewed about 200 individuals.

The OECD Review Team wishes to record its grateful appreciation to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the OECD Review Team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. Special words of appreciation are due to the Head of the Educational Policy Planning and Assessment Unit, Bernardo Rojas Nájera, and the National Co-ordinator at the time of the visit, Florencia Martínez Becerra, for going to great lengths to respond to the questions and needs of the OECD Review Team. We were impressed by their efficiency and expertise. This gratitude extends to their team for providing excellent support to the OECD Review Team, particularly Lourdes Cobos Gutiérrez and Marcela Gallardo González, Advisors at UPEPE. We are also grateful to Alejandro Ramírez Torres, initial National Co-ordinator, for the preparatory work in Mexico’s participation in the OECD Review. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in Mexico made our task as a Review Team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging.

The OECD Review Team is also grateful to colleagues at the OECD, especially to Thomas Radinger for preparing the statistical annex to this Country Review report (Annex D) and to Heike-Daniela Herzog for editorial support.

This report is organised in six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the Mexican school system, main trends and concerns, and recent developments. Chapter 2 looks at the overall evaluation and assessment framework and analyses how the different components of the framework play together and can be made more coherent to effectively improve student learning. Then Chapters 3 to 6 present each of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework – student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation – in more depth, presenting strengths, challenges and policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in Mexico, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those we met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of Mexico and fully understanding all the issues.

Of course, this report is the responsibility of the OECD Review Team. While we benefited greatly from the Mexican CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of Mexican personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are our responsibility.
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<td>ACE</td>
<td>Alliance for Quality in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANMEB</td>
<td>National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATP</td>
<td>Technical Pedagogical Advisor</td>
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<td>CAM</td>
<td>Multi-Service Centre</td>
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<td>CBR</td>
<td>Country Background Report</td>
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<td>CEDE</td>
<td>Educational Development Centre</td>
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<td>CENEVAL</td>
<td>National Assessment Centre for Higher Education</td>
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<td>CEP</td>
<td>Co-ordination of Programme Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CET</td>
<td>Technological Studies Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNCM</td>
<td>National Co-ordination of the Teaching Career Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONAEDU</td>
<td>National Council of Educational Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONAFE</td>
<td>National Council for Educational Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONALEP</td>
<td>National College of Technical Professional Education</td>
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<td>CONAPASE</td>
<td>National Council for Social Participation</td>
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<td>CONAPO</td>
<td>National Population Council</td>
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<td>CONAPRED</td>
<td>National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONEVAL</td>
<td>National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Directorate General</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGAIER</td>
<td>Directorate General of Accreditation, Incorporation and Revalidation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGDC</td>
<td>Directorate General of Curricular Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGDGIE</td>
<td>Directorate General for the Development of Education Management and Innovation</td>
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<td>DGIE</td>
<td>Directorate General of Indigenous Education</td>
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<td>DGEP</td>
<td>Directorate General of Policy Evaluation</td>
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<td>DGESPE</td>
<td>Directorate General of Higher Education for Education Professionals</td>
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<td>DGFCMS</td>
<td>Directorate General of Continuous Training for In-Service Teachers</td>
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<td>DGME</td>
<td>Directorate General of Educational Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGP</td>
<td>Directorate General of Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBSEN</td>
<td>Basic Statistics of the National Education System</td>
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<td>EGEL</td>
<td>General Examination at Bachelors Degree Graduation</td>
</tr>
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<td>ENAMS</td>
<td>National Examinations for the Continuous Training of In-Service Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENCHD</td>
<td>National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENLACE</td>
<td>National Assessment of Academic Achievement in Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXANI I</td>
<td>National Upper Secondary Education Entrance Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXANI II</td>
<td>National Higher Education Entrance Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXCALE</td>
<td>Educational Quality and Achievement Tests</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAEB</td>
<td>Contributions Fund for Basic and Normal Education</td>
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<td>FAM</td>
<td>Multiple Contributions Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDANIS</td>
<td>Instrument for Testing New Lower Secondary School Students</td>
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<td>IDCIEN</td>
<td>Diagnosis and Classification Instrument for Normal School Enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INEE</td>
<td>National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INEGI</td>
<td>National Statistics and Geography Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGE</td>
<td>General Education Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLECE</td>
<td>Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OEIF</td>
<td>Independent Federalist Evaluation Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OREALC</td>
<td>Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAE</td>
<td>Annual Evaluation Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>Annual Work Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC</td>
<td>Quality Schools Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEMLE</td>
<td>Emergent Programme for Improvement in Educational Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETC</td>
<td>Full-time Schools Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETE</td>
<td>Strategic School Transformation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNCM</td>
<td>National Teacher Career Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROSEDU</td>
<td>Education Sector Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNFCSP</td>
<td>National System of Training and Professional Improvement for In-Service Teachers Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>National Student, Teacher and School Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGEB</td>
<td>Regions for the Management of Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIEB</td>
<td>Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEB</td>
<td>Undersecretariat of Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMS</td>
<td>Undersecretariat for Upper Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td>Secretariat of Public Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Undersecretariat for Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIE</td>
<td>Education Indicator System</td>
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<td>SIEEB</td>
<td>Statistical Information System of Basic Education</td>
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<td>SININDE</td>
<td>National Education Indicator System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SISTESEP</td>
<td>Systems for Education Statistics Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNACEEB</td>
<td>National Accreditation System for Basic Education Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNEE</td>
<td>National System for Educational Evaluation</td>
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<td>SNIE</td>
<td>National Education Information System</td>
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<td>SNTE</td>
<td>National Union of Education Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>TALIS</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning International Survey</td>
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<td>TIMSS</td>
<td>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPEPE</td>
<td>Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAER</td>
<td>Unit for Support Services to Mainstream Schools</td>
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</table>
Executive summary

Student learning outcomes in Mexico are considerably below the OECD average. However, trend analyses of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results have shown some encouraging improvement in student learning outcomes, particularly in the area of mathematics. Despite the impressive expansion of the education system in the last few decades, educational attainment remains a challenge and the high share of students leaving the education system too early with low skills remains also a major problem. In addition, there are indications that student results are strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors. The role of evaluation and assessment as key tools to achieve quality and equity in education is reinforced by a range of policy initiatives. Mexico has recently introduced an extensive curricular reform to improve the coherence of the system and its focus on student achievement: the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB). Also, the federal government funds public education partly through targeted educational programmes, which typically include an important evaluation component. While there are provisions for evaluation and assessment at student, teacher, school and system levels, challenges remain in strengthening some of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework, in ensuring articulations within the framework to ensure consistency and complementarity, and in establishing improvement-oriented evaluation practices. The following priorities were identified for the development of evaluation and assessment policies in Mexico.

Sustaining efforts to strengthen evaluation and assessment and placing greater emphasis on their improvement function

Mexico has made a remarkable progress in developing the foundations of a framework for evaluation and assessment. As of the early 2000s, educational policy conferred a central strategic role to evaluation and assessment as indispensable tools for planning, accountability, and policy development. However, at the present time, there is no integrated evaluation and assessment framework – it is not perceived as a coherent whole and it does not visibly connect all the different components. Also, it is apparent that the policy initiatives in evaluation and assessment of the last few years have emphasised accountability over improvement. An important initial step for policy development is to develop a strategic plan or framework document that conceptualises a complete evaluation and assessment framework and articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components. A priority is to reinforce the improvement function of evaluation and assessment and reflect on the best ways for evaluation and assessment to improve student learning. Realising the full potential of the evaluation and assessment framework involves establishing strategies to strengthen the linkages to classroom practice, where the improvement of student learning takes place. This involves the reinforcement of the role of state educational authorities in developing structures to undertake school-level evaluation procedures and provide the necessary follow-up support to drive school improvement. A critical element in the effectiveness of the evaluation and assessment framework is its proper alignment with the RIEB. Another
challenge are the limited evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the education system in spite of the considerable national efforts to stimulate an evaluation culture, as well as providing some competency-building learning opportunities. Hence, an area for policy priority is consolidating efforts to improve the capacity for evaluation and assessment.

**Drawing on the implementation of the curricular reform to broaden approaches to student assessment**

Teachers in Mexico play an important role in student assessment, as both formative continuous assessment and summative assessment are an essential part of their professional responsibilities. However, teaching, learning and assessment still take place in a somewhat “traditional” setting with the teacher leading his/her classroom, the students typically not involved in the planning and organisation of lessons and assessment concentrating on summative scores. As a result, Mexico needs a stronger commitment to improving students’ achievement through the use of formative assessment to enhance student learning. In this context, the implementation of the RIEB is an opportunity as it is bringing a sound approach to classroom-based assessment. The RIEB expands the meaning of assessment, conceiving it as an essential part of teaching and learning; proposes the use of a wide range of assessment instruments; emphasises the formative purpose of classroom-based assessment; and introduces a critical shift in giving a new meaning to marks. Another concern is the dominance of ENLACE (National Assessment of Academic Achievement in Schools, a census-based standardised student assessment). While ENLACE was originally supposed to be a diagnostic and formative assessment instrument, the new objectives and consequences that were added subsequently led to some visible unintended effects such as teaching to the test. Hence, a major priority for policy should be the development of strategies to eliminate or at the very least reduce the current detrimental effects of ENLACE. Possible strategies are reducing the high stakes of ENLACE or transforming ENLACE into a tool for the external summative assessment of students, i.e. an external examination system. In addition, if student marking is to be aligned with the RIEB’s expected learning outcomes and standards in a consistent way across the country, then a priority is to establish mechanisms for the moderation of marking, both within and across schools.

**Developing teaching standards, strengthening teacher appraisal for improvement and establishing teacher certification**

Teacher appraisal is recognised as an important tool to improve student learning and is central in the overall evaluation and assessment framework. This is reflected in the very comprehensive approach to teacher appraisal in Mexico, with a multitude of schemes and programmes. Teacher appraisal is generally perceived positively as a regular component of teachers’ careers. However, teacher appraisal appears complex and fragmented. The overall system of teacher appraisal is the result of the accumulation of isolated programmes and initiatives which evolved independently of each other over time and does not come across as a coherent whole. Also, teacher appraisal, as it is currently conceived, does not emphasise the promotion of teacher improvement. It is predominantly a mechanism to award rewards to teachers mostly based on instruments that only indirectly measure the quality of the teaching (ENLACE results and standardised teacher examinations). The use of raw ENLACE results in teacher appraisal
also raises important issues of fairness across teachers and has the potential to generate detrimental effects in classroom practices. To address these challenges, it is proposed to develop a teacher appraisal model based on two main components: (i) Teacher appraisal for improvement with the introduction of a component predominantly dedicated to developmental evaluation, fully internal to the school, for which the school director would be held accountable, to be used for internal performance management, and to provide an assessment (only) of a qualitative nature to inform professional development plans; and (ii) Teacher appraisal for career progression as a model of certification of competencies for practice within and across career paths, to be associated with career advancement and to be based on a greater variety of instruments. This requires Mexico to establish a clear set of coherent teaching standards that signal to teachers and to society as a whole the core knowledge, skills and values associated with effective teaching at different stages of a teaching career.

Introducing a comprehensive and objective system of school evaluation

The notion of school evaluation is not well embedded in Mexican education principles and practices. Overall, key components of a successful policy development and implementation for school evaluation and improvement are missing from the approaches currently adopted in Mexico. A sustained meaningful system of external school evaluation is lacking. Currently, the external monitoring of schools is undertaken by the supervision system in place in the different states. However, the capacity of supervisors in general to engage in school evaluations in ways which may promote school improvement as well as resulting in accurate evaluation of the quality of a school’s work is limited under present conditions. The present system does not include qualitative aspects which are reliable and validated and which contribute to telling the full story of any school. Efforts at federal level have emphasised the development of materials for self-evaluation. They include advice, instruments and options for self-evaluation and for the construction and implementation of an effective school improvement plan as one of the outcomes of the self-evaluation process. However, the reality is that this work did not result in any sustained and consistent approach to self-evaluation across the country. In the longer term, Mexico should develop a comprehensive system of school evaluation. This would include at least the following elements: ensuring that national advice on self-evaluation penetrates the system; reinforcing the awareness of the rigour required to make self-evaluation lead to improvement; ensuring that all states recommend or require all schools to be involved in self-evaluation; promoting and encouraging states to have mechanisms through which they can engage in external evaluation of schools; and strengthening and broadening the role of supervisors as potential external evaluators. Another priority is to ensure that school directors have or develop the capacities to exercise instructional leadership in their schools.

Strengthening the use of system-level information and filling some data gaps in the national monitoring system

The monitoring of education system quality is a well-developed component of the Mexican approach to evaluation and assessment. There has been a lot of attention among policy makers and the civil society on developing indicators at the national and state levels in order to measure the quality and progress of the education system as a whole. This key focus on system evaluation is reflected in the establishment of comprehensive
Information systems and sample-based national assessments that have been continuously refined over the last decade. The key challenge, however, is to ensure that stakeholders across the system make effective use of the available data. System-level data are not well exploited to inform the development of policies. There seems to be limited capacity and/or interest at the state and national levels to engage in deeper analysis and interpretation of results. Another challenge is to facilitate the use of data by professionals at the school level. This calls for the development of strategies to optimise the use of existing system-level data by stakeholders across the system. Also, there are some areas where the collection of data should be further developed: individual student and teacher trajectories in the school system; the monitoring of inequities in learning outcomes between specific student groups; the socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of students; and the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the teaching and learning environment. Finally, EXCALE (Educational Quality and Achievement Tests, sample-based standardised student assessment for national monitoring) should be continuously reviewed to ensure their relevance to national education goals.
Chapter 1

School education in Mexico

The governance of schools is largely decentralised with states taking most responsibility as school providers. This follows the 1992 National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education signed between the federal government, the state government and the National Union of Education Workers, which transferred the operation of federal basic education to state governments. However, the federal government through the Secretariat for Public Education (SEP) is responsible for national education policy and the overall strategy for the education system. The SEP regulates areas such as funding, evaluation and administration of education personnel. It retains normative authority to assure the uniformity of education services across the country and guarantee their national character. Other major players include the National Council of Educational Authorities (CONAEDU), which assumes responsibilities for educational planning and co-ordination of decision making among the federal government and the states; the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE); the National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (CENEVAL); the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL); and the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE).

Major features of the Mexican education system include: the dominance of half-day schooling; the difficult social contexts faced by schools; a deficient school infrastructure; numerous challenges facing the teaching profession; the limited school autonomy; and the considerable funding inequities. Student learning outcomes in Mexico are considerably below the OECD average in spite of some progress in the last decade. There are also concerns about strong social inequities in the school system. Major reforms were launched in recent years including the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB), the National Assessment of Academic Achievement in Schools (ENLACE) and a range of targeted federal educational programmes.
Main features

Context

Mexico, with about 112 million inhabitants, is the 11th most populous country in the world and the 14th most extensive in land area. Mexico is a democratic federal republic made up of 31 states and a Federal District (Distrito Federal or D.F.), which is the political and administrative capital. The most populated federal entities are the state of Mexico (15.2 million inhabitants), the Federal District (8.9 million), Veracruz (7.6 million), Jalisco (7.5 million), Puebla (5.8 million) and Guanajuato (5.5 million). About 78% of Mexico’s population lives in urban areas dominated by the mega agglomerations of Mexico City (estimated 20 million inhabitants), Guadalajara and Monterrey, although over the last decade medium-sized and satellite cities have been growing strongly. While mega cities bring well known challenges, so too do Mexico’s rural areas, particularly in terms of service delivery. They are highly fragmented with 22% of the rural population living in localities with less than 250 inhabitants. This dispersion is closely linked to poverty which in turn is linked to geographical conditions making both services supply and community development very challenging. About a third of the population is in the 0-to-14-year-old age range (2010 census data from INEGI, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, www.inegi.org.mx).

The economy of Mexico is the 13th largest in the world in nominal terms and the 11th by purchasing power parity. In 2010 its GDP per capita was USD 9,123, the 54th in the world (online data by the World Bank). The low levels of education are often pointed as one of the main inhibitors of economic prosperity and growth (see, for example, Arias et al., 2010). In 2008, 50.6 million Mexicans were asset-poor (47.4%) as they lacked sufficient income to satisfy their needs for health services, education, food, dwelling and public transportation, even though they dedicated all their economic resources to those purposes. Also, 19.5 million were food-poor (18.2%) in the sense of not having sufficient income to acquire basic food products. Six of every ten food-poor inhabitants live in the country’s rural settings (CONEVAL, 2009).

The cultural diversity in the country is extensive. The Indigenous population is approximately 8 million, representing 62 ethno-linguistic groups that speak one of the 68 Indigenous languages and 364 dialectic variations. These communities show high and very high degrees of social disadvantage, a fact partly related to their remote location which hampers access to education services.

The structure of the school system

The Mexican school system is large. In the 2011/12 school year, 31,115,977 students were enrolled and 1,472,738 teachers were employed in a total of 242,621 schools (data provided by the SEP), for all levels of pre-tertiary education. The school system is organised in two sequential levels: basic education (typical ages 3 to 14) and upper secondary education (typical ages 15 to 17). Basic education is organised according to three stages: pre-primary education (ages 3 to 5); primary education (grades 1-6); and lower secondary education (grades 7-9) (see Figure 1.1). School attendance is compulsory for 15 years, including three years of pre-primary education (3-to-5-year-olds), primary and lower secondary education (from 6 to 15 years old) and, as of 2012, upper secondary education (grades 10 to 12). In primary education, all subjects are usually taught by a generalist teacher, while from lower secondary education on, subjects are taught by teachers specialising in subjects.
## Figure 1.1 The Mexican school system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/type/modality</th>
<th>Pre-primary education (Preescolar)</th>
<th>Primary education (Primaria)</th>
<th>Lower secondary education (Secundaria)</th>
<th>Upper secondary education (Media Superior)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modalities:</td>
<td>General;</td>
<td>General;</td>
<td>General programmes (Bachillerato)</td>
<td>Modalities: General, technological, televised (Telebachesillerato), Colegio de Bachilleres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communitarian (Comunitaria);</td>
<td>Communitarian (Comunitaria);</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical-professional programmes (Profesional Técnico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modalities: National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP); Technological Studies Centres (CETs); other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Pre-primary and primary education are provided in three distinct modalities, each typically associated with a school type: general, communitarian and Indigenous. These seek to adapt the learning to different circumstances such as linguistic and cultural needs, remote locations and migrant groups. General schools are more typical of urban and rural zones and enrol the vast majority of students in these education levels (see Table 1.1). Indigenous schools are characterised by bilingualism/biculturalism: a school where at least one Indigenous language is taught and elements of Indigenous culture are immersed in the school’s activities. They are not necessarily attended in majority by students with an Indigenous background. Community courses are targeted at small communities and are provided by a Government Agency created in 1971, CONAFE (National Council for Educational Promotion, Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo), with the objective of promoting education among populations in rural and urban highly deprived contexts. One half of the Indigenous primary schools and at least three-quarters of the community courses are in rural areas. Of all the primary schools, 44% are multi-grade (teachers instructing two or more grades simultaneously) including all the community courses (INEE, 2009).

Lower secondary education is provided in five distinct modalities, each typically associated with a school type: general, technical, televised (Telesecundarias), communitarian, and for workers. In this level of education, general schools cater for about half of the student enrolment while about 28% of students attend a technical school (a school which in addition to general education offers a range of “technical” subjects such as ICT or electronics and which gives access to any type of upper secondary education) (see Table 1.1). The Telesecundarias system – attended by one out of five students – was created in the 1960s to provide compulsory education in rural or hardly accessible areas in Mexico, even if currently many Telesecundarias are also located in urban areas. Instruction is delivered through specialised television broadcasts, as well as printed and digital materials, complemented with teachers’ instruction. The teachers are considered facilitators and are specially trained for this education modality. Unlike regular lower secondary schools, where there is a teacher per subject, the Telesecundarias...
system allows having only one teacher per grade or school. In the 2008/09 school year, about 20% of Telesecundarias had either one or two teachers in charge of all the three grades (INEE, 2009). A small proportion of students (0.4%) attend CONAFE community courses while specific lower secondary courses are also provided for workers (0.5% of enrolment). Students receive an official certificate upon completion of lower secondary education (Certificate of Basic Education, Certificado de Educación Básica), which is needed to enrol in upper secondary education.

Upper secondary education is of two types:

- General programmes (Bachillerato). It includes 2- to 4-year programmes in four modalities: general (42.8% of enrolment), technological (33.8%), televised (Telebachillerato) (4.6%), and Colegio de Bachilleres (18.8%). These programmes are either mainly geared to working life or the continuation of studies at higher education level. The Colegio de Bachilleres is a sub-system with extra offerings more vocational in nature. The programmes awarding the “technological baccalaureate” (Bachillerato tecnológico) include 60% general subjects and 40% vocational subjects (Kis et al., 2009).

- Technical-professional programmes (Profesional Técnico), which typically last three years and are offered by various sub-systems, though one sub-system (CONALEP) includes over 70% of the students (see Kis et al., 2009). The programme involves 35% of general subjects and 65% of vocational subjects and students are required to complete 360 hours of practical training (Kis et al., 2009). These programmes are geared towards an initial qualification for students, giving priority to their entering the job market while, at the same time, allowing them to study further.

Table 1.1 Student enrolment by education level, type and modality, 2010/11 school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/type</th>
<th>Total enrolment</th>
<th>Proportion of enrolment (%)</th>
<th>Enrolment by modality (proportion within level and type of education) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total school system</strong></td>
<td>29 853 979</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic education</strong></td>
<td>25 666 451</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-primary education</td>
<td>4 641 060</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>General 88.2 Communitarian 3.4 Indigenous 8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>14 887 845</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>General 93.6 Technical 0.8 Teledised 5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>6 137 546</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>General 50.3 Technical 28.2 Teledised 20.6 For workers 0.5 Communitarian 0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>4 187 528</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>General 42.8 Technological 33.8 Teledised 4.6 Colegio Bachilleres 18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General programmes</td>
<td>3 811 473</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>General 42.8 Technological 33.8 Teledised 4.6 CONALEP Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical-professional programmes</td>
<td>376 055</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>General 76.6 Technical 1.1 Teledised 22.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also non-school (servicio extraescolar) and mixed modes of enrolment in education. These refer to open or distance learning options with no requirement for full-time physical presence at a learning institution. They also include initial education (prior to pre-primary education), adult education (for adults who have not previously completed basic education), special education (see below), and training for workers (for workers with basic skills). These are options which adapt to the users’ needs and functions with the support of consultants. In 2008/09, non-school services were provided to about 5 million individuals (INEE, 2009).

Students with special needs (with disabilities and gifted students) attend mainstream basic schools, or receive their education from Multi-Service Centres (Centros de Atención Múltiple, CAMs). CAMs exist from pre-primary to upper secondary education, and cover training for the labour market of students up to 22 years of age. The Federal Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), through the Programme for the Strengthening of Special Education and Educational Integration (Programa de Fortalecimiento de la Educación Especial y de la Integración Educativa), manages special education programmes and supports the special education services provided by the 32 federal entities. Basic schools receive assistance for special needs students from units created to support this kind of education in mainstream schools – the Unit for Support Services to Mainstream Schools (Unidad de Servicios de Apoyo a la Escuela Regular, USAER). These units promote the use of specific methods, techniques and materials to support the learning of special needs students in mainstream schools, including with the provision of the necessary resources. Across the country, there are 1 519 CAMs and 3 858 USAERs. There is also a structure to provide information and guidance to teachers and families on options and strategies for the education of students with special needs, typically in the form of Resource and Information Centres for Educational Integration (Centros de Recursos e Información para la Integración Educativa, CRIE) and Units for Public Guidance (Unidad de Orientación al Público, UOP).

The governance of the education system

The decentralisation of provision

The great majority of students attend public schools. In the 2010/11 school year, the proportion of students attending public schools was 90.8% in basic education and 82.5% in upper secondary education (see Table 1.2). Private schools are not publicly subsidised and derive their resources from student fees. In basic education, in order to operate, private providers need the authorisation of state educational authorities. They are required to follow the national curriculum established by the SEP. However they are autonomous in the management of their human resources and in the choice of teaching and learning approaches.

The governance of schools is largely decentralised with states taking most responsibility as school providers. About 84% of students enrolled in basic education are in schools under the jurisdiction of states, while about 9% of students are in private schools and less than 7% attend schools under the direct jurisdiction of the federal government (see Table 1.2). The distribution of student enrolment is somewhat different at the upper secondary level: 45% in schools governed by state governments, 25% in schools under the jurisdiction of the federal government, 18% in private schools, and 12% in schools managed by autonomous agencies (such as autonomous universities).
Education was decentralised in 1992 through the National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education (Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica, ANMEB) signed by the federal government, the state governments and the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE, Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Educación). This political agreement transferred the operation of federal basic education to state governments, creating education sub-systems at the state level. These comprise pre-school, primary and lower secondary, initial teacher education (in the Teachers Colleges or Normal Schools sub-system), and in-service teacher education (in addition to upper secondary and higher education offerings). Education services in the Federal District remained under the administration of the federal SEP through an agency called the Federal Administration of Educational Services in the Federal District. The distribution of responsibilities for education which resulted from the ANMEB was formalised by the General Education Law (Ley General de Educación, LGE), established in 1993. It remains the main legal reference which regulates education in Mexico, with revisions in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2009 (see Chapter 2 for more details).

Analysts highlight that the ANMEB Agreement essentially consists of a pact between the co-existing real powers in education – the SEP and the SNTE – to transfer the operation of federal educational services to the state level while maintaining the national character of the education system. This was done in such a way the central authority kept the main areas of decision (see below), including the control of most of the funding, the SNTE kept the control of labour negotiations within the system while states assumed the operational aspects of the transferred federal educational services (Fierro et al., 2009). As Ornelas (1998) puts it, “In other words, power is centralised and the administration is decentralised”.

It should be noted that at the time the ANMEB Agreement was signed, states were already offering – to different extents – their own basic education services. For instance, in three states the provision of basic education services was balanced between state and the federal government: Mexico (about 57% of basic education schools operated by the state), Baja California (47%) and Nuevo Léon (44%). In another 17 states, the proportion of basic schools under state jurisdiction was between 20 and 35% while in the remaining 11 states such proportion was below 15% (Table 1.1 in Fierro et al., 2009).

The integration of federal and state basic education services following the ANMEB Agreement is, however, to some extent incomplete. As of 2009, only in 21 states were both the transferred federal services and the pre-1992 state services under the governance
of a common educational authority (a state Secretariat of Education in 18 states and a Decentralised Institute of the local government in 3 states). In the remaining 10 states, both a state Secretariat of Education and a Decentralised Institute (in charge of the transferred federal educational services) co-existed. Among these, two situations can be distinguished: in 8 states the Decentralised Institute was under the same leadership as the Secretariat of Education, while in the remaining 2 states (state of Mexico and Nayarit) the Decentralised Institute was under a different leadership than that for the Secretariat of Education (Table 1.3 in Fierro et al., 2009).

The Secretariat for Public Education

The SEP is responsible for national education policy and the overall strategy for the education system, in addition to its role as educational provider. Through the ANMEB the SEP strengthened its role as regulator in areas such as funding, evaluation and administration of education personnel. It retained normative authority to assure the uniformity of education services across the country and guarantee their national character. The responsibilities of the SEP include the supervision, evaluation and development of the education system, establishing student learning objectives (including a national curriculum in the form of study plans and programmes) and assessing whether these are met, authorising textbooks to be used in schools, defining the levels of and principles for federal funding, setting the requirements for the professional and pedagogical competence of educational staff (including the study plans for initial teacher education and the requirements to enter the teaching profession), negotiating teacher salaries, regulating a national system of continuous education for basic education teachers, maintaining a registry of institutions which belong to the national education system, and defining the school calendar. Also, the federal government retains the key role in assuring equity of educational provision across the country. With this objective, it develops “compensatory programmes” involving the allocation of resources to states in relation to educational disadvantage (see SEP and INEE, forthcoming; and UNESCO-IBE, 2010).

At the federal level, policy is established by the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). Its organisation provides for the existence of four main Undersecretariats: the Undersecretariat for Basic Education (Subsecretaría de Educación Básica, SEB); the Undersecretariat for Upper Secondary Education (Subsecretaría de Educación Media Superior, SEMS); the Undersecretariat for Higher Education (Subsecretaría de Educación Superior, SES); and the Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (Unidad de Planeación y Evaluación de Políticas Educativas, UPEPE). The SEP also manages some decentralised agencies such as the National Polytechnic Institute and the National Pedagogical University (a public higher education institution with over 300 units across the country, involved in teacher education, predominantly at the post graduate level, which had a key role in upgrading the qualifications of teachers, especially those who entered the system with no graduate qualifications). Also, the Federal Administration of Educational Services in the Federal District reports directly to the Secretary of Public Education.

The federal government manages basic education through five Directorate Generals (DGs) under the Undersecretariat for Basic Education (SEB): the DG of Curricular Development (Dirección General de Desarrollo Curricular, DGDC); the DG for the Development of Education Management and Innovation (Dirección General de Desarrollo de la Gestión e Innovación Educativa, DGDGIE); the DG of Indigenous Education (Dirección General de Educación Indígena, DGEI); the DG of Continuous Training for In-service Teachers (Dirección General de Formación Continua de Maestros en Servicio, DGFCMS); and the DG of Educational Materials (Dirección
General de Materiales Educativos, DGME) which, for instance, produces textbooks and multimedia didactic materials.

The UPEPE takes responsibility at the federal level for the development and co-ordination of educational evaluation in the education system, including the National System for Educational Evaluation (Sistema Nacional de Evaluación Educativa, SNEE). It is also responsible for the collection and dissemination of the information necessary for the planning and evaluation of the education sector as well as for the development of strategic programmes. Its organisation includes the following units: the DG of Policy Evaluation (Dirección General de Evaluación de Políticas, DGEP), in charge of overall policies to evaluate the education system; the DG of Accreditation, Incorporation and Revalidation (Dirección General de Acreditación, Incorporación y Revalidación, DGAIR), which deals with the certification of learning; the DG of Planning (Dirección General de Planeación, DGP), in charge of the development of statistics and indicators including the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (RNAME); the National Co-ordination of the Teaching Career Programme (Coordinación Nacional de Carrera Magisterial, CNCM); and the DG of Educational Television (Dirección General de Televisión Educativa, DGTV). A relevant unit within the Undersecretariat for Higher Education is the DG of Higher Education for Education Professionals (Dirección General de Educación Superior para Profesionales de la Educación, DGESPE), which takes responsibility for initial teacher education.

The role of state educational authorities

As explained earlier, at the state level, the governance of basic education is the responsibility of a state Secretariat of Education or/and a Decentralised Institute of the state government created to govern the transferred federal educational services. State educational authorities take responsibility for the operation of basic (including Indigenous) and special schools, they run Teachers Colleges (Normal Schools) where most initial teacher education takes place, they provide professional development for basic education teachers, and they authorise private providers of basic education to operate. Within their basic education sub-system, states are given full responsibility for the quality of the education, the financial management, the appointment and dismissal of teachers and the relations to the school community and the general public. States can also introduce some regional content into the national curriculum (study plans and programmes) following consultation and guidance from the federal SEP. They can also develop evaluation activities to complement those organised by the federal SEP. The role of the states in upper secondary education was also reinforced through the transfer of educational services from the SEP to the states as with most of the CONALEP sub-system and the Colegio de Bachilleres. Following the 1992 ANMEB Agreement, states also inherited the structures of power deep-rooted in the transferred schools, in particular the influence that SEP conceded over the years to SNTE in the management of a range of aspects such as the recruitment of teachers and school leaders, and the supervision of schools (Fierro et al., 2009).

The role of municipalities

Municipalities’ role in education remains limited and typically involves the building and maintenance of school infrastructure, equipping schools’ spaces, and participation in some specific education programmes. Their role might be more influential in rural and isolated areas. A more recent opportunity for their participation is through their involvement in schools’ Councils of Social Participation (see below) (OECD, 2010a).
The co-ordination of education policy

Educational planning and co-ordination of decision making among the federal government and the states is the responsibility of the National Council of Educational Authorities (Consejo Nacional de Autoridades Educativas – CONAEDU). It was constituted in 2004 by the Federal government and the representatives of the 31 states and state educational authorities, and is chaired by the Federal Secretary of Education. At present, CONAEDU has more of an advisory role when called for by the federation and its influence does not seem to be on aspects of policy design, but rather limited to implementation aspects (OECD, 2010a). In the fulfilment of its responsibilities as regulator and guarantor of the integration of the national education system, the SEP promotes regular meetings – at the national and regional levels – between the state educational authorities and the Federal government to articulate actions and programmes, disseminate federal regulations, and support state educational authorities in the implementation of educational programmes.

Other major players at the national level

A significant player at the national level is the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación, INEE). It was created in 2002 by presidential decree as a public, decentralised agency to provide instruments to federal, state and private education authorities for the evaluation and assessment of educational activities at both the basic and upper secondary education levels. It is an Agency with high technical standards which shares the responsibility to evaluate the Mexican education system with SEP’s Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP). Activities of INEE include the design and development of student national assessments, educational indicators on the quality of the national education system as well as of state education sub-systems, and evaluation instruments and guidelines (e.g. for elements of school evaluation, formative student assessment); the management of international student assessments; the support to state authorities in their educational evaluation activities; the promotion of an evaluation culture within the Mexican education system; and studies and research in educational evaluation. Following the recent revision to the 2002 Presidential Decree which creates the INEE (of 16 May 2012, after the visit by the OECD Review Team), the governance of INEE consists of the following units: the Board of Directors (Órgano de Gobierno, the executive body); the Technical Board (Junta Técnica); the Presidency (Presidencia); the Specialised Technical Councils (Consejos Técnicos Especializados); the Social Council for the Evaluation of Education (Consejo Social de Evaluación de la Educación); the Council for the Liaison with Federal Entities (Consejo de Vinculación con las Entidades Federativas); and the administrative units responsible for the functioning and operation of the Institute.

Another important player in educational evaluation is the National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (Centro Nacional de Evaluación para la Educación Superior, CENEVAL). CENEVAL is a not-for-profit civil association created in 1994 whose main activity is the design and application of instruments for assessing knowledge, skills and competencies, as well as for analysing and disseminating test results, at different levels in the education system. It implements a range of student and teacher assessments in the country.

Education is also the subject of evaluations by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, CONEVAL). CONEVAL is a decentralised public agency of the
Federal Public Administration created in 2005, with autonomy and the technical capacity to assess the social policy situation and to measure poverty in Mexico. Since 2007, it assesses federal social development programmes, including those dealing with basic education. Other major players are the Education Commissions of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

The National Union of Education Workers (SNTE)

The National Union of Education Workers (Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Educación, SNTE) is the biggest union in Mexico and one of the biggest teacher unions in the world with between 1.3 and 1.5 million education workers affiliated, including basic school teachers, school leaders and administrative and technical personnel at all levels (such as in school supervision, see below). It also includes staff from initial teacher education institutions (such as Teachers Colleges), staff in charge of teachers’ in-service training and personnel working at SEP and state educational authorities (OECD, 2010a). For basic school teachers, the affiliation with SNTE is mandatory as stipulated by a Presidential Decree of 15 March 1944, which recognises SNTE as the only organisation which represents the teachers and its right to charge fees from teachers’ salaries (Benavides and Velasco, 1992). In practice, the government transfers 1% of the salary of each teacher and management staff directly to the SNTE (Barrera and Myers, 2011).

The influence of the SNTE in the education system is not limited to industrial relations with educational authorities, as in most other countries. Historically, since its creation in 1943, it has developed a corporatist relationship with the State (or governments in office) and has played a political role through its representativeness in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies (Góngora and Leyva, 2008; Barrera and Myers, 2011). According to some analysts, this has led to a significant role of the SNTE in the administration of the education system. As Tapia (2004) puts it, in the context of the 1992 ANMEB Agreement, “The federal entities received the set of pacts, agreements, uses and customs of the relationship between the federal government and the SNTE which imply the de facto co-administration of the system, through which school directors, supervisors and other members of the union participate in decisions about an endless number of matters such as the nomination, permanency or mobility of teacher appointments; the nomination of civil servants of the educational administration…”. According to Elizondo Mayer-Serra (2009), “the SNTE controls the Ministry of Education’s structure supervising the work of teachers. This situation effectively means that the administration of a school has little control over what happens in its school”.

The governance of schools

In Mexico, the school director is the person in charge of the functioning, organisation and management of the school. The main tasks of the school director are to define goals, strategies and school operation policies; to analyse and solve pedagogical problems that may arise; and to review and approve the work plans elaborated by teachers (OECD, 2010a). The director is not necessarily the only person who is expected to undertake a leadership role. At the lower secondary level, there is also a deputy director. Larger primary schools and lower secondary schools may also have technical pedagogical advisors (asesores técnico pedagógicos) known as ATPs. Most ATPs hold a teaching post but carry out “ATP functions”, whatever they are. They do not have a teaching workload but are supposed to provide support at different levels, for example in pedagogical leadership, in administrative roles, as school deputies or in other capacities. ATPs
constitute one particular strand in the National Teacher Career Programme (Carrera Magisterial) in addition to the categories of teacher (Strand I) and school leader (Strand II) (see Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). ATPs most often support more than one school. Some administrative functions in schools are also undertaken by teachers who do not, however, have formal responsibility for these functions (OECD, 2010a).

An additional advisory body established in schools with at least four to five teachers is the School Technical Council (Consejo Técnico Escolar). Its functions include making recommendations on: the implementation of study plans, teaching methods, assessment methodology and criteria, in-service training for teachers, the use and elaboration of didactic materials, among others. These councils are chaired by the director, and include as appropriate the deputy directors, heads of class or subject, ATPs, presidents of the students’ council, and representatives of the parents’ association (OECD, 2010a and UNESCO-IBE, 2010). Also, in lower secondary schools it is typical to establish academies (academias) bringing together all the teachers belonging to a given academic area or specialty. These academies focus on technical-pedagogical matters within the respective area of expertise (UNESCO-IBE, 2010).

The participation of the school community in the school’s activities is the objective for the establishment of a School Council of Social Participation (Consejo Social de Participación Social) in each basic school. This council, comprising parents and representatives of the parents’ association, teachers and representatives of the teacher union, members of school management, and members of the community of which the school is part, has administrative, pedagogical and relational roles (UNESCO-IBE, 2010 and OECD, 2010a). The General Education Law provides these councils with some responsibilities but these are not fully implemented as further instruments have not yet been provided. Parents’ Associations mainly participate to support school authorities in the collection of funds and the organisation of voluntary work for tasks related to school maintenance (OECD, 2010a). Councils of Social Participation also exist at the municipal, state and national levels, and function mainly as advisory bodies.

Each state has a system of supervision of schools, structured according to geographical areas at two levels: sectors (sectores) and zones (zonas). Sectors consist of a number of zones (about 10) and each zone comprises a number of schools (typically between 8 and 20 schools). Supervisors (or Inspectors, as they are commonly called at the lower secondary level) take responsibility for each zone (and the respective schools) and report to Heads of Sector (Jefes de Sector, sometimes also called General Supervisors or General Inspectors). Supervisors function as the direct link between schools and educational authorities (UNESCO-IBE, 2010). Another function at the lower secondary level of a more instructional nature is that of Head of Teaching (Jefe de Enseñanza), to assist the work of the supervisor in specific disciplinary areas (see Chapter 5 for further details).

The appointment of teachers, school directors, heads of teaching, supervisors and heads of sector is done according to the Vertical Promotion System (Escalafón Vertical), which has been in place since 1973 (see Chapter 4 for further details) (ATPs are not formally recognised by this system). These all constitute specific ranks in the Vertical Promotion System. Hence, only former teachers can become school directors, only former school directors are eligible for the post of supervisor, and so on. The appointments are permanent. Applications are assessed and posts allocated in each state by a joint commission composed of the SEP and representatives of the SNTE (Comisión Nacional Mixta de Escalafón). These commissions evaluate candidates according to several criteria, as specified in the regulations of the Escalafón Vertical, such as: time in
service, academic credentials, participation in education projects, participation in projects to support the community, publications, participation in teacher training activities, and previous recognition of teacher performance. However, it is known that school leaders have often been nominated by the SNTE or by the joint Escalafón commission SEP-SNTE through non-transparent procedures and criteria. Efforts are currently under way to change this process and make it more transparent. For example, it was announced as part of the Alliance for Quality in Education (Alianza por la Calidad de la Educación) (see below) that a test for the selection of school directors of basic education would be introduced in 2009, although this has not yet been instituted (OECD, 2010a).

The funding of education

Mexico devotes a considerable proportion of its resources to education. Public expenditure on pre-tertiary education as a proportion of total public expenditure reached 13.6% in 2008, the highest such proportion in the OECD area (against an OECD average of 8.7%). Total expenditure on pre-tertiary education as a proportion of GDP was 3.7% in 2008, the same as in 1995, and close to the OECD average of 3.8% (see Annex D). However, in 2008, annual expenditure per student (adjusted for differences in purchasing power parities) remained low by OECD standards: USD 2 246 in primary education (lowest figure in the OECD area, against an average of USD 7 153); and USD 1 853 in lower secondary education (lowest figure in the OECD area, against an average of USD 8 498) (see Annex D). Expenditure per student in pre-tertiary education increased in real terms about 17% between 2000 and 2008 (below the average increase of 34% in the OECD area) (see Annex D).

The general funding of schools in Mexico, in international comparison, is characterised by the following three distinct features: the compensation of educational staff absorbs a very high proportion of expenditure at pre-tertiary levels of education (92.9% in 2008), the 2nd highest in the OECD area (against an average of 79.0%) (see Annex D); the proportion of total current expenditure on pre-tertiary education allocated to capital expenditure at 2.9% in 2008 was low by OECD standards (4th lowest figure, against an average of 7.9%) (OECD, 2011a); and the gap in expenditure per student between tertiary education and pre-tertiary education is the largest in the OECD area (Brunner et al., 2008).

In 2009, considering all levels of education, the funding of education was shared between the federal government (62.1%), state governments (15.6%), municipalities (0.2%) and the private sector (22.1%). The equivalent proportions in 1996 were 67.8%, 14.7%, 0.2% and 17.3% respectively (Gobierno de la Presidencia de la República, 2011).

The decentralisation of federal education services, which took place in 1992 through the ANMEB Agreement, involved the transfer of the respective funding to individual states in what has become earmarked federal funding for the provision of educational services. The federal government allocates funds for educational services through three main strands: (i) Strand 11, which includes direct spending by the SEP partly in resources provided to states, in particular through targeted (or compensatory) educational programmes aimed at, for instance, improving equity of resource distribution across states (43% of the 2011 federal budget for education); (ii) Strand 25, which corresponds to educational expenditure in the Federal District (8.3% of the 2011 federal budget for education); and (iii) Strand 33, which essentially corresponds to the direct transfer of funds to state authorities for the operation of education services (48.7% of 2011 federal budget for education) (SEP, 2011). Strand 33 is composed of three distinct Funds:
(a) Contributions Fund for Basic and Normal Education (Fondo de Aportaciones para la Educación Básica y Normal, FAEB), a dominant share of Strand 33 (95.1% in the 2011 budget); (b) Multiple Contributions Fund (Fondo de Aportaciones Múltiples, FAM), about 3.1% of Strand 33 in the 2011 budget (with two-thirds going to basic education); and (c) the Contributions Fund for the Education of Adults (Fondo de Aportaciones para la Educación de Adultos, FAETA), about 1.8% of Strand 33 in the 2011 budget (part of which is dedicated to upper secondary education).

The distribution of the FAEB, the dominant direct federal funding for basic education, across states reveals marked differences. In 2008, the FAEB spending per student in basic public education ranged from figures above 13 000 Mexican pesos (2003 prices) in Baja California Sur and Campeche to figures below 7 000 Mexican pesos in Chiapas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, state of Mexico, Nuevo Léon and Puebla (INEE, 2009). However, these differences are greatly explained by the differences in the extent to which provision of basic public education services is directly provided by the states. Indeed, in 2010 there were considerable differences across states in the proportion of state funding for basic public education: from below 10% in Campeche, Quintana Roo and San Luis Potosí to above 35% in Baja California, Chihuahua, state of Mexico, Nuevo Léon and Sinaloa (data provided by states through the Questionnaire on State Educational Funding – Cuestionario sobre Financiamiento Educativo Estatal – conducted by the SEP and available from http://cfee.dgpp.sep.gob.mx).

States devise their own approaches to distribute resources across individual schools. Little information is available on how such distribution takes place but part of it seems to be on an historical basis (previous amounts adjusted for inflation). Private funding of public education has become more important in recent years. Public upper secondary schools charge tuition fees and, in basic education, parents are asked to make donations to the extent of their possibilities. This means that public schools serving more advantaged communities might benefit from greater resources.

**Policy consultation**

The development of educational policies led by the SEP involves a range of consultations sometimes through formal advisory bodies. As described earlier, consultation and co-ordination with the individual states takes place through the CONAEDU. Policies which bear a relation to teachers also require the consultation of the SNTE. The major reforms of the teaching profession in recent years included the formal agreement by the SNTE, without which the implementation is not likely to succeed. In recent years, representatives of civil society have gained an important space in Mexico, raising awareness of the need to strengthen public education and providing important bridges between parents, society, education and schools. In addition to parents’ associations, in recent years new and active civil society organisations and networks have emerged at the state and national levels. Their demands seem to be gaining attention from education authorities and other stakeholders (OECD, 2010a). Among these are Mexicanos Primero, Suma por la Educación, Observatorio Ciudadano, Hacia una Cultura Democrática, Proeducación, Servicios a la Juventud and Empresarios por la Educación Básica. Yet there do not seem to be formal channels for representing their views on education policy matters. The National Council for Social Participation (CONAPASE) was created to reflect the interests of these special interest groups and representatives of different institutions, but there has not been much progress in its formal development in the past decade (OECD, 2010a).
Major features

Half day schooling is dominant

In Mexico, classes in basic education are typically held either in the morning or in the afternoon. Most school buildings work on the basis of a double shift (escuelas de doble turno) with a separation between the morning shift (turno matutino) and the afternoon shift (turno vespertino). Each shift generally consists of a separate school structure with its own school leadership and educational staff. On average, the regular school day is from 9:00 to 12:00 in pre-school, 8:00 to 12:30 in primary school, 7:00 to 13:30 in lower secondary school, and 8:00 to 14:00 in Telesecundarias. In the afternoon, primary schools have about four-and-a-half hours of instruction, which can be between 14:00 and 18:30 (OECD, 2010a). Some public schools have now introduced full-time education (e.g. through the Full-time Schools Programme) and some private schools also offer full-time education.

There is some evidence that the quality of schooling varies considerably between the morning and afternoon shifts, partly as a result of student populations with different characteristics. For instance, Cárdenas (2010) found that, on average, an afternoon shift school has lower quality educational inputs, a higher concentration of poor students, lower academic results, higher drop-out rates, and lower success rates than the morning shift school operating in the same school building.

Schools face difficult social contexts

Poverty among the population as well as parents’ low educational levels inevitably shape the social context faced by schools. There are indications that parents provide limited support to their children’s education. In 2008, a profile of 9th grade students indicated that only about 36% of parents helped their children with their homework when they needed help (INEE, 2009). During the Review visit, teachers and school leaders were quite consistent in expressing the average low levels of parental support received by children in their education.

It is also somewhat common for older students to work alongside their studies, which is facilitated by the little prevalence of full-time schooling. A profile of 9th grade students developed in 2008 revealed that in the week prior to the survey, about 41% of students undertook non-remunerated work for three hours or more per day (typically domestic work with the family business or farming activities); and about 8% of students undertook remunerated work for four days or more (INEE, 2009).

The context can also differ across school types. For instance, there is evidence that the student population of Telesecundarias is generally more disadvantaged than those of the general and technical strands of lower secondary education. For instance, an estimated 28% of students attending Telesecundarias in 2008 had mothers who attended lower secondary education or higher against a proportion of 64% and 62% for students in general and technical lower secondary education, respectively. Also, about 67% of students attending Telesecundarias that year benefitted from an Oportunidades scholarship (provided to the most disadvantaged students) against a proportion of about 18% and 22% in general and technical lower secondary education, respectively (INEE, 2009). In general it can be said that Telesecundarias, Indigenous schools and communitarian courses face particularly difficult circumstances in providing educational services (INEE, 2007a).
The average school infrastructure is deficient

Most schools and their teachers operate under very difficult conditions, which can be partly explained by the limited proportion of education spending going into infrastructure investment (as explained earlier). In the 2008/09 school year, the proportion of schools with no computers for educational use was about 50% in primary education (including 75% in Indigenous education and 99% in communitarian education) and 27% in lower secondary education (including 32% in Telesecundarias and 61% in education for workers) (INEE, 2009). Similarly, in 2005, about 65% of primary schools (including 83% of Indigenous schools) and 43% of lower secondary schools (including 65% of Telesecundarias) did not have a library (Ruiz Cuéllar, 2007).

Numerous challenges face the teaching profession

Teachers often work in difficult circumstances. Many teach in one school in the mornings and another in the afternoons, or in a different type of employment. Some teachers might work in more than two schools on an hourly basis. In many rural or isolated areas they teach in small schools where there are few opportunities for teamwork and learning from each other. This raises concerns about the training, selection and allocation of teachers to schools; the professional careers of teachers; and the quality of support to schools and teachers from school directors, supervisors and others who lead and manage the system (OECD, 2010a). This is compounded by extensive absenteeism and late arrival of teachers, reducing effective teaching hours (OECD, 2009a).

There are also serious concerns about the management of the teaching profession, in particular related to the transparency in the access to permanent posts (see also Chapter 4). These are conferred not only by educational authorities (SEP and the state educational authorities) but also by the SNTE, often by non-transparent means. There is good anecdotal evidence of teachers able to “buy/sell” their posts or “offer in heritage” their permanent posts to whomever they choose, including their relatives (even if requirements to be a teacher generally need to be observed) (OECD, 2010a). These practices are now changing with the introduction, as of 2008, of the National Teaching Post Competition (see Chapter 4 for further detail).

Schools benefit from little autonomy

Mexico has one of the lowest levels of autonomy in schools across OECD countries, with principals having currently little or no autonomy to decide on how their school is managed (OECD, 2009a). School directors are not responsible for the recruitment of teachers (undertaken by state authorities and the SNTE), have little say in teacher appraisal, and play an incipient role in determining the professional development activities of teachers. Furthermore, their financial autonomy is limited. Most public financial resources available to school directors are provided through earmarked educational programmes so the budget specifically managed by the school is very limited and is often restricted to parental donations. Similarly, the curriculum is dictated at the national level and gives little room for innovation at the school level.

There are considerable funding inequities

Overall it can be said that there are likely to be inequities of public funding across schools and states. Earlier, we noted that considerable differences in expenditure per student in basic education across states are likely to exist. There are also indications that there is inequity of resource distribution across schools. For instance, a study about
Telesecundarias revealed that in 2002 the spending per student in Telesecundarias was about half of that in general and technical lower secondary education (Fundación Este País and INEE, 2005). Also, for schools in more disadvantaged areas access to targeted educational programmes might prove more difficult as they might lack capacity to apply to and run those programmes (OECD, 2010a). This adds to issues such as disadvantaged areas attracting less qualified teachers and schools in disadvantaged communities raising more limited donations from parents and benefitting from less adequate assistance from municipalities.

Main trends and concerns

Low starting point and significant quantitative growth

Mexico’s school system has experienced a true revolution by growing from about 3 million in 1950 to more than 30 million students in 2007. The proportion of the population above 10 years of age who was illiterate decreased from about 43% in 1950 to about 8% in 2005 (INEGI, 2010). Two consequences of the historical low educational attainment have been the difficulty in finding qualified teachers when the education system expanded and the impact parents’ education has had on subsequent generations’ educational attainment. Nevertheless, efforts to ensure access to education for all Mexicans resulted in a rapid expansion of enrolment. The proportion of the population that has attained at least upper secondary education grew from 21% for the generation aged 55-64 in 2009 to 42% for the generation aged 25-34 in the same year (see Annex D). Lower secondary education is now virtually universal and enrolment rates for 15-to-19-year-olds grew from 36% in 1995 to 52% in 2009 (still well below the OECD average of 82%) (OECD, 2011a). The coverage of pre-primary education has also increased rapidly and reached a participation rate of 68.1% for children aged 3-4, close to the OECD average of 70.1% (OECD, 2011a).

Challenges with educational attainment remain

Despite the expansion of the education system, educational attainment remains a challenge. It is the third lowest in the OECD area for the working-age population with 35% of 25-to-64-year-olds having attained at least upper secondary education in 2009 (against an OECD average of 73%, see Annex D), lower than in Brazil (41%) and Chile (69%) (OECD, 2011a). The high share of students leaving the education system too early with low skills remains also a major problem. Upper secondary graduation rates reached 45% in 2009, well below the OECD average of 82% (see Annex D) and considerably lower than in Chile (68%). The high proportion of early school leavers is associated with the relatively low appreciation of schooling by large groups of the population likely to result from the parents’ low educational attainment and the availability of unskilled jobs. Some 18.4% of 15-to-19-year-olds and 30% of 25-29-year-olds in Mexico are not in education, are unemployed or are not in the labour force. This represents one-quarter of all of Mexico’s 15-to-29-year-olds, just behind Turkey and Israel in the OECD area (OECD, 2011a).

Student learning outcomes show some progress

Student learning outcomes in Mexico are considerably below the OECD average in spite of some progress in the last decade. In 2009, achievement levels of Mexican students in the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were statistically significantly below all other OECD countries in the assessed areas of reading literacy, mathematics and science (OECD, 2010b). In comparison with other Latin
American countries which take part in PISA, Mexico performed below Chile (in reading literacy and science) and Uruguay (in mathematics and science) and above Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Peru (in all assessed areas). Trend analyses of PISA results have shown some encouraging improvement in student learning outcomes, particularly in the area of mathematics.

In PISA 2009, the main focus was on reading literacy. The performance of Mexican 15-year-olds in reading was considerably below the OECD average – all other OECD countries scored significantly higher than Mexico. Since the first PISA study in 2000, the improvement of Mexico in reading literacy has not been statistically significantly different from the average change in the OECD area (OECD, 2010c). The mean score for Mexican students in PISA 2000 was 422 points, compared to 425 for PISA 2009. However there has been an unusual pattern of a decline between 2000 and 2003 and then increases between 2003 and 2009. The increase in performance for Mexico is statistically significant for the period between 2003 and 2009 (OECD, 2011b). In terms of the proficiency levels, at the lower end of the reading literacy proficiency scale, the proportion of students who failed to reach Level 2 declined with statistical significance from 44.1% in PISA 2000 to 40.1% in PISA 2009 (OECD, 2010c).

The results of Mexican 15-year-olds in mathematics are at the lowest end in the OECD area. However, the PISA 2009 results indicated a rise in test scores in comparison to the PISA in-depth assessment of mathematics in 2003 (OECD, 2010c). In PISA 2009, the average mathematics score was 419 points, 33 points higher than it was in 2003 – representing, in a statistically significant way, the highest increase in mathematical literacy among countries which took part in PISA in both these years. Science results of Mexican 15-year-olds were also at the lowest end of the OECD area and in this assessment area there was also an improvement in the average scores between 2006 and 2009 of six points, even if this was not statistically significantly different from the average change in the OECD area (OECD, 2010c).

The variation in performance between high- and low-performing students in Mexico was lower than the OECD average in reading in PISA 2009 and no statistically significant difference was observed since 2000 (OECD, 2010c). Variations in student reading performance can be found in almost equal weight between schools and within schools (OECD, 2010c). However, variation in performance within schools increased in a statistically significant way between 2000 and 2009 even if it remains below the OECD average. The between-school variation of reading performance in Mexico remains higher than the OECD average, which seems to indicate that the specific school a student attends has considerable impact on how the student performs (OECD, 2010c). This is in spite of some decrease between 2000 and 2009, even if not statistically significant.

Regarding the PISA relationship between socio-economic background and performance (i.e. between the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status and the performance of 15-year-olds), the following indications emerge: (i) Mexico is not statistically different from the OECD average in terms of the percentage of variance in student performance explained by student socio-economic background (strength of the socio-economic gradient), but the impact of socio-economic background on learning outcomes tends to be slightly above the OECD average (OECD, 2010d); and (ii) Mexico is significantly below the OECD average in terms of the score point difference associated with one unit increase in the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (slope of the socio-economic gradient) (OECD, 2010d) – and there was a statistically significant decrease between 2000 and 2009 in this indicator (OECD, 2010c). However, it should be
borne in mind that in the case of Mexico the relationship between socio-economic background and performance is weakened as a result of the fact that about a third of individuals have dropped out of school by the time they are 15 years of age.

There are concerns about strong social inequities in the school system

There is evidence that student results are strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors. Research by INEE on national student assessments in basic education shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between student performance and the family’s social-cultural conditions (INEE, 2007b). This investigation concluded that: (i) there are enormous educational gaps between students within the same grade, which may reach the equivalent of over four schooling years; (ii) to a great extent such gaps are the product of social inequities, which are closely reproduced within the education system; and (iii) the socio-cultural conditions of students explain most of the variations in educational performance in Mexico (INEE, 2007a). The study shows systematic unequal results in the education system across school types, which is likely to be explained by differences in the socio-cultural background of the student populations attending the different school types. In primary education, results tend to be better in private schools and urban public schools and worse in rural public schools, communitarian courses and Indigenous schools. In lower secondary education, the pattern is also clear: private schools and general education schools systematically have better results than technical education schools and Telesecundarias (INEE, 2007b). Another study by INEE found that the factors with more impact on student performance, in both primary and lower secondary education, are those related to the characteristics of students and their families, followed by those specific to the educational modality attended as well as school composition factors, while factors related to the structural characteristics of schools had less influence (INEE, 2007c).

There is evidence showing that some groups are particularly vulnerable (see, for example, INEE, 2007a). For instance, the proportion of students with an Indigenous mother tongue who performed at the lowest of four performance levels in the Spanish language national assessment in 2007/08 was 48.9% in 6th grade (against a proportion of 16.4% for students with no Indigenous mother tongue) and 51.8% in 9th grade (against a proportion of 26.7% for the other students) (INEE, 2010).

The differences in the socio-cultural contexts faced by schools are clear. For instance, in 2005, the proportion of 3rd grade students whose mothers had completed at most primary education was 4.7% in private schools, 22.9% in urban public schools, 51.7% in rural public schools, 64.5% in Indigenous schools and 77.3% in communitarian courses (INEE, 2007a). At the lower secondary level (9th grade in 2005) the equivalent proportion was 8.0% in private schools, 36.4% in general education schools, 38.8% in technical education schools and 66.1% in Telesecundarias. Similarly, for the same year, the proportion of 3rd grade students who stated they had a computer at home was 74.5% in private schools, 37.2% in urban public schools, 13.3% in rural public schools, 13.9% in Indigenous schools and 4.0% in communitarian courses (INEE, 2007a). Socio-cultural contexts also differ considerably across states, which explains to a great extent the variation of student performance across them (INEE, 2007a and 2007b).

There are also inequities in terms of the distribution of resources across school types. For instance, in 2005/06, the proportion of 3rd grade teachers with no higher education qualification was 8.9% in private schools, 16.7% in urban public schools, 8.8% in rural public schools, 29.3% in Indigenous schools and 98.2% in communitarian courses (INEE, 2007a). Similarly, for the same year, the proportion of 3rd grade teachers using computers
for instruction was considerably different across school types: 87.3% in private schools,
48.8% in urban public schools, 25.5% in rural public schools, 9.4% in Indigenous schools
and 0.8% in communitarian courses (INEE, 2007a).

Main developments

**Overall reform in basic education**

Mexico has recently introduced an extensive curricular reform to improve the
coherence of the system and its focus on student achievement: the Comprehensive
Reform of Basic Education (*Reforma Integral de la Educación Básica*, RIEB). Its key
elements include the co-ordination among the different levels comprising basic education;
the continuity between pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education; and the
emphasis on issues relevant for today’s society and education for life. The reform
involves the preparation of updated study plans and programmes, focusing on pertinent
teaching and with clearly defined expectations of skills to be acquired by grade and
subject; improved training provided to school directors and teachers; and participative
processes of school management (OECD, 2012).

The RIEB is based on a number of pedagogical principles (further details are
provided in Chapter 2):

- Student-centred learning processes;
- Planning to stimulate learning;
- Creation of learning environments;
- Collaborative work to develop learning;
- Emphasis on the development of competencies and the achievement of curricular
  standards and expected learning outcomes (*Estándares Curriculares y
  Aprendizajes Esperados*);
- Use of educational materials to promote learning;
- Assessment for learning;
- Promotion of inclusion to address diversity;
- Integration of issues of social relevance;
- Renewal of the pact between the student, the teacher, the family and the school;
- Reorientation of leadership; and
- Pedagogical support to the school.

**National student assessment**

A particularly significant development in the area of educational evaluation has been
the introduction in 2006 of the National Assessment of Academic Achievement in
Schools (*Evaluación Nacional de Logro Académico en Centros Escolares*, ENLACE) to
measure student performance across the country. In basic education, this assessment is
applied in each grade for grades 3 and above in Spanish and mathematics and a third
subject which varies across years (*e.g.* history in 2010, geography in 2011). ENLACE’s
results are made public at the school level and have become an important tool to give
feedback to students, parents, teachers, schools and educational authorities. For instance, students (as well as their parents) can consult their own results on the Internet. They are also now used in individual incentive schemes such as reward systems for teachers. As a result, the impact of ENLACE is significant at several levels of the education system (as will be documented throughout this report).

**Targeted federal educational programmes**

As described earlier, the federal government funds public education partly through targeted educational programmes (*i.e.* programmes with a specific policy purpose). These typically require an application by individual schools and involve additional resources for schools. They are part of the “compensatory” function of the federal government with the allocation of resources across schools and states in relation to educational disadvantage. Some examples of programmes are (OECD, 2010a):

- Quality Schools (*Escuelas de Calidad*) (see Box 1.1 for further details)
- Full-time Schools (*Escuelas de Tiempo Completo*) (see Box 1.1)
- Emergent Programme for the Improvement of Educational Achievement (*Programa Emergente para la Mejora del Logro Educativo*) (see Box 1.1)
- Safe School (*Escuela Segura*)
- “Always Open to the Community” School (*Escuela Siempre Abierta a la Comunidad*)
- Support Scholarships for the Basic Education of Young Mothers and Pregnant Youngsters (*Becas de Apoyo a la Educación Básica de Madres Jóvenes y Jóvenes Embarazadas*)
- Basic Education for Boys and Girls of Internal Migrant Agricultural Families (*Educación Básica para Niños y Niñas de Familias Jornaleras Agrícolas Migrantes*)
- Education Support to Groups in Vulnerable Situations (*Atención Educativa a Grupos en Situación Vulnerable*)
- Digital Abilities Programme (*Programa Habilidades Digitales*)
- Enciclomedia (an e-learning pedagogical tool for teachers to use in the classrooms)
- Telematics Basic Class Programme (*Programa Aula Base Telemática*)
- National Reading Programme (*Programa Nacional de Lectura*)
- Strengthening of Telesecundaria services (*Fortalecimiento del Servicio de la Educación Telesecundaria*)
- Strengthening of Special Education and Educational Integration (*Fortalecimiento de la Educación Especial y de la Integración Educativa*)
- Strengthening of Actions Related to Indigenous Education (*Fortalecimiento a las Acciones Asociadas a la Educación Indígena*)
- Technical Pedagogical Advisor (*Asesor Técnico Pedagógico*)
- Strengthening of Educational Infrastructure (*Fortalecimiento de la Infraestructura Educativa*)
Box 1.1 Selected educational programmes – main features

Quality Schools Programme (Programa Escuelas de Calidad, PEC)

The PEC is intended to reduce the gap in quality between schools through the allocation of grants to finance school improvement plans. It aims to give autonomy to schools and encourage shared decision-making among directors, teachers and parents through Social Participation Councils. The project started in 2001 and in 2008/09 it covered about 40 790 schools, 296 478 teachers and 34 688 school directors. Between 2006 and 2009, it obtained financing from the World Bank, which has been renewed for 2010-13.

To participate in the programme, staff and parents engage in a self-evaluation which results in the Strategic School Transformation Plan (Plan Estratégico de Transformación Escolar, PETE) and subsequently prepare a plan which outlines steps for improving the school – the Annual Work Plan (Plan Anual de Trabajo, PAT). The school receives an annual grant that can be provided for a maximum of five years if the school is selected each time to implement the activities included in the plan. During the first four years, PEC requires schools to spend 70% of the grant on supplies, infrastructure and other physical goods. In the final year, schools must only spend 50% of the grant on such goods, and much of the grant should be directed to fund teacher training and development. Parent associations are involved in designing school improvement plans, purchasing supplies and carrying out the plans. School directors also receive training through PEC.

Full-time Schools Programme (Programa Escuelas de Tiempo Completo, PETC)

The PETC is mainly focused on populations living in urban marginalised contexts, or with large proportions of Indigenous, migrants, or students with low educational achievement. This programme proposes an average 4-hour increase of the school day, based on a six-element pedagogical proposal: 1) fostering learning of curricular contents; 2) didactic use of ICT; 3) learning additional languages; 4) art and culture; 5) recreation and physical development; and 6) healthy life. Created in 2007, this programme had 500 basic education schools participating across the country. During 2009/10, it reached 365 269 students, 2 000 school directors and 13 271 teachers in 2 214 schools of 30 federal entities.

Emergent Programme for the Improvement of Educational Achievement (Programa Emergente para la Mejora del Logro Educativo, PEMLE)

The PEMLE is focused on providing support to around 7 395 schools that had the lowest achievement levels in the national student assessments (ENLACE) of 2007, 2008 and 2009. Launched on a three-year plan (November 2009 to December 2012), this programme is composed of two key elements: a) training networks of teachers; and b) personalised capacity-building at schools through tutorships.

In addition to improving education results, the objectives of the programme are to: 1) encourage an understanding of topics beyond the lessons taught or the mere teaching of content; 2) help teachers have a better knowledge of the main basic education topics; 3) develop tutoring networks of continuous training; and 4) foster a better pedagogical exchange between teachers and their students, both inside and across regions, in order to build local capacities.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2010a).
Alliance for Quality in Education

The Alliance for Quality in Education (Alianza por la Calidad de la Educación, ACE), a national pact on education, was signed in 2008 by the Presidency and the SNTE, and later supported by most of the governments of the states. The Alianza has been an important political agreement that also drew from the guidelines established in the 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme. The Alianza has helped to shape education policy since its creation. It focuses on five areas that aim to foster change in the education system (OECD, 2010a):

1. Modernisation of schools;
2. Professionalisation of teachers and education authorities;
3. Students’ well-being and personal development;
4. Students’ preparation for life and work; and
5. Evaluation to improve the quality of education.

OECD-Mexico Agreement “Improving Education in Mexican Schools”

The Mexican government and the OECD established the Co-operation Agreement “Improving Education in Mexican Schools” in 2008. The purpose of the two-year agreement was to provide the Mexican government with relevant policy advice and recommendations in support of ongoing and future reform efforts in Mexico to improve educational outcomes, based on a review of international practices, evidence and OECD research (OECD, 2011b). The main areas for analysis were policies for school effectiveness (including school leadership, social participation and school evaluation), the teaching profession, and teacher appraisal. The results of this work, including the specific recommendations to Mexico, are presented in the following reports: Establishing a Framework for Evaluation and Teacher Incentives: Considerations for Mexico (OECD, 2011c), Improving Schools: Strategies for Action in Mexico (OECD, 2010a), and Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers: International Practices (OECD, 2009b). Given the relevant analysis this work provides about educational evaluation policy in Mexico, several references will be made to it in the course of this report.

Notes

1. It should be noted that the scope for the analysis in this report is limited to evaluation and assessment in primary and lower secondary education.
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Chapter 2

The evaluation and assessment framework

Evaluation and assessment in Mexico operates at five key levels: (i) national system – namely through education indicators, national student assessments and international student surveys; (ii) state sub-systems – through education indicators and national student assessments; (iii) school – namely through student assessment-based accountability and oversight of school work by a supervision structure; (iv) teacher – in particular through promotion and incentive schemes; and (v) student – with instruments ranging from external national student assessments to on-going daily formative assessment in the classroom. The overall evaluation and assessment framework appears fragmented given that individual components have developed independently of each other over time.

Particularly positive characteristics of the framework include the notable progress in granting prominence to evaluation and assessment; the range of recent initiatives to strengthen evaluation and assessment; the existence of common references at the national level; the implementation of a comprehensive reform of basic education with potential to generate lasting improvement in the education system; an emergent emphasis on equity and inclusion; the strong capacity at the national level; and the growing involvement of a diverse set of stakeholders in the evaluation and assessment framework. However, considerable challenges exist in building an effective evaluation and assessment framework. These include the incipient development of some key components; missing links between different elements of the framework; concerns about the governance of the evaluation and assessment framework; the limited emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment; a narrow conception of evaluation and assessment; the early stage of development of the alignment between the curricular reform and evaluation and assessment; and insufficient competencies for evaluation and assessment across the system.
This chapter looks at the overall framework for evaluation and assessment in the Mexican school system, i.e. its various components such as student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation, the coherence of the whole as well as the articulation between the different components. Following this overview, the succeeding chapters (3-6) will analyse the issues relevant to each individual component in more depth.

This report differentiates between the terms “assessment”, “appraisal” and “evaluation”. The term “assessment” is used to refer to judgments on individual student progress and achievement of learning goals. It covers classroom-based assessments as well as large-scale, external tests and examinations. The term “appraisal” is used to refer to judgements on the performance of school-level professionals, e.g. teachers. Finally, the term “evaluation” is used to refer to judgments on the effectiveness of schools, school systems and policies.

**Context and features**

**Governance**

As in some other OECD countries, Mexico does not have an integrated evaluation and assessment framework that was designed as a whole but instead has a series of components operating at different levels that have developed relatively independently of each other over time. Evaluation and assessment in Mexico operate at five key levels: national system, state sub-systems, school, teacher, and student. At each of these levels, evaluation and assessment mechanisms provide a basis for assessing how effectively education is being provided for students in Mexico. They also identify strengths and weaknesses of the system, schools, teachers and students which inform areas for improvement. The ultimate objective is to improve the quality of education in the country.

Mexico’s approach to evaluation and assessment combines central federal direction over policy development and standard-setting with a measure of devolved responsibility for the implementation of evaluation and assessment at the state and school levels. According to the General Education Law (Ley General de Educación, LGE), educational evaluation is a responsibility of federal educational authorities. The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) is responsible for the supervision of the entire education system and plays a role in all components of the evaluation and assessment framework, including developing mandatory student learning objectives (national curriculum in the form of study plans and programmes), determining the features of the teaching profession, monitoring the performance of schools and the education system. SEP designs, implements and monitors education policies, including the establishment of the 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme. The SEP also delineates the areas in which states have responsibilities in educational evaluation.

A range of other federal-level agencies also have key functions in the evaluation and assessment framework. The most prominent is the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación, INEE), created in 2002 as a public agency to establish high technical standards in evaluation practices in Mexico and bring a more autonomous perspective on the evaluation of the education system. Activities of INEE include the design and development of student national assessments, educational indicators on the quality of education in Mexico, and evaluation instruments and guidelines (e.g. for school
Another major player is the National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (Centro Nacional de Evaluación para la Educación Superior, CENEVAL), which takes responsibility for the design and application of a range of student and teacher assessments in the country. Finally, education is also the subject of evaluations of federal social development programmes undertaken by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, CONEVAL).

States take responsibility for education in their territories. State authorities operate schools in their sub-system, and therefore assume responsibility for the quality of the education offered. They organise their own systems of school supervision which tend to concentrate on compliance with regulations and provide some support for schools to improve. States are also permitted to develop evaluation initiatives to complement the federal ones, as for instance with the establishment of a state-level evaluation institute or the development of state-specific standardised student assessments. As a result, in addition to the co-ordination of federal evaluation initiatives, states can also develop their own evaluations. Schools benefit from some limited autonomy in the organisation of the various components of evaluation and assessment at the student, teacher and school level. They take most responsibility for student assessment, including the definition of assessment criteria and instruments (mostly determined by individual teachers); they operate some elements of some teacher appraisal processes; and they take responsibility for their self-evaluation.

**Main components**

In a nutshell, the Mexican framework for evaluation and assessment can be described as consisting of the following four main components:

- **Student assessment.** Student performance in Mexico is assessed by a wide range of instruments, ranging from national standardised assessments to continuous formative assessment in the classroom. Teachers take the main responsibility for student assessment. All students are assessed in an on-going manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area or subject. Marks used to report student achievement are on a scale of 5 to 10. Assessment criteria and methods are defined by each teacher. There are also externally-based national final examinations at the end of both primary (Instrument for Testing New Lower Secondary School Students, IDANIS) and lower secondary education (National Upper Secondary Education Entrance Exam, EXANI I). These assessments serve diagnostic and selection (by school at the next level) functions. At the national level, there is also a full-cohort external assessment (National Assessment of Academic Achievement in Schools, ENLACE) which is used for diagnostic and improvement purposes but which has “high stakes” for teachers and schools. In basic education, ENLACE is administered annually to all students in third to ninth grades in Spanish and mathematics. Since 2008 a third variable subject is assessed each year in all the same grades: sciences in 2008, civics in 2009, history in 2010 and geography in 2011.

- **Teacher appraisal (including school leader appraisal).** Teacher appraisal is comprehensive and consists of a range of components covering the different stages of a teacher’s career. Where pertinent, the teacher appraisal schemes also apply to school management staff. There are examinations to select students into initial teacher education as well as diagnostic external examinations during and
upon graduation from initial teacher education. Access to a permanent post is regulated through the National Teaching Post Competition which, at present, is based on a standardised examination: the National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills. While in service the teacher can be appraised, on a voluntary basis, in three different situations: to access a promotion to a management post through the Vertical Promotion System (Escalafón Vertical); to access salary progression within each rank of the Vertical Promotion System through the National Teacher Career Programme (Programa Nacional de Carrera Magisterial); and to access collective and individual monetary stimuli based on student standardised assessments results through the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality (Programa de Estímulos a la Calidad Docente). In addition, the government is currently in the process of implementing a mandatory process of teacher appraisal covering all teachers, which is more formative in nature, the Universal Evaluation System (Evaluación Universal de Docentes). ENLACE results are heavily used as an instrument – for instance, it has a weight of 50% in both the Universal Evaluation System and the National Teacher Career Programme. It is also the main basis for the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality.

- **School evaluation.** There is no well-established, systematic approach to school evaluation. School-level aggregated data, including results in ENLACE assessments, provide general information on student performance against state and national averages, but not on the context faced by schools. Schools are encouraged to engage in self-evaluation and advice and instruments are provided nationally. Involvement is voluntary except in those cases where the school takes part in one of the federal education programmes, such as the Quality Schools Programme. No systematic external school evaluation exists. There is a long-established tradition of oversight of school work by supervisors and other personnel external to the school, but their role has been largely associated with ensuring schools’ compliance with regulations and other administrative tasks.

- **System evaluation.** The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) is responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the education system with the support of the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE). A range of tools are used to monitor performance of the education system. Information on student learning outcomes is collected from Educational Quality and Achievement Tests (EXCALE) at the end of pre-primary education and in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 covering Spanish, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. The monitoring system also includes a range of statistics on education based on snapshot data collected from schools on a standardised format. These are the basis for annual publications with system-level indicators on education. Also, international benchmarks of student performance provided by international student surveys such as PISA have been influential in driving policy development at the system level. In addition, there has been a growing interest in undertaking studies of the impact of policy initiatives and in preparing thematic reports which can inform policy development. Individual states complement national level initiatives with their own approaches to the evaluation of their sub-system and some have created an evaluation institute.
Educational goals

Broad goals of education

The General Education Law (Ley General de Educación, LGE), established in 1993 (and revised in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2009), regulates education in Mexico. The main goals for education, as stipulated in article 7 of the LGE, include:

- The contribution to the full development of individuals so they fully exercise their human capacities.
- The support to develop skills to acquire knowledge, as well as the capacity for observation, analysis and critical thinking.
- The promotion of knowledge and appreciation of the traditions and cultural idiosyncrasies of the country’s different regions.
- The promotion of the awareness of the country’s linguistic diversity and the respect for the linguistic rights of Indigenous populations, specifying that “speakers of Indigenous languages must have access to mandatory education in their own languages and in Spanish”.
- The promotion of democracy as the form of governance and co-existence that allows all to participate in decisions to improve the society.
- The promotion of the values of justice, compliance with the Law and the equality of individuals before the Law, as well as the awareness of human rights and their observation.
- The promotion of attitudes that stimulate research, scientific and technological innovation.
- The promotion of artistic creation and the acquisition, enrichment and dissemination of universal cultural values and assets, especially those which constitute the cultural patrimony of the Nation.
- The encouragement of physical education and sports.
- The development of responsible attitudes toward the protection of health, family planning and child rearing.
- The promotion of the concepts and basic principles of environmental sciences, sustainable development and environmental values and protection.
- The promotion of positive attitudes toward work, savings and general well-being.
- The promotion of the values and principles of co-operation.

Policy objectives

At the federal level, the key reference points for education planning are the 2007-2012 National Development Plan and the 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme (Programa Sectorial de Educación, PROSEDU). The PROSEDU has 6 objectives, which are divided into 41 indicators (22 for basic education):

1. To elevate the quality of education so students improve their levels of academic achievement, have a means of access to improved well-being and contribute to national development.
2. To extend educational opportunities in order to decrease inequalities among social groups, close gaps and promote equality.

3. To promote the development and use of information and communication technologies in the education system in order to provide support for student learning, increase student life abilities and favour student entry into the knowledge society.

4. To offer integral education that balances the formation of citizenship values, the development of abilities and the acquisition of knowledge through regular classroom activities, teaching practices and the school environment in order to strengthen democratic and intercultural co-existence.

5. To offer quality education services in order to shape individuals with a heightened sense of social responsibility and who participate productively and competitively in the workforce.

6. To promote school and institutional management that strengthens the participation of schools in decision-making; holds different social and educational players jointly accountable; and promotes the safety of students and teachers, transparency and accountability.

Setting of national targets

Mexico established educational targets within each of the six objectives of the 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme (SEP and INEE, forthcoming). These are to be attained by 2012. Examples of targets which were set are:

- A combined score of 435 in the reading and mathematics PISA tests;
- In primary school, a proportion of 82% and 83% students achieving at the basic proficiency level in national tests (ENLACE) in Spanish and mathematics respectively (70% and 53% in lower secondary education);
- A lower secondary school graduation rate of 86.7%;
- 99% coverage in basic education in the eight poorest states (Chiapas, Durango, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Tabasco, Veracruz);
- 100% of Telesecundarias’ classrooms equipped with computer and communication technologies, as well as educational materials;
- 5 000 primary schools joined the Full-time Schools Programme; and
- 40 000 school directors trained in strategic management as part of the Quality Schools Programme.

Student learning objectives

More specific learning objectives for students in basic education are elaborated in a binding curriculum established at the national level following the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (Reforma Integral de la Educación Básica, RIEB). The national curriculum is supported by two main documents: the general 2011 Study Plan for basic education (Plan de Estudios 2011: Educación Básica) and the grade- and subject-specific 2011 Study Programmes: Guide for the Teacher (Programas de Estudio 2011: Guía para el Maestro). These binding documents stipulate the content of learning in each field and
subject of education and the expected outcomes at given stages in the basic education system.1

The Study Plan for basic education stipulates the following:

- Twelve pedagogical principles on which the study plan is based (see list in Chapter 1);
- Five “competencies for life” to be developed across all stages of basic education: lifelong learning; information management; management of situations; co-existence; and life in society.
- The profile of a basic education graduate, which specifies ten characteristics (e.g. “uses the mother tongue, orally and in writing, to communicate clearly and fluently, and interact in distinct social and cultural contexts; in addition, has basic tools to communicate in English”).
- The curricular map of basic education, which specifies the four fields of education for basic education (language and communication; mathematical thinking; exploration and understanding of the natural and social world; and personal and social development); as well as the subjects associated with each field of education; their distribution across grades and the time allocated to them in the timetable.
- Curricular references/parameters for Indigenous education, establishing principles and objectives for the national curriculum to be adapted to Indigenous education. It also specifies the purposes of the creation of a subject on Indigenous language.
- Strategies for the development of digital competencies, including performance indicators about teachers’ use of ICT in their teaching.
- Principles for the management of schooling and learning (including the management of schools’ timetables).
- The structure for the organisation of curricular standards. These express what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of the four main stages of basic education: pre-primary education, 3rd grade, 6th grade, and lower secondary education.
  - For each education field and subject, they have a given structure. For instance, curricular standards for Spanish are grouped into five components: (1) Reading processes and interpretation of texts; (2) Production of written texts; (3) Production of oral texts and participation in communication events; (4) Knowledge of the characteristics, function and use of language; and (5) Attitudes with language.
  - It should be noted that one specific national standard for reading ability was also introduced for each grade: the number of words a student is expected to read out loud in the classroom in one minute.

The Study Programmes: Guide for the Teacher then translate into more specific terms the principles and objectives described in the Study Plan for basic education. There is one study programme for pre-primary education, one study programme for each grade in primary education (covering the different educational fields) and one study programme per subject within lower secondary education (covering all three grades). The study programmes define the following in considerable detail:
• **Learning content for each subject and field of education.** For instance, in 6th grade of primary education the following subjects are taught: Spanish, mathematics, natural sciences, geography, history, civics and ethics, physical education, and artistic education. For each of the subjects or fields of education, the respective study programme typically covers the following aspects:

  - **Purposes of the subject**
    
    It specifies broad objectives for the subject. For instance, mathematics in the 6th grade includes as one of its purposes: the expectation that “students use and interpret different codes to orient themselves in space and to locate objects or places”.

  - **Curricular standards**
    
    These express what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of the four main stages of basic education. For instance, curricular standards for mathematics are grouped into four components: (1) Sense of numbers and algebraic thinking; (2) Form, space and measure; (3) Information management; and (4) Attitude towards the learning of mathematics. In the 6th grade there are 15 standards across these components (*e.g.*, “Solves problems involving the multiplication or division of natural numbers using conventional algorithms”).

  - **Didactic focus**
    
    This section suggests didactic methodologies to the teacher. These include how to: manage time in the classroom, generate collaborative work among students, and ensure the participation of students.

  - **Organisation of the learning**
    
    This section specifies the learning contents. These are organised by thematic “blocks” according to the different components of curricular standards and are associated with expected learning outcomes (*aprendizajes esperados*). The latter specify the knowledge and abilities that all students must reach as a result of the study of given learning contents, within or across thematic “blocks”. For instance in 6th grade mathematics, in Block III establishing the learning of numbers and numerical systems, spatial location, measurement, proportionality and functions, and analysis and data representation, one of three expected learning outcomes is “solves problems which involve the use of measures of central trend (mean, median and mode)”.

• **Guide for the teacher.** This section provides guidance to the teacher, for each of the four fields of education for basic education (language and communication; mathematical thinking; exploration and understanding of the natural and social world; and personal development and development for co-existence), across a range of aspects which typically include:

  - **Focus**
    
    It describes the main characteristics of the particular field of education alongside the main purposes for learning.
2. THE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK –

- Learning environment
  It outlines approaches to organise the learning in the classroom such as the development of didactic projects.

- Development of digital competencies
  It proposes approaches to develop digital competencies such as the use of digital resources available on line and the use of computers by students in the preparation of projects.

- Assessment
  It describes the range of assessment techniques the teacher can use for diagnostic, formative and summative assessment of students.

- Pedagogical organisation
  It enunciates a range of principles for the pedagogical organisation of the learning such as the contextualisation of learning, the account of the previous knowledge of students, the explanation to students of the objectives of learning, and the active participation of students in learning activities.

- Didactic orientations
  It recommends a range of didactic approaches to implement learning projects in the classroom.

Alongside the study plan and the study programmes, teachers also benefit from textbooks accredited by the SEP, guides and case studies on the teaching of specific subjects, online teaching materials, and support from state technical committees.

**Strengths**

*There has been notable progress in granting evaluation and assessment a prominent place in educational policy*

In the last 12 years, Mexico has made a remarkable progress in developing the foundations of a framework for evaluation and assessment. As of the early 2000s, educational policy conferred a central strategic role to evaluation and assessment as indispensable tools for planning, accountability, and policy development. As of the National Education Programme 2001-2006 it was established that evaluation and assessment should be permanent and systematic, combining the involvement of internal and external agencies and be important management instruments to achieve improvement and accountability to society.

A milestone in the development of evaluation and assessment in Mexico was the creation of the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE) in 2002 by presidential decree as a public, decentralised agency to provide national guidance and direction in evaluation and assessment activities at both the basic and upper secondary education levels. This responded to the increasing social demand for an independent body to carry out reliable evaluations of the education system (OECD, 2010). Another ground-breaking development was the implementation of national standardised assessments: on the basis of a sample (EXCALE in 2005) and census-based (ENLACE in 2006). These made available data on student learning outcomes which, for
the first time, provided a picture of the extent to which student learning objectives were being achieved. ENLACE also granted the opportunity to compare student learning outcomes across individual schools. These developments clearly communicated that evaluation and assessment had become priorities in the school system and generated a comprehensive agenda to advance an evaluation culture among school agents. The objective was to get away from a tradition of unexamined education practices, limited accountability for student outcomes, and narrow focus on improvement strategies.

Currently, evaluation and assessment remains a priority of educational policy. The 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme (PROSEDU) places evaluation and assessment as a transversal issue across all education objectives with three main functions: accountability of education agents; information to parents; and support for public policies. Along the same lines, the Alliance for Quality in Education (ACE) establishes that evaluation and assessment should act as a stimulus to improve education quality, favour transparency and accountability and act as a basis for the development of educational policy. Accordingly, it commits to: (i) articulate the National System for Educational Evaluation (SNEE) by bringing together government agencies, processes and existing procedures; (ii) evaluate all those who take part in the education process in an exhaustive, periodical manner; and (iii) stipulate performance standards of components, processes and resources of the national education system.

Clearly, evaluation and assessment has gained a prominent place within Mexican educational policy. The OECD Review Team also formed the view that there is growing support among the school agents for consolidating evaluation and assessment practices at the different levels of the system. The general acceptance of the need to strengthen evaluation activities is the result of sustained evaluation and assessment policies implemented with determination in the last decade. These have done much to stimulate public awareness of evaluation and assessment and convey a strong message about their centrality in educational policy.

A major benefit of the stronger emphasis on evaluation and assessment has been the greater focus on improving student outcomes and achieving student learning objectives. This is reflected in the establishment of education national targets to be achieved by 2012, the growing importance of student outcomes (particularly ENLACE results) for school accountability and teacher appraisal, and the requirements for reporting publicly on student results.

**A range of recent initiatives strengthen the evaluation and assessment framework**

The centrality of evaluation and assessment in the education agenda has resulted in the recent development of a range of initiatives which have the potential to strengthen evaluation and assessment in the school system. Among the most significant are:

- The Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB), with student learning defined on the basis of competencies and expected learning outcomes, enhanced reporting to students and parents, and greater focus on formative assessment (see Chapter 3 for further analysis).
- The consolidation of teacher appraisal through more transparent access to the teaching profession (following the introduction of the National Teaching Post Competition) and a new formative focus with the introduction of the Universal Evaluation System (see Chapter 4).
• Work on the definition of standards for teaching and school management (see Chapter 4).

• Initial work on self- and external evaluation of schools (see Chapter 5).

• Programme evaluation by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) since 2007: all social development programmes (including education programmes) are required to include an evaluation component to assess whether they meet the established objectives and which adjustments are needed to improve their effectiveness (see Chapter 6).

• Consolidation of the work on system-level education indicators and creation of the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (RNAME) (see Chapter 6).

These developments clearly communicate that evaluation and assessment are priorities in the school system and reveal a broad agenda to develop an evaluation culture among school agents. In this context, it is significant that states are progressively engaging with the national evaluation agenda not only through their adherence to federal initiatives but also through the development of their own evaluation programmes (for example, the creation of state-level evaluation institutes).

There are common references at the national level to provide the basis for evaluation and assessment

There are common references to provide the basis for evaluation and assessment. At the system level, federal governments in office establish priorities for educational policy, which provide the framework for policy development. Education targets to be achieved by 2012 have also been established with associated indicators to permit the monitoring of their achievement. These are important references to shape the evaluation and assessment framework and inform, in particular, system evaluation. The General Education Law (LGE) also provides clear aims for education emphasising the development of individuals and the promotion of values and attitudes. These are associated with broader social and economic goals. Statements about the aims for the education system such as its promotion of diversity, equity and quality and its role in developing successful learners and informed citizens are articulated.

At the level of student learning goals, there is a basis for common expectations of outcomes from schooling. In basic education, there is a national curriculum supported by the general 2011 Study Plan for basic education and the grade- and subject-specific 2011 Study Programmes. As described earlier, these establish curricular standards to be met at the end of each of the four main stages of basic education as well as expected learning outcomes and are fairly detailed and prescriptive. While schools and teachers have some room to make local adjustments to the curriculum, the study programmes dictate in a fairly detailed way what is to be taught at schools. This limits curriculum innovation in schools and does not encourage collaborative work among teachers on curriculum development/adaptation at the local level. However, given the reality of limited capacity at the school level at least in the most disadvantaged areas, the objective is to ensure that all schools (including the most disadvantaged ones) are provided with a solid structure to guide student learning.
The Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education has the potential to generate lasting improvement in the education system

The RIEB is a wide-ranging reform with the potential to have long-lasting effects on student learning in Mexico, through redefining learning as the development of competencies (instead of the transmission of knowledge contents) and shifting pedagogical practices in classrooms (see Chapter 3 for further details). It puts emphasis on concepts such as assessment for learning, expected learning outcomes, collaborative learning, project-based work, student self-assessment and peer assessment and criterion-referenced marking, all of which place students at the centre of the learning. The RIEB is a profound structural educational reform, benefiting from the efforts of a large number of school agents, and drawing on the consensus achieved among educational stakeholders. Through the promotion of practices which favour student learning, the RIEB has the potential to sustain lasting improvement and reflects a proper long-term vision of educational policy.

There is an emergent emphasis on equity and inclusion among national goals for education

There has been an emergent focus on equity and inclusion in the Mexican education system. For example, one of the six priorities for educational policy proposed in the 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme (PROSEDU) is “to extend educational opportunities in order to decrease inequalities among social groups, close gaps and promote equality” (Objective 2), which is associated with some targets to be reached by 2012 (e.g. 99% coverage in basic education in the eight poorest states). A multitude of federal programmes targeted at improving the education of disadvantaged groups have also been implemented. Concrete examples of actions targeted at disadvantaged or underperforming students include programmes such as Basic Education for Boys and Girls of Internal Migrant Agricultural Families, Education Support to Groups in Vulnerable Situations, Strengthening of Special Education and Educational Integration, Strengthening of Actions Related to Indigenous Education, Schools of Quality, and Emergent Programme for the Improvement of Educational Achievement.

However, equity and inclusion are areas for further policy attention. As pointed out in Chapter 6, there is limited knowledge about educational disadvantage in the Mexican education system – little differential analysis is undertaken on student performance across specific groups such as Indigenous students, migrant students, students from disadvantaged families or those who live in a remote location. Also, no measures of equity in the education system have been developed so that progress towards reducing inequities can be monitored. Indeed, in the PROSEDU, the indicators to measure progress towards Objective 2 refer to input factors rather than student learning outcomes. The indicators developed mostly refer to scholarships provided to disadvantaged students, equipment in disadvantaged schools and enrolment rates at different educational levels.

The principle of transparency in monitoring and publishing results is established

The evaluation and assessment framework is strengthened by the establishment of significant requirements for public reporting. Mexico collects a wide range of data on education system performance, including through international student surveys, national standardised assessments, qualitative studies and the development of educational indicators. The SEP and the INEE publish comprehensive sets of educational statistics and have developed publicly available education databases. Furthermore, the results of
ENLACE are published at the school level but with the drawback that the simple averages provided do not allow for the appropriate contextualisation of the results (see Chapter 6 for further details).

This present situation is in contrast to the period prior to 2000, largely characterised by the absence of public data on educational outcomes. From 2002 on, there has been an explicit objective of disseminating publicly data on educational outcomes both to hold school agents accountable and to ensure the respective analysis informs educational policy development. In this respect, INEE has played a particularly important role.

**There is strong capacity at the national level to engage in evaluation and assessment**

The capacity for evaluation and assessment at the federal level is impressive. Millions of student assessments and teacher examinations are processed every year requiring a large logistical capacity and high levels of technical expertise. This is the result of considerable technical expertise accumulated in an institution such as CENEVAL, top methodological guidance from INEE, and strong policy and implementation capacity within the SEP. At the federal level, work on evaluation and assessment has involved a large number of individuals including top academics, distinguished teachers, experienced school leaders and motivated education policy makers. The development of instruments and the processing of the data generally involve the best expertise in the country, which is considerable. Areas such as educational measurement, psychometrics, test development, validation of test items or scaling methods are fairly well developed in Mexico.

**There is some guidance and a range of tools at the central level to support evaluation and assessment**

There are some concerted efforts at the federal level to build up a knowledge base, tools and guidelines to assist evaluation and assessment activities. The SEP produces fairly detailed national study programmes to implement the national curriculum, including guidelines for teachers to develop their lesson plans. There are also extensive materials to facilitate the implementation of the RIEB, including the new approaches to student assessment and the reporting of student results (for example, the new Basic School Card, as described in Chapter 3). In an initiative to support the implementation of the RIEB, and following joint work with the SEP, a toolbox for teachers on instruments for classroom assessment is being developed by INEE. Another significant example is the Enciclomedia initiative, an e-learning pedagogical tool for teachers to use in the classrooms. The SEP also produces materials for teachers to use ENLACE results formatively. Another area of intervention are the materials produced by the SEP, INEE and CENEVAL for the application of evaluation and assessment procedures such as student standardised assessments and teacher examinations (e.g. manuals for co-ordinators in charge of the application). In addition, there is a range of materials for school self-evaluation developed by both the SEP and the INEE. The SEP also provides materials to assist teachers with the different teacher appraisal programmes, including guidance on how to prepare the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM).

**There is a growing involvement of a diverse set of stakeholders in the evaluation and assessment framework**

The development of evaluation and assessment policies generally involves a large set of stakeholders. For instance, the governance of the INEE includes the representation of
federal and state educational authorities, teachers (SNTE), civil society, national and state-level evaluation institutes, academia and research centres. Similarly, bodies organising teacher-related processes (such as the National Teaching Post Competition or the Vertical Promotion System) typically bring together federal and state educational authorities and teacher representatives (SNTE). Also, civil society organisations are more and more involved in educational issues, with a particular interest in holding educational authorities accountable for educational outcomes (Chapter 1 provides examples of civil society organisations involved in education). For instance, the organisation Mexicanos Primero publishes the annual report *Goals: the State of Education in Mexico (Metas: Estado de la Educación en Mexico)*, which includes state-level indicators for the education sector.

A particularly positive development with the potential to involve parents in the evaluation and assessment framework is the creation of a School Council of Social Participation in each school. This council comprises parents and representatives of the parents’ association as well as teachers, representatives of the teacher union, members of school management, and members of the community of which the school is part. Even if there is considerable room for these councils to become more effective, they provide an opportunity for parents to exert some influence on schools’ activities.

**Challenges**

*The evaluation and assessment framework needs to be completed and made coherent*

*There is no integrated evaluation and assessment framework*

As in many other OECD countries, the different components of evaluation and assessment have developed independently of each other over time and there is currently no policy document on the overall framework for evaluation and assessment in Mexico. There are provisions for student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation, but these are not explicitly integrated or aligned (more on this below). The existing framework is not perceived as a coherent whole and it does not visibly connect all the different components.

*The evaluation and assessment framework is incomplete*

While the initiatives introduced in the last decade have helped to develop an evaluation culture across the education system, the evaluation and assessment framework is not yet complete. Some key components of a comprehensive evaluation and assessment framework are currently still underdeveloped:

- The formative assessment of students by teachers is underdeveloped as a result of the focus placed on marks and a classroom practice which is still very traditional. The formative component seems to be displaced by the generation of summative results, particularly ENLACE results (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed analysis).
- Criterion-based student assessment (*i.e.* assessment against student learning standards) is underdeveloped (see Chapter 3).
- Moderation of marks which reflect the summative assessment of students by teachers across schools is not undertaken. As a result, it is not possible to guarantee that teacher-based marks are fair across schools and reflect a consistent assessment against student learning objectives (see Chapter 3).
• Formal teacher appraisal covering the entirety of the teaching body is not in place (see Chapter 4).
• The formative assessment of teachers with the objective of informing teachers’ professional development plans is underdeveloped (see Chapter 4).
• School self-evaluation is still at an early stage of development and the competencies to implement it remain incipient (see Chapter 5).
• There is no holistic external evaluation of schools which includes an evaluation of school processes (see Chapter 5).
• There is no specific national framework for the appraisal of school leaders (see Chapter 5).
• Thematic system-level evaluations are underdeveloped (see Chapter 6).

Some articulations within the evaluation and assessment framework are not sufficiently developed

How the different components have to be interrelated in order to generate complementarities, avoid duplication, and prevent inconsistency of objectives is an important aspect of designing the evaluation and assessment framework. There are a number of missing links, or underdeveloped articulations, between different elements of the evaluation and assessment framework in Mexico. These can be grouped into two distinct sets:

• Within specific components of the evaluation and assessment framework:
  – Linkages between student summative assessment and curricular standards
    Teacher-based summative assessment is still often norm-referenced (i.e. involving the comparison of students within the same classroom) rather than criterion-referenced (i.e. against curricular standards) (see Chapter 3 for further detail).
  – Linkages between standardised student assessment (ENLACE) and student formative assessment
    It is not clear that teachers give formative uses to ENLACE results (and there is little awareness of the uses which should be discouraged) (see Chapter 3).
  – Linkages between teacher appraisal and teacher professional development
    There are indications that the provision of professional development for teachers is not systematically linked to teacher appraisal (see Chapter 4).
  – Linkages between school evaluation and school improvement
    The linkages between school evaluation and school improvement are incomplete as a result of the absence of external school evaluation (see Chapter 5).
− Articulation between school self-evaluation and external school evaluation
  Given the incipient development of school self-evaluation and the absence of external school evaluation, no synergies are created from their articulation (see Chapter 5).

− Absence of teaching and school management standards
  No teaching and school management standards are implemented to work as the references for teacher and school leader appraisal respectively (see Chapter 4).

• Between specific components of the evaluation and assessment framework:
  − Articulation between teacher appraisal, school evaluation and school development
    This relates to a range of aspects such as: school-based teacher appraisal being validated by school evaluation processes; making the focus of school evaluation on teacher effectiveness systematic across schools; and school development processes exploring links to the evaluation of teaching practice. At the present moment, these links are weak given the incipient development of school self-evaluation, the absence of external school evaluation and the little use of teacher appraisal results for school development.

  − Articulation between school evaluation and the appraisal of school leaders
    The appraisal of school leaders (part of teacher appraisal processes) bears no relation to school evaluation except for the account of school-level ENLACE results.

  − Articulation between school evaluation and system evaluation
    The absence of an evaluation of school processes prevents the generation of relevant system-level information about qualitative aspects of schooling.

  − Articulation between school evaluation and student assessment
    To a great extent school accountability is limited to the publication of ENLACE results which do not take into account schools’ specific contexts (see Chapter 5 for further detail).

  − Articulation between teacher appraisal and student assessment
    ENLACE results have a disproportionate influence on teacher appraisal with no correction for the other factors which influence performance such as the socio-economic context faced by students.

The governance of the evaluation and assessment framework raises some concerns

The distribution of responsibilities within the evaluation and assessment framework raises some concerns. First, even if the General Education Law clearly states that the evaluation of the education system is an exclusive responsibility of the SEP, in practice the division of labour between the SEP and INEE within the framework remains unclear. There is considerable overlap between the work of the two institutions, for instance on the development of education indicators, the production of annual reports on the state of
education in Mexico, or on the development of a vision for school evaluation. While there is collaboration between the SEP’s Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP) and INEE, it is often ambiguous how far INEE can take its autonomy in leading educational evaluation activities in the country. The reality is that the SEP inevitably has a vested interest in the evaluation of the Mexican education system. While INEE has technical autonomy over its work, at the time of the visit by the OECD Review Team it remained politically and financially dependent on the SEP. For instance, the Head of INEE’s Board of Directors was the Secretary of Public Education. This had the potential to greatly limit the independence of INEE’s work, including its judgments on the state of education in Mexico.

Subsequently to the visit by the OECD Review Team, the 2002 Presidential Decree which created the INEE was revised on 16 May 2012 with the changes taking effect as of September 2012. The revisions are significant in a range of aspects. INEE acquires a new status: that of non-sectorised agency instead of that of public agency. This removes previous directions/co-ordination provided by the SEP. It is also granted autonomy in more explicit terms: “for the exercise of its functions the Institute benefits from technical, operational and decisional autonomy”. The expectation is that INEE will have the authority to make recommendations for the implementation of standards and technical procedures in educational evaluation. The revision to the 2002 Decree involves the modification of the governance structure of INEE (see Chapter 1 for a description of the new governance structure). A significant change is the fact that the Head of the Board of Directors is no longer the Secretary of Public Education but, instead, the member of the Board which represents the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL). The President of the Institute (which replaces the Director in the previous governance structure) is directly nominated by the President of the Republic who also nominates all the members of the Technical Board (in charge of the technical decisions within INEE). The new governance structure strengthens the role of evaluation experts (e.g. through the profile for the membership of the Technical Board and the Specialised Technical Councils) and relevant actors within the Mexican education system (through the Social Council for the Evaluation of Education and the Council for the Liaison with Federal Entities). Another important feature is that INEE will have its own budget coming directly from the federal government.

Second, while states are required to implement federally-dictated evaluation and assessment policies and are allowed to develop complementary initiatives, they do not have clear domains of responsibility within the evaluation and assessment framework. As explained below, there is a deficit of structures for evaluation at the local level, in view of supporting schools’ work. Similarly, while states are responsible for administering their school systems and their teaching workforces, they do not have to assume responsibilities for evaluating the schools and the teachers. There seems to be an opportunity in the evaluation and assessment framework for giving state educational authorities the responsibility – and the accountability – for the evaluation activities which are closer to the place of learning, that is school evaluation and school-based teacher appraisal. This would also involve taking responsibility for supporting schools in their improvement efforts.

Third, teacher appraisal, which benefits from a large share of the resources invested in the evaluation and assessment framework, is highly politicised and does not benefit from a co-ordinated management at the national level. As a result, professional aspects of teaching are not always at the forefront of teacher policy developments. This situation might call for the creation of an independent body at the national level to co-ordinate efforts in the management and improvement of the teaching workforce in the country.
There is room to strengthen the improvement function of evaluation and assessment

An important challenge is to find the right balance between the accountability and the improvement functions of evaluation and assessment. It is apparent that the policy initiatives in evaluation and assessment of the last few years have emphasised accountability over improvement. For instance, the in-service teacher appraisal system currently in place is mostly focussed on salary progression and rewards and places little emphasis on its links to professional development (see Chapter 4 for further detail), the assessment of students is oriented towards summative scores (see Chapter 3), and school evaluation is essentially reduced to accountability through the publication of ENLACE results (see Chapter 6).

While transparency of information, high quality data, and the accountability of school agents are essential for a well-functioning evaluation and assessment system, it is important to both guarantee that the existing data and evaluation results are actually used for improvement and that school agents have the capacity to use the data and feedback made available to them in order to improve their practices. In this way, it is encouraging to observe greater emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment in recent initiatives such as the Universal Evaluation System for teachers (conceived as mostly formative) and the RIEB (which emphasises assessment for learning).

Links to classroom practice are not clearly established

In Mexico, the development of the evaluation and assessment framework is led from the centre (federal authorities). The national agenda for education provides a framework of national objectives and establishes clear expectations in relation to the curriculum, the teaching profession, national student assessment, reporting requirements and system monitoring at the top level of the overall evaluation and assessment framework. The focus has been on structures, procedures, programmes and resources but, while these components of policy are clearly important, there has been a less clear articulation of ways for the national agenda for education to generate improvements in classroom practice through the assessment and evaluation procedures which are closer to the place of learning. To a great extent, the greater focus on accountability also results from the strong top-down national vision for evaluation and assessment which constrains the ownership of evaluation and assessment procedures by school agents. This also reflects the greater technical capacity at the centre and the more limited competencies at the local level to engage in evaluation and assessment activities. However, establishing links between evaluation and assessment and classroom learning inevitably requires establishing clear roles for local structures – school management, supervision, state educational authorities – in the implementation of evaluation and assessment policies. The point is that the fulfilment of the improvement function of evaluation and assessment requires articulation at the local level.

Evaluation and assessment frameworks have no value if they do not lead to the improvement of classroom practice and student learning and therefore securing effective links to classroom practice is one of the most critical points in designing the evaluation and assessment framework.
It is unclear that the students are at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework

An important challenge in the Mexican school system is that it is unclear that students are at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework. Teaching, learning and assessment still take place in a somewhat “traditional” setting with the teacher leading his/her classroom, the students typically not involved in the planning and organisation of lessons and assessment concentrating on summative scores. The opportunity given to parents and students to influence student learning is more limited than in other OECD countries. There is also relatively little emphasis on the development of students’ own capacity to regulate their learning. Other practices which are developing in Mexican classrooms but require further strengthening are the communication of learning expectations to students, the opportunities for performance feedback and mechanisms for individualised support. Overall, students still tend to play a more passive role in their learning. In this context, it is encouraging that the RIEB is in fact addressing these limitations in classroom practices in Mexico, as it is based on placing the student at the centre of learning, giving students an active role in their learning, and using assessment for learning.

Feedback in Mexico tends to be focused on test performance and results rather than on learning (see Chapter 3 for further detail). Also, collecting the views and perspectives of parents and students to inform school improvement through the systematic use of surveys is not a general practice in Mexico. This includes surveys designed by teachers to collect student views on their teaching. Also, student and parental views are not yet a key element for the self-evaluation of teachers and schools.

There is a narrow conception of evaluation and assessment

In Mexico, there is a narrow understanding of the purposes and the potential of evaluation and assessment. Evaluation and assessment are still perceived mostly as instruments to hold stakeholders accountable, to “control” and assess compliance with regulations. This is visible at all levels with the focus often being whether formal requirements are met with less attention given to the quality of practices or ways for these to improve. For instance, supervision structures within states emphasise administrative rather than pedagogical aspects of schools (see Chapter 5), student assessment remains focussed on summative results (see Chapter 3) and teacher appraisal mostly aims at salary progression and monetary rewards (see Chapter 4). There is not enough reflection on the use of results from evaluation activities and the concept of feedback is not yet fully ingrained among school agents. The idea that the ultimate objective of evaluation and assessment is to improve students’ learning and teachers’ teaching is not yet fully matured in the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework. This translates into a situation whereby the more accountability-oriented elements of the framework are receiving greater attention than processes for improvement, which leads to more limited local engagement in self-assessment activities, incipient practices of evidence-informed inquiry, and assessment and evaluation results not used to their potential. The emphasis on accountability risks leading to a compliance culture as perceptible in the repetitive use of the word “simulation” by the school agents interviewed by the OECD Review Team when confronted with the need to comply with the requirements for evaluation and assessment.

Also, evaluation and assessment in Mexico is to a great extent conceived as “measurement”. This reflects the dominance of ENLACE in the evaluation and assessment framework. In addition to the primary role for which it was conceived, the formative assessment of students, ENLACE results constitute the dominant instrument in
in-service teacher appraisal (National Teacher Career Programme, Universal Evaluation System, and Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality), the central factor in school accountability (through the publication of results at the school level), and the de facto key element in the evaluation of the national education system and the state education sub-systems. As explained later in the report (in Chapters 3 and 4), while ENLACE has been important to raise awareness of the importance of focussing on student results, its dominance in the system raises important challenges in terms of its potential detrimental effects to pedagogical practices and not fairly reflecting the contribution of individual teachers and schools. The concept of evaluation as “measurement” is also reflected in the expectation among school agents that results of evaluation and assessment can all be reduced to indicators, which the OECD Review Team observed during its visit. By contrast, qualitative evaluation, feedback for improvement, and professional dialogue around evaluation results are all not sufficiently developed in the evaluation and assessment framework. In a few words, evaluation and assessment are more about control and measurement but not as much about learning.

**The alignment between the curricular reform and evaluation and assessment is still at an early stage of development**

A crucial aspect to the successful implementation of the RIEB is its alignment to the evaluation and assessment framework. Given the novel pedagogical orientations of the RIEB, its focus on student competencies and expected learning outcomes, and the proposed new emphasis on formative assessment, the alignment with evaluation and assessment is inevitably an effort of significant magnitude. In most of its dimensions, it is in its starting phase and much remains to be done. There is some progress in aligning ENLACE to the RIEB. In early 2011, the design of a new generation of ENLACE assessments were matched to the RIEB and the proposed expected learning outcomes. These were piloted in 2011/12 and will be generalised to the full cohort of students as of 2012/13 when the RIEB is extended to all grades. However, there is a need to re-align EXCALE to the curricular standards provided by the RIEB and a major effort needs to be undertaken in developing teacher capacity to assess students against the RIEB’s student learning objectives. The latter includes the need for teachers to build on the potential of the new Basic School Card (see further analysis in Chapter 3).

Similarly, another priority is to ensure that the development of teaching and school management standards are properly aligned with the student learning objectives proposed in the RIEB. A consequence will be the need to redesign instruments for teacher and school leadership appraisal (such as the teacher examinations which are part of teacher appraisal processes) to reflect this alignment. More broadly, the spirit of the RIEB requires greater emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment, better use of evaluation results for feedback, more attention to self-reflection by learners and educational practitioners, more interactive and collaborative work among school agents, and a closer focus on student competencies. No doubt, the RIEB promises to be the pillar of a renewed evaluation and assessment framework.

**There is a need to strengthen competencies for evaluation and assessment across the system**

The effectiveness of evaluation and assessment relies to a great extent on ensuring that both those who design and undertake evaluation activities as well as those who use their results are in possession of the proper skills and competencies. While there have
been considerable national efforts to stimulate an evaluation culture by strengthening assessment and evaluation activities, as well as providing competency-building learning opportunities in some cases, there are still limited evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the education system.

Competencies for evaluation and assessment at the state and local levels remain limited. Developing their own arrangements for evaluation and assessment has not been a priority within states. Most states rely on federal initiatives to engage in evaluation and assessment activities (such as standardised student assessments or federal programmes requiring the self-evaluation of schools). To date, only five states have created autonomous evaluation institutes and nine states have developed their own state-level assessments. Typically states do not have structures such as an agency to take responsibility for school evaluation and support schools, or manage the teaching profession. This implies that the knowledge accumulated of evaluation and assessment practices remains scarce.

Moreover, as explained in Chapter 5, school supervision structures within states remain mostly focused on administrative tasks rather than engaging in a dialogue with individual schools around pedagogical aspects. There is great variation in the capacity of supervisors, heads of teaching, and heads of sector to effectively engage in quality assurance practices and provide support to schools. There is also little transparency in the recruitment of supervision staff and it is unclear in many cases whether they have the right expertise in education. There is typically no competencies profile for assuming responsibilities in the supervision structure. This does not provide guarantees that the skills and competencies of supervision staff are adequate to effectively contribute to school improvement.

There is also a need to improve the competencies of school leaders in evaluation and assessment, in particular with regard to ensuring a meaningful school self-evaluation process, and providing pedagogical guidance and coaching to individual teachers. There is no specific initial education to train school leaders in Mexico, nor does the specific career of school leader exist. In addition issues of transparency of school leaders’ recruitment have not yet been solved. School directors still focus their work largely on administrative tasks and do not exert a strong pedagogical leadership in schools. Overall there is a limited preparation on pedagogical evaluation and human resource management for the role of the school director in school self-evaluation, school improvement, teacher appraisal and teacher career development.

Other areas in which building capacity is a considerable challenge include: the competencies of teachers for student assessment (both formative and summative), also the result of the insufficient focus on skills for student assessment in initial teacher education; the data handling skills of school agents (e.g. to use ENLACE results); and analytical capacity for educational planning and policy development at the system level.

The development of competencies for evaluation and assessment, particularly at the local level, should be among the highest priorities. The ambitions of the sound policies developed at the central level do not always match the realities in schools, meaning that they are often confronted with the modest local capacity for implementation.
Policy recommendations

Sustain efforts to strengthen evaluation and assessment

In just over a decade, Mexico has made remarkable progress in embedding evaluation and assessment as regular practices in the education system. The achievements in a short time span are impressive, including: the creation of a national institute with top technical capability (INEE); the provision of information on educational outcomes to the Mexican society; the generation in teachers of a focus on student learning outcomes; the development of important capacity to run standardised assessments; and the improvement of the evaluation culture among school agents. Although there is still progress to be made to reach a comprehensive evaluation and assessment framework, it is important not to lose the ground that has been gained. Hence, it is strongly recommended that, building on the achievements to date, Mexico sustains its efforts to strengthen evaluation and assessment in the years to come.

Authentic evaluation, that which leads to the improvement of educational practices at all levels, is central to establishing a high-performing education system. It is also essential to recognise and reward the work of educational practitioners. Promoting evaluation and assessment is clearly in the national interest. As a result, the national policies for evaluation and assessment should hold a steady course, accommodating well-founded concerns, and making the adjustments necessary so evaluation and assessment becomes a meaningful and valuable exercise in schools and classrooms. It is already clear that placing evaluation and assessment at the core of school reforms in the last decade achieved considerable recognition among school agents of the fact that meaningful evaluation and assessment is indispensable.

The current evaluation and assessment framework provides a good basis for further development. It is comprehensive, includes most domains of evaluation and assessment, a wide range of sources of data, and it generates useful results for policy development. Expertise has been developed at the different levels of basic education, which is not to be lost. However, some adjustments are needed to consolidate the meaningfulness of evaluation and assessment in the Mexican school system. The suggestions that follow intend to provide a long-term vision for evaluation and assessment in Mexico. This involves greater emphasis on the formative function of evaluation and assessment, local agents considerably more involved in evaluation and assessment activities, and a significant investment in skills and competencies for evaluation and assessment across the education system. The objective is to consolidate those evaluation and assessment practices that hold the promise of generating lasting improvement in the learning of Mexican children, very much in the spirit of the commendable Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB).

Adjust the governance of the evaluation and assessment framework

The governance of the evaluation and assessment framework could benefit from a few significant adjustments. This would be in a context where the SEP retains the leadership in setting educational strategy and developing educational policy and maintains a role in the implementation of all the components of the evaluation and assessment framework. A first adjustment recommended is the considerable expansion of the autonomy of INEE so it can take the leadership in evaluation and assessment activities in the country. This would imply being politically and financially independent from the SEP and reinforcing the presence of evaluation experts and specialists in its
decision-making bodies. The objective would be to establish INEE as the authoritative voice in evaluation and assessment in Mexico, highly credible for its expertise and technical capacity, and issuing directions for the implementation of evaluation and assessment procedures in the country. An important step in this direction was made on 16 May 2012 through the revision to the 2002 Presidential Decree which created the INEE. The revisions, which will take effect in September 2012, address most of these issues as discussed in the previous section, with the reinforcement of INEE’s autonomy, the strengthening of its technical expertise, and the provision of further independence from the SEP. In terms of functions, the INEE should emphasise its technical leadership (e.g. in developing evaluation instruments, guidelines), the monitoring of the education system (and its sub-systems), the introduction of innovations on the basis of research results, the development of capacity for evaluation and assessment across the system, and its technical support for educational authorities to implement evaluation and assessment procedures at the local level. The expectation is also that the INEE becomes the entity with the responsibility to assess the state of education in Mexico and develops analysis to inform policy development by the SEP and state educational authorities. It is also expected that INEE’s work is done in close dialogue with educational authorities at the federal and state levels, which should be represented in INEE’s internal bodies.

A second major adjustment concerns giving specific responsibilities to state authorities for the implementation of evaluation and assessment activities which are closer to the place of learning. As explained earlier, there is a vacuum of responsibilities in the framework in areas such as school evaluation and school-based teacher appraisal, which are essential for evaluation and assessment policies to connect to classroom practices. State educational authorities should be required (or receive strong incentives) to establish structures to formally organise external school evaluation, supervise school self-evaluation, and validate school-based approaches to teacher appraisal (along the lines of what is recommended in Chapters 4 and 5). This could be done through the establishment of agencies (or institutes) with responsibility for school supervision and improvement (as suggested in Chapter 5). INEE could create a framework for the establishment of such agencies and ensure its technical support as is the case with the state-level evaluation institutes that currently exist. The idea is that these state-level agencies complement (and do not duplicate) the work undertaken by INEE, i.e. they lead the implementation of evaluation and assessment activities at the local level (including the associated support to schools) under the technical guidance from INEE.

A third adjustment is to ensure a better co-ordination of the teaching profession. This could be achieved through the creation of an independent body at the federal level to co-ordinate efforts in the management and improvement of the teaching workforce in the country (see also Chapter 4). The focus of such a body would be the regulation of the teaching profession, including the definition of standards of practice, the establishment of requirements for initial teacher education programmes, the organisation of the National Teaching Post Competition, the institution of a career structure for teachers, the administration of teacher appraisal processes, the management of the supply of professional development programmes, and the operation of a certification process for teachers (as recommended in Chapter 4). This would ensure a much better articulation between the different components of teacher policy. For instance, in New Zealand, the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) has key responsibilities for teacher policy including establishing and maintaining standards for teacher registration, carrying out teacher registration processes, publishing a code of ethics for the teaching profession and exercising disciplinary functions relating to teacher misconduct. NZTC provides teachers
with professional autonomy, a degree of self-regulation and the right to have a say in the further development of their profession. NZTC further contributes to building a sound evidence base on high quality teaching. It commissions research relating to all aspects of the teaching profession, including induction and mentoring, teacher education, teacher standards and the status of the profession.

**Place greater emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment**

A priority is to reinforce the improvement function of evaluation and assessment and reflect on the best ways for evaluation and assessment to improve student learning. Realising the full potential of the evaluation and assessment framework involves establishing strategies to strengthen the linkages to classroom practice, where the improvement of student learning takes place. Channels which are likely to reinforce such linkages and which are less well articulated in Mexico include: ensuring teaching and school management standards are developed and aligned with student learning objectives; assuring schools engage in meaningful self-evaluation practices; building teacher capacity for student formative assessment; ensuring that teachers are seen as the main experts not only in instructing but also in assessing their students, so teachers feel the ownership of student assessment and accept it as an integral part of teaching and learning; placing the emphasis of teacher appraisal on the continuous improvement of teaching practices; assuring schools engage in informal teacher appraisal for feedback in close alignment with student learning objectives; and strengthening teachers’ ability to assess against the curricular standards established by the RIEB. The greater emphasis on formative aspects proposed by the Universal Evaluation System for teachers and the RIEB are excellent opportunities to reinforce the improvement function of the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework.

As explained earlier, the other medium to strengthen the use of evaluation results for improvement is the reinforcement of the role of state educational authorities in developing structures to undertake school-level evaluation procedures and provide the necessary follow-up support to drive school improvement. The articulation of evaluation and assessment at the local level is essential to establish links between national level policies and the improvement of classroom practices.

**Integrate the evaluation and assessment framework**

Mexico is increasingly building on evaluation and assessment to consolidate its school reform programme. There is an emergent evaluation culture in the system and an awareness of the importance of using the evaluation and assessment framework to help drive the reform agenda. However, the full potential of evaluation and assessment will not be realised until the framework is fully integrated and is perceived as a coherent whole.

An important initial step is to develop a strategic plan or framework document that conceptualises a complete evaluation and assessment framework and articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components. Key stakeholders groups should be engaged in the development of the plan so as to ensure that it is responsive to broader social and economic needs as well as to the goals of the education system. Similarly, the different levels of education governance should be engaged, in particular state educational authorities so their responsibilities and roles in the framework are clearly established. The plan should essentially constitute a common framework of reference for educational evaluation across the country with the ultimate objective of embedding
evaluation as an on-going and essential part of the professionalism of the actors in the education system.

The plan should establish a clear rationale for evaluation and assessment and a compelling narrative about how evaluation and assessment align with the different elements in the education reform programme. For instance, it would be important to convey the message that evaluation and assessment are about the improvement of learning and cannot be conceived mostly as accountability and measurement. This should include a reflection on ways for ENLACE to be less dominant in the evaluation and assessment framework through greater prominence of other evaluation instruments. The plan should describe how each component of the evaluation and assessment framework can produce results that are useful for classroom practice and school improvement activities. The plan could also contribute to clarifying responsibilities of different actors for the different components, and allow for better networking and connections between the people working on evaluation and assessment activities. It should also create the conditions for a better articulation between the different levels of education governance, including autonomous evaluation institutes (at the federal and state levels).

This reflection should be followed up by improved training and competency descriptions for key people within the evaluation and assessment framework (including education staff in state education authorities such as those in the supervision structures), include strategies to strengthen certain components of the framework and propose ways of establishing better articulations between different evaluation components (see below).

Finally, state educational authorities should be required to develop their own strategic plans for evaluation and assessment focussed on school-level evaluation practices with the potential to reach the classroom. Such plans should describe their alignment with the federal strategic plan and articulate how evaluation and assessment activities at the state level complement activities led at the federal level.

**Strengthen some of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework**

As indicated earlier, there are a number of components that are still underdeveloped in the current evaluation and assessment framework. There is a need to consolidate student formative assessment and criterion-based summative assessment by teachers, priorities which will benefit from the introduction of the RIEB (see Chapter 3 for further analysis). Another priority area is to improve the consistency of teacher summative assessment across schools, mostly through the introduction of moderation processes (see Chapter 3). This is a key area to guarantee fairness of student marking across the country. Teacher appraisal also requires considerable policy attention. Formal teacher appraisal needs to reach the entire teaching workforce so the levels of competence of all teachers are appraised and subsequently inform career progression. This is in the spirit of the Universal Evaluation System, being currently introduced. In addition, an area for extensive work is developmental teacher appraisal focussed on informing teachers’ professional development plans (see Chapter 4). There is a need to re-conceptualise teacher appraisal, develop teaching standards and provide a structure to support its implementation at the school level (see Chapter 4). Also, greater incentives need to be provided to schools to engage in school self-evaluation so it is systematically performed in Mexican schools with the involvement of all school agents and follow-up which leads to school improvement (see Chapter 5). This is to be complemented with requirements for external school evaluation which includes the evaluation of school processes (see Chapter 5), an exercise to be led by state educational authorities with structures also ready
to support school development. Moreover, the appraisal of school leaders needs to be separated from teacher appraisal with the objective of reinforcing school pedagogical leadership (see Chapter 5). Finally, considerable efforts should go into reinforcing qualitative types of evaluation at the system level (see Chapter 6).

Further develop some articulations within the evaluation and assessment framework

The process of developing an effective evaluation and assessment framework should give due attention to: achieving proper articulation between the different evaluation components (e.g. school evaluation and teacher appraisal); and ensuring the several parts within an evaluation component are sufficiently linked (e.g. school evaluation and school improvement). For example, as explained in the previous section, there is room to better define the articulations between: school evaluation and the appraisal of school principals (see Chapter 5 for further analysis); school evaluation and system evaluation (see Chapter 6); school evaluation and student assessment (see Chapter 5); and school evaluation and teacher appraisal (see Chapter 4). This results from the absence of an evaluation of school processes and the fact that school accountability is essentially reduced to non-contextualised ENLACE results. There are also improvements to bring to the articulation between teacher appraisal and student assessment given that the ENLACE results used reflect the impact of many factors other than the performance of the teacher (see Chapter 4).

Examples of linkages within single evaluation components which need to be reinforced include: the linkages between student summative assessment and curricular standards (see Chapter 3); connections between student standardised assessment (ENLACE) and student formative assessment (see Chapter 3); the association between teacher appraisal and teacher professional development (see Chapter 4); the linkages between school evaluation and school improvement (see Chapter 5); the articulation between school self-evaluation and external school evaluation (see Chapter 5); and the development of teaching and school management standards to serve as references for teacher and school leader appraisal, respectively.

Commit significant resources to align the evaluation and assessment framework with the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education

A critical element in the effectiveness of the evaluation and assessment framework is its proper alignment with the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB). The RIEB calls for a greater emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment, which requires significant re-orientations of most of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework. This includes more attention to student formative assessment, greater emphasis on self-reflection for all the school agents, greater focus on continuous improvement in teacher appraisal, and better use of results for feedback. At the same time, the more summative components such as external standardised assessments (for students and teachers), and teacher-based student summative assessment require adjustments to align with the RIEB. Similarly, teaching and school-management standards will need to be developed in accordance with the student learning objectives proposed in the RIEB. An important prerequisite is that all elements internal to the RIEB are well aligned. In sum, the alignment with the RIEB is an effort of considerable scale and requires a substantial investment of resources particularly in dedicated training at all
levels. But that is an investment that promises great returns in generating lasting improvement of student learning in the Mexican education system.

The successful and consistent implementation of the RIEB across Mexican schools also requires strengthened guidance from the centre. This involves the development of support materials and exemplars of good practice that teachers can use to implement the RIEB. An example is the development of guidelines for student assessment as well as national grading criteria for teachers to use in their summative assessment of students against the curricular standards suggested in the RIEB. Other examples include tools for the formative assessment of students, instruments for school-based developmental teacher appraisal, and guidelines for school self-evaluation. Both the SEP and the INEE should take the lead in this area. Another area for further work is the development of procedures and instruments for external school evaluation to be made available to state educational authorities, so they progressively engage in this area.

Build on some key policy levers to effectively implement evaluation and assessment

The strategy to develop an effective evaluation and assessment framework should build on the following key principles:

- Place the students at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework
  Given that the fundamental purpose of evaluation and assessment is to improve the learning of the students, a key principle is to place the students at the centre of the framework. This translates into teaching, learning and assessment approaches which focus on students’ progress and development. There are already provisions in the Mexican school system for individualised support, growing opportunities for differentiated learning, and greater say of students in their learning. However, these approaches need to become more systematic across schools and classrooms. There is a need for strong messages and incentives for teachers to get away from more traditional teaching strategies and focus on motivating students and using assessment for learning and providing high quality feedback. Students should be fully engaged with their learning, contributing to the planning and organisation of lessons, having learning expectations communicated to them, assessing their learning and that of their peers, and benefitting from special attention when they fall behind. In addition, it is important to build community and parental involvement and an acceptance of learning and teaching as a shared responsibility. These are all objectives of the RIEB, whose implementation will be instrumental in placing students at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework. A related area for attention is the reduction of grade repetition (see Chapter 3 for further analysis).

- Communicate the rationale for evaluation and assessment
  It should be clearly communicated that the purpose of the evaluation and assessment framework is to improve the educational outcomes of students. As such, it is expected that school agents actively use the results of evaluation and assessment activities to develop improvement or action plans at all levels.

- Ensure the centrality of teaching and learning
  It would be critical to ensure that the evaluation of teaching and learning quality is central to the evaluation framework. The latter should capitalise on the “open
door” climate which exists among Mexican teachers. Classroom observation should become an important instrument in teacher appraisal (see also Chapter 4) and external school evaluation (when these processes are introduced, see also Chapter 5). Similarly, the observation of teaching and feedback to individual teachers should be part of school self-evaluation processes. The effectiveness of the evaluation and assessment framework will depend to a great extent on the ability to cultivate a culture of sharing classroom practice, professional feedback and peer learning.

- Sustain an equity dimension in the evaluation and assessment framework

It is essential that evaluation and assessment contributes to advancing the equity goals of the education system. At the system level, it is imperative to identify educational disadvantage and understand its impact on student performance. Developing equity measures should be a priority. It is also important to ensure that evaluation and assessment are fair to given groups such as cultural and linguistic minorities and students with special needs.

- Recognise the importance of school leadership

The effective operation of evaluation and assessment will depend to a great extent on the way the concept and practice of school leadership develops in Mexico. It is difficult to envisage either effective teacher appraisal or productive school self-evaluation without strong leadership capacity. It is essential that school principals take direct responsibility for exerting pedagogical leadership and for assuming the quality of education in their schools (OECD, 2010). Hence, the recruitment, development and support for school leaders is of key importance in creating and sustaining effective evaluation and assessment practices within schools (see also Chapters 4 and 5). Research internationally has shown that school leadership focused on goal-setting, assessment, appraisal and evaluation is positively correlated with teacher and student performance (Pont et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2006).

- Establish an implementation strategy

The implementation of evaluation and assessment policies requires the recognition of a range of important aspects. First, reaching agreements on the design of evaluation and assessment activities requires time for discussions and consultations with all stakeholders. Second, developing expertise in the system, including training evaluators, is expensive and requires time. Third, conducting evaluation processes induces additional workload for school agents. Fourth, aligning broader school reforms such as professional development opportunities with evaluation and assessment strategies requires more educational resources. It needs to be borne in mind that evaluation and the resulting feedback, reflection and development processes will only support better educational experiences and outcomes for students if school agents collaborate to make it work. To a great extent it is the motivated school agent who ensures the successful implementation of reforms in schools. Hence, it is imperative not only to find ways for school agents to identify with the goals and values of evaluation and assessment practices but also to ensure that such goals and values take account of teacher agency.
Significantly invest in evaluation and assessment capacity development across the school system

The development of an effective evaluation and assessment framework involves considerable investment in developing competencies and skills for evaluation and assessment at all levels. As the evaluation and assessment framework develops and gains coherence, an area for policy priority is consolidating efforts to improve the capacity for evaluation and assessment. As in Mexico the evaluation capability deficit is greater at the state and local levels, it is important that capacity building responds to the diverse needs of state educational authorities, supervision structures, school management and teachers.

A priority is to improve the competencies for evaluation of state educational authorities and staff in their supervision structures (supervisors, heads of teaching, heads of sector). The objective would be the development of competencies to grant a solid basis for the creation of state-level evaluation structures such as an agency or an evaluation institute to take responsibility for school-level evaluation procedures, including school evaluation. This could benefit from INEE’s contribution to the development of the associated training programmes. Also, an area of particular importance for state educational authorities is capacity building to understand, interpret and make decisions based on information generated by school-level evaluation activities, including future school evaluations (see Chapter 5 for further analysis). Moreover, competency profiles for supervision staff should also be developed. There is a need to strengthen the pedagogical role of supervisors and ensure that progressively they focus their work on the improvement of teaching and learning in schools (see Chapter 5). This requires considerable training for supervision staff, including in techniques of evaluation and feedback.

There is also a need to reinforce the educational leadership skills of school principals as their role in Mexico still retains a more traditional focus on administrative tasks. The objective is that school leaders operate effective feedback, coaching and appraisal arrangements for their staff and effectively lead whole-school evaluation processes. This can primarily be achieved by redefining school leadership as educational leadership, and ensuring that the whole cohort of school leaders receives adequate training in “leadership for learning” (see also Chapter 5). School leaders should be trained to implement an authentic evaluation of teaching and learning, feedback and objective setting at their schools, including techniques in teacher observation.

Teachers could also benefit from a range of development opportunities. These include: improving skills for formative assessment including engaging students in assessment; enhancing the capacity to assess against the student learning objectives defined in the RIEB, including promoting collaborative work among teachers around student summative assessment; and improving the capacity to collect and analyse information for self-improvement. Capacity building through adequate provision of initial teacher education and professional development should be a priority making sure provision is well aligned with the national education reforms.

Notes

1. These documents are available at http://basica.sep.gob.mx/reformaintegral/sitio.
References


Chapter 3

Student assessment

Student performance in Mexico is assessed by a wide range of instruments, ranging from national standardised assessments to continuous formative assessment in the classroom. All students are assessed in an on-going manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area or subject. Marks used to report student achievement are on a scale of 5 to 10. Assessment criteria and methods are defined by each teacher. There are also externally-based national final examinations at the end of both primary (Instrument for Testing New Lower Secondary School Students, IDANIS) and lower secondary education (National Upper Secondary Education Entrance Exam, EXANI I). These assessments serve diagnostic and selection (by school at the next level) functions. At the national level, there is also a full-cohort external assessment (National Assessment of Academic Achievement in Schools, ENLACE) which is used for diagnostic and improvement purposes but which has “high stakes” for teachers and schools. In basic education, ENLACE is administered annually to all students in third to ninth grades in Spanish and mathematics and a third subject which varies every year.

A major asset is that assessment is seen as part of the professional role of teachers in Mexico. Other strengths include the introduction of a new comprehensive framework for classroom-based assessment; the progress made in aligning marks with expected learning outcomes; the good attention to reducing grade repetition; the promotion of the involvement of parents in their children’s learning; and the capacity for implementing large-scale assessments. However, considerable challenges exist in building effective student assessment approaches. These include the currently traditional approaches to teaching and assessment; the prevalence of teaching to the test across the school system; the excessive reliance on multiple-choice tests; the great number of objectives for ENLACE; marking practices with little pedagogical significance; the lack of consistency of student assessment across schools and classes; the limited capacities at the state and local levels to support classroom-based assessment; and the need to improve instruments for reporting marks.
This chapter focuses on approaches to student assessment within the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework. Student assessment refers to processes in which evidence of learning is collected in a planned and systematic way in order to make a judgment about student learning (EPPI, 2002). This chapter looks at both summative assessment (assessment of learning) and formative assessment (assessment for learning) of students.

**Context and features**

**Overview**

Student assessment in Mexico comprises three main components: (i) classroom-based assessment, with both formative and summative purposes; (ii) external assessments for diagnostic and selection purposes both at the entrance of lower secondary education (IDANIS) and of upper secondary education (EXANI I); and (iii) external assessments for diagnostic and improvement purposes (ENLACE).

Classroom-based assessment for formative and summative purposes is carried out by teachers and regulated by official Agreement 200 (DOF, 1994). This norm has been in force since 1994 and establishes the obligation for public and private schools to implement student assessment for formative and certification purposes, based on the knowledge, abilities and attitudes included in the national curriculum. This agreement regulates the periodicity of summative assessments, the scale to be used for assigning marks and the conditions to pass or fail a student. In recent years, in the context of the ACE and the RIEB, a new approach to classroom-based assessment has been launched and the new initiatives are in their initial stages of implementation (including proposals to adjust Agreement 200).

IDANIS (Instrument for the Diagnostic of New Lower Secondary School Students, *Instrumento para el Diagnóstico de Alumnos de Nuevo Ingreso a Secundaria*) and EXANI I (National Upper Secondary Education Entrance Examination, *Examen Nacional de Ingreso a la Educación Media Superior*) are national external examinations for diagnostic and selection purposes. IDANIS was created in 1989, is operated by the SEP and assesses students entering lower secondary education. EXANI I was created in 1994, is operated by CENEVAL and assesses students entering upper secondary education. Both instruments are administered with the purpose of providing information to authorities and schools for student selection purposes (Vidal, 2009).

ENLACE is a national standardised assessment administered annually by the SEP on a census basis since 2006. Every student in third to sixth grades of primary education and in seventh to ninth grades of lower secondary education is currently assessed every year in Spanish and mathematics. Since 2008 a third variable subject is assessed each year in all the same grades: sciences in 2008, civics in 2009, history in 2010 and geography in 2011. Results are available individually to each student and average scores by school are widely disseminated. ENLACE’s initial explicit purpose was to provide information about students’ academic achievement on curriculum objectives, in order to promote the improvement of teachers’ professional practices and enhance the quality of learning. Afterwards, new objectives and consequences became attached to these assessments (see below) (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).


Regulations for classroom-based assessment

Classroom-based assessment is regulated by official Agreement number 200 (DOF, 1994). It states that student assessment should be formative, systematic, continuous and integral. It also specifies that for summative purposes teachers must use a numeric scale ranging from 5 to 10. In this scale, 6 is the minimum passing mark, 5 means insufficient and 10 is excellent.

Marks must be assigned and parents informed about them every two months, during October, December, February, April and within the last five working days of the school year, as stated in Agreement 499 (DOF, 2009), which introduced minor amendments to Agreement 200. This norm is widely observed by schools and teachers, leading to an organisation of teaching and learning activities in five terms or blocks, each of them with a two-month duration. School directors must communicate marks to students and parents and foster communication between them and teachers. For this purpose each term schools must complete a standardised report card for each student showing the marks obtained in each subject, which must be signed by parents. The current report card’s design corresponds to the 1993 National Curriculum. In the context of the RIEB, a new report card called Basic Education Card is being designed and trialled in schools (see below).

At the end of the school year a final mark on every subject must be calculated as the average of term marks obtained during the school year. Each student also receives an Annual General Average, which is the average of the final marks in each subject (SEP, 2011a).

In primary education there should be no repeating between the first and the second grades, as both are considered part of a unique period of learning. Between second and sixth grades, to pass to the next grade students must obtain at least 6.0 as the final mark in Spanish and mathematics, as well as an Annual General Average equal or greater than 6.0. Students who fail to obtain these marks must repeat the grade, unless they attend “regularisation processes”, which are summer courses or tutorships organised and delivered at the state level. Students may pass to the following grade if they are certified by an extraordinary examination before the beginning of the next school year (SEP, 2011a; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

In lower secondary education students who fail to obtain at least the 6.0 mark in more than five subjects must repeat the whole grade. Students who fail five or fewer subjects at the end of the school year should take development activities and pass an examination in each of those failed subjects. Students cannot enrol in the next grade if they have still not passed more than two subjects after the “regularisation period” in September (at the beginning of the school year) (SEP, 2011a; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

Classroom-based assessment practices

The procedures and regulations described above are focused on formal aspects of summative assessment. Formative assessment is declared as important, but there are no concrete guidelines about how to perform it. As for summative assessment, the Agreement 200 does not include guidelines about the meaning of marks in terms of expected student performance. This issue is beginning to be addressed in the context of the RIEB, the current curricular reform, including with proposals to revise Agreement 200 (see below).

Within this formal framework, schools and teachers are completely free to determine assessment criteria and undertake student assessment. Teachers use quite different criteria.
to assess their students, particularly to assign marks for academic achievement. As observed by the OECD Review Team during the Review visit, many teachers use a normative approach to marks, meaning that they first assign the maximum mark (10) to the best students in their classroom, and then give marks to other students in relation to this benchmark. There are also instances, conveyed to the OECD Review Team by different school agents, where teachers adjust their assessment criteria in order to reduce the number of apparently underachieving students.

For most teachers in Mexico marking consists of assigning points to students across a range of elements: homework completion, class attendance, participation in classroom activities, neatness of tasks, discipline, teamwork, presentations and tests (usually in a multiple-choice format). These aspects receive “points” which are finally averaged to obtain a mark. When asked about which element is the most important for assigning the bi-monthly mark (other than test results), 71% of primary school teachers answered “attention and participation in classroom activities” (García et al., 2011).

The weight assigned to each of these elements varies across teachers and across terms for the same teacher, depending on the content taught and the activities carried out. The weighting of these elements is not explicit, but tests usually have more influence on final marks (García et al., 2009; Loureiro, 2009; Picaroni, 2009; Ravela, 2009a; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

Formative assessment in Mexico is performed in a very narrow manner: it basically involves giving marks for tests, tasks and attitudes and telling students where they have failed. There is little evidence of teachers’ awareness of the importance of giving feedback to students during the process of their work in order to help them reflect about their own learning or about their products (Picaroni, 2009; Ravela, 2009a).

**Teacher capacities for student assessment**

According to the national curriculum for teacher education degrees in Basic (SEP, 2002) and Lower Secondary Education (SEP, 2010), teachers should be trained to perform student assessment in the classroom during their initial teacher education. Capacity to effectively assess student learning is supposed to be developed through a course called “Teaching planning and learning assessment”, taught six hours per week in the sixth semester of the Bachelor’s in Primary Education and four hours per week in the fourth semester of the Bachelor’s in Lower Secondary Education (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

This course is aimed at preparing future teachers for organising teaching activities and assessing both progress and difficulties in student learning. Future teachers should learn how to use instruments adequate to curricular content and student characteristics. The course should also prepare them to assess learning processes, establish the timing for administering standardised instruments and write test questions requiring student reflection which use the knowledge and intellectual skills they have acquired. Future teachers are supposed to learn that the main objective of assessment is enhancing teaching and learning rather than just assigning marks (SEP, 2002, 2010; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

Regarding in-service teacher training and professional development, classroom-based student assessment is a major line of work for the Directorate General of Continuous Training for In-service Teachers (DGFCMS) of the SEP. The main national initiative in this area, the annually published *National Catalogue of Continuous Training and...*
Professional Betterment for Basic Education, includes a large offer of over 1 000 in-service and postgraduate courses, from short courses (40-hour duration) to Master’s and Doctoral programmes (SEP and INEE, forthcoming). These courses, which are delivered by higher education institutions throughout the country, are evaluated and accredited by the DGFCMS. Assessment related topics are receiving increasing emphasis in the offerings available to teachers. While two years ago only two programmes were specifically focused on assessment issues, the current 2011/12 catalogue includes over 30 programmes, among about 1 100 offerings. Most of them are targeted at school supervisors and focused on competencies-based assessment. Simultaneously, a large number of courses focused on curricular subjects include new approaches, techniques and instruments for classroom-based assessment (SEP, 2011b; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

SEP has also implemented other support devices to facilitate the development of teachers’ capacities for student assessment. This includes books for teachers, a special section on assessment and self-assessment in textbooks and a variety of materials available at SEP’s website, such as research articles on assessment, assessment indicators and links to other relevant websites about assessment (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

External student assessment for selection purposes

IDANIS was created in 1989 with the objective of providing information for the selection of students entering lower secondary education. It is administered and processed by the DGEP-SEP only in those states requesting it. The test is composed of around 60 multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blanks questions, assessing students’ basic abilities in three areas: communication, use of mathematics and abstract reasoning. Test items are very traditional and assess quite simple abilities. Results are used for assigning new students into lower secondary schools, especially for selective schools. For example, as explained in the SEP-DF’s website, in the Federal District, students entering lower secondary education express three preferences of specific lower secondary schools during the enrolment process. IDANIS results are the main criterion to then assign students to individual schools. Consequently, these results are quite important for students, as they determine their access to selective lower secondary schools (SEP and INEE, forthcoming; SEP-DF, 2011). As observed during the Review visit, in other states the selection process is typically carried out at the school level, by each lower secondary school having more candidates than available places.

EXANI I, created in 1994 and administered by CENEVAL, is undertaken on a voluntary basis and students or institutions must pay for taking it. As EXANI I results are widely used by upper secondary schools for student selection, it also has a strong influence on students and teachers in lower secondary education. EXANI I is currently composed of two instruments. The first and traditional one is a selection test that measures general intellectual abilities. The second is a recently introduced diagnosis test that assesses major subjects’ content that should have been learned during lower secondary education and are relevant for the next level. Both instruments are norm-referenced (i.e. test takers are compared to each other). As for IDANIS, EXANI I results are used by upper secondary schools for selection purposes (Vidal, 2009; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

IDANIS and EXANI I exert a strong influence on students and teachers, who devote time to prepare for them, as they determine students’ chances to attend the school of their preference at the next level. Furthermore, a search for “IDANIS” or “EXANI I” on the Web leads to several sites offering paid courses for preparing students for these
examinations. On the CENEVAL website there is an announcement saying that guides and materials for preparing the tests are available for free, but the same materials are offered for pay on other sites.

**External student assessment for formative purposes**

ENLACE is a major assessment endeavour, covering more than 14 million students from every public and private school in Mexico, from third grade (primary education) to ninth grade (lower secondary education). Since 2008 it also includes students leaving upper secondary education in reading comprehension and mathematics. At the upper secondary level ENLACE is of a different nature, as it tests competencies rather than curriculum content, and involves a separate planning and logistics.3

Test administration is externally controlled by parents in each school. Teachers supervise the test administration for a student group different from their own (so the supervision of their own students is avoided). Tests include between 50 and 70 multiple-choice questions and are aligned to the curricular content. Using a three-parameter Item Response Theory model, results are estimated using horizontal scaling with reference to an average of 500 points corresponding to the average student results in the first application of ENLACE (in 2006). Students are also placed into four performance levels: “insufficient”, “basic”, “good”, and “excellent”. “Insufficient” means that students lack the necessary knowledge and skills to continue learning the subject at a proper pace. “Basic” level students are proficient in only a small part of the knowledge and skills assessed in a subject and school grade, but enough to continue learning satisfactorily. “Good” level students are proficient in most of the knowledge and skills assessed in a subject and grade. “Excellent” level students are proficient in all knowledge and skills assessed in a subject and school grade (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

Results are presented with scores and percentages of students by performance level and are available on the SEP website. Students are given a code to look at their individual results, but during the Review visit the OECD Review Team perceived that many students do not find out about their results through the Internet. A study by Mendoza Trejo (2010) reveals that only 27% of parents of primary school students and 31% of parents of lower secondary school students find out about ENLACE results through the Internet (in a context where 52% of parents of basic school students do not find out about ENLACE results at all). This happens in spite of the substantial efforts by SEP which sends printed reports to parents with their children’s results. Aggregate results by school are also available on line and can be consulted by the general public. Schools’ directors and teachers have access to individual students’ results by test component, and can learn the right and wrong answers for each student, permitting them to identify the topics which are more difficult for the students (SEP and INEE, forthcoming). Teachers also receive printed reports with their groups’ results. Posters with school results compared to other schools are sent to the educational community and are to be posted at a visible place in schools.

Assessment can be “low stakes” or “high stakes” (as defined by Messick, 1999). ENLACE was initially presented as a “low-stakes” assessment, but it has progressively evolved into a “high stakes” scheme. This is a consequence of other uses of its results, the most relevant being the use of student results in the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM), so part of teachers’ salaries are tied to their students’ scores in ENLACE (see analysis in Chapter 4). While ENLACE has been used in the context of the PNCM since its inception in 2006, its original design was based on the formative use of its results for
the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom (see, for instance, Zúñiga Molina and Gaviria, 2010).

Originally the SEP suggested the following “low-stakes” uses for ENLACE results:

- Activities to involve parents in supporting their children’s learning, such as workshops and reinforcement of learning at home;
- Creating materials for improving teaching and promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices between teachers and states;
- Development of continuous education offerings based on ENLACE results;
- Special initiatives to strengthen schools with low ENLACE results;
- Actions for strengthening educational management, such as establishing learning standards at the end of each education level; and
- Promoting programmes for improving education quality (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

But ENLACE rapidly became a “high stakes” assessment with the publication of results at the school level, school rankings published in the media, monetary incentives for teachers based on their students’ ENLACE scores and students with the highest scores receiving public recognition. These other uses of ENLACE are quite distinct from those initially intended. They may be leading schools, teachers and students to devote a large amount of time to practising ENLACE tests (Backhoff et al., 2008; Loureiro, 2009), a perception also conveyed to the OECD Review Team by a large number of stakeholders including in the schools visited.

During the Review Visit, the OECD Review Team witnessed the strong influence of ENLACE on schools’ lives in a wide range of aspects. Examples of behaviours which were consistently mentioned by personnel interviewed in the seven schools visited (and which were corroborated by a large number of the stakeholder groups interviewed during the Review visit), include:

- In every school visited teachers and directors attached great importance to ENLACE results.
- In every school visited students heavily practised for ENLACE using the tests set in preceding years.
- Some schools seek to stimulate improvement in student motivation to achieve by participating in promotional programmes developed by education authorities such as “Let’s go for 600 points” (organised by the Federal Administration for Educational Services in the Federal District, AFSEDF).
- Some teachers expressed the view that, as ENLACE has no direct consequences for them, students do not make a great effort when taking the test. As a result, as conveyed to the OECD Review Team in the schools visited, some teachers may seek to motivate students by indicating that ENLACE results contribute to their overall achievement data, which is not the case.
- Many teachers expressed concern about ENLACE not taking into account the different circumstances and contexts schools and students face.
Some teachers recognise a positive effect of ENLACE, as “it exerts a little pressure on teachers to make an effort to improve students’ achievement”.

ENLACE led teachers to have some particular concern about low achievement students. It also generated a special concern about reading comprehension.

As for students with special educational needs, there are a few adaptations for the test administration. ENLACE allows a relative to be in the classroom and help the student without providing her or him the answers. In some cases, depending on the specific type of student needs, the questions can be read to the student or help may be received in writing the responses on the response sheet (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

In the case of Indigenous students, it is supposed that the tests’ linguistic and cultural pertinence is assured through the accompanying work of the DGEI (SEP and INEE, forthcoming). The DGEI is part of ENLACE’s Technical Council since 2008 and has worked with the DGEP in order to improve the pertinence and reliability of the test for Indigenous students. This work has included reviewing over 2 500 test items. However, during the visits to schools, teachers argued that many items include wording or situations that are unknown by rural and Indigenous students. In 2008 the teachers of a school based in the state of Chiapas filed a complaint against the SEP at the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, CONAPRED) for linguistic discrimination in the application of ENLACE. The complaint received the support of representative organisations such as the National Congress for Indigenous and Intercultural Education. In 2011, the CONAPRED issued a resolution in favour of the teachers, stating that the SEP should introduce modifications to ENLACE to ensure that it is not culturally-biased against Indigenous students. The SEP accepted the resolution and is currently working with Indigenous education organisations with a view to adapting ENLACE to the needs of Indigenous students (CONAPRED, 2011).

Policy initiatives related to classroom-based student assessment

In the context of the Alliance for Quality in Education (ACE), a major curriculum reform effort is taking place in Mexico, the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB). A unified Study Plan, which articulates course programmes from pre-school to the end of basic education, is being piloted and progressively introduced in schools. The reform aims to improve the coherence of the whole system, focusing on providing students with a comprehensive education, so that they can acquire the skills needed for life (OECD, 2011a; SEP, 2011c) (see Chapters 1 and 2).

The new curriculum is oriented by an explicit profile to be achieved by every student leaving basic education. This profile is composed of ten main aspects which are expected to align all curricular efforts and to serve as a benchmark for evaluating the efficacy of the educational process (SEP, 2011c) (see Chapter 2).

The 2011 Study Plan establishes that teaching should be oriented towards competencies for life, so it should comprise more than simply explaining concepts. Every course is organised into five blocks and “expected learning outcomes” (aprendizajes esperados) are explicitly stated for each block. There has been an important effort for setting curricular standards to be used as a benchmark for external and classroom-based student assessment at the end of the main cycles of basic education: pre-school, third grade, sixth grade and lower secondary education. Curricular standards express what students should know and be able to do at the end of each cycle. There are standards for
the main formative areas: Spanish, English, mathematics, sciences, reading ability in Spanish and digital abilities. Standards have been set with technical advice from the University of London and are aligned with PISA performance level 3 in reading, mathematics and sciences, as a target to be reached by students leaving lower secondary education (SEP, 2011c; SEP, 2011d).

In early 2011, work on the design of a new generation of ENLACE assessments aligned with the new RIEB’s standards and expected learning outcomes was launched. These were piloted in 2011/12 and will be generalised to the full cohort of students as of 2012/13 when the RIEB is extended to all grades. This work has brought together the SEB, DGAIR, INEE, state educational authorities, teachers and experts under the co-ordination of experts of the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.

Under this reform, a great effort is being made to establish a new approach to classroom-based assessment. More emphasis is placed on assessment as an on-going process and an essential part of teaching and learning. Teachers remain in charge of assessing students’ achievement. Official documents explicitly establish that in basic education, the formative approach should have prevalence in all assessment activities, as the main objective is to improve students’ performance. Teachers must explicitly and clearly explain to students and parents the expected learning outcomes for students and the assessment criteria, as well as the steps to be taken by students in order to overcome their difficulties. Teachers should not give a mark to students without advice on how to improve their performance (SEP, 2011d; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

As for the instruments to be used for classroom assessment, the Study Plan states that rubrics, checklists, registries of observations, written pieces of work, team projects, conceptual maps, portfolios and written and oral tests should be used (SEP, 2011c; SEP and INEE, forthcoming). Students should be frequently involved in self-assessment and peer assessment activities.

In the context of this new emphasis on classroom-based assessment, the SEP is working on a new approach to reporting marks to students and parents. The existing Report Card will be replaced by a Basic Education Card, which should combine qualitative and quantitative perspectives on student achievement, focusing on student progress in relation to the expected learning outcomes for each curricular block (SEP, 2011c; SEP, 2011d; SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

Marks will continue to be expressed using the current numeric scale ranging from five to ten, but each mark will have attached a description of the level of performance reached by the student, in relation to the expected learning outcomes. Performance levels will be labelled with an “A” for “outstanding” (corresponding to a 10); a “B” for “satisfactory” (corresponding to an 8 or a 9); a “C” for “sufficient” (corresponding to a 6 or a 7); and a “D” for “basic” or “elemental”. For each mark the card includes a statement about the type of support needed for the student, which should be complemented with teachers’ observations. This new instrument has been developed by a working group formed by the SEP and the INEE in 2009. At this stage it is being trialled in 5 000 primary schools and 1 000 lower secondary schools.
Strengths

**Teachers are committed to student learning**

During visits to schools the OECD Review Team formed the view that most teachers in Mexico are genuinely involved in students’ learning and achievement. In all meetings students consistently mentioned their teachers’ determination in explaining the subject themes to them and in helping underachieving classmates. The OECD Review Team witnessed cases where teachers devoted time to extra classes and activities, as well as to meetings with parents, on a voluntary basis, on Saturdays or after hours. Teachers are also aware of the importance of adapting teaching and assessment to students’ individual needs and cultural contexts – although the way they do it is not always adequate, as will be explained below. In some schools teachers asked advanced students to act as monitors in helping their classmates.

Teachers in Mexico play an important role in student assessment, as both formative continuous assessment and summative assessment are an essential part of their professional responsibilities. Assessment in Mexico is integral to the work of teachers. Evidence on student learning is collected regularly and a variety of aspects are taken into account for student assessment: tasks, effort, presentations, tests, projects. Nevertheless, there is much room for improvement, both in the way teachers approach formative feedback and in the way marks are established.

A new and comprehensive framework for classroom-based student assessment with an increased emphasis on outcomes is developing

The RIEB is bringing into the education scene a sound approach to classroom-based assessment. It constitutes a major and clever effort to align curriculum across compulsory education, from pre-school to the end of lower secondary education. While maintaining room and flexibility for adaptations to different educational levels, backgrounds and students’ special needs, the RIEB organises study programmes with a comprehensive and coherent approach. The new curriculum seems to have a good balance between what is compulsory and what can be locally adapted.

One of the main features of the RIEB approach is the curricular alignment around students’ expected performance. Each “block” for each course includes “expected learning outcomes”, which are intended to be the main guide for teachers’ work. Expected learning outcomes are aligned with curricular standards set at the end of each of three-year cycles (pre-school, first to third grade, fourth to sixth grade and seventh to ninth grade). Curricular standards are aligned with a graduate profile defined for students at the end of basic education (i.e. lower secondary education), which includes PISA’s performance level 3 as a main component (SEP, 2011c).

By unifying curricular efforts around expected learning outcomes, the RIEB is generating a positive move from a content-based curriculum to a competencies-oriented one. This constitutes an important step forward for Mexico. Having PISA competencies in mind as part of the graduate student profile is clever in the sense that authorities are sending a unified message to teachers about what they are expected to generate as competencies.

The RIEB also includes a clear and interesting approach to student assessment in the classroom, for both formative and summative purposes, which is explicitly stated as a professional responsibility of teachers. As described previously, the RIEB: expands the
meaning of assessment, conceiving it as an essential part of teaching and learning; proposes the use of a wide range of assessment instruments; emphasises the formative purpose of classroom-based assessment; and, as will be explained below, introduces a critical shift in giving a new meaning to marks.

As observed by the OECD Review Team during visits to schools, teachers who have been in touch with the new curriculum – through direct participation in pilot experiences or through continuous training courses on the RIEB – are beginning to introduce new practices in their classrooms: checklists oriented to aspects such as participation, collaboration and research attitudes of students; rubrics; new authentic products being required from students (e.g. producing an announcement as a written task); projects oriented towards expected learning outcomes; and student self-assessment and peer assessment.

There is progress in aligning marks to expected learning outcomes

Another important shift that the RIEB is introducing in classroom-based assessment concerns the changes to the Report Card (renamed as “Basic Education Card”). The significant development is the intent to give a new meaning to marks in terms of expected learning outcomes.

The on-going approach is quite smart, in the sense that the focus is not on changing the scale, but on attaching a new meaning to the existing marks in terms of student performance. In some reforms of performance scales, a lot of energy is devoted to changing the scale, for example from numbers to letters. This is usually just a cosmetic change, and marking practices remain the same. The main problem with marking is the absence of a meaning for the different marks and the prevalence of marking as a matter of assigning points across a number of aspects and averaging them into a meaningless final mark (Wiggins, 1998; Ravela, 2009a). Current efforts in Mexico are being devoted to the establishment of a relationship between marks in the current scale and performance levels, although specific descriptions have not been developed yet. The new Basic Education Card is still being piloted and there is still work to do in order to define the specific meaning of each performance level for each of the subjects, so that marks acquire a clear meaning for teachers, students and families.

However, it must also be said that the new reporting scheme includes some debatable aspects such as indicators on reading speed and comprehension (a specific required classroom test consisting of measuring the number of words a student is able to read in one minute), and the practice of averaging marks for different subjects in lower secondary education.

There is good attention to reducing grade repetition in primary education

Grade repetition is a major problem in Latin America. Analysis for primary education in Latin America indicates that Guatemala (26%) and Colombia (21%) show the largest proportions of students in ages 7 to 11 who are lagging behind (i.e. not in the grade they should be at their age), with the figures for Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina being 11%, 10%, 9% and 6% respectively (OEI, 2010). The percentage for Mexico (3%) was the lowest within 17 countries.

It is well known that: (i) students who repeat a grade continue to be underachievers during their schooling (i.e. repeating a grade does not have the supposed effect of taking repeaters to the same level of their classmates); and (ii) students who repeat a grade
increase their probability of dropping out of school. Many countries have been trying to eliminate repetition, but in many cases the perverse effect has been that students move forward in their schooling without acquiring the expected learning (Torres, 1995; Schiefelbein and Wolff, 1992).

In Mexico, students cannot repeat between the first and the second grade of primary education (SEP, 2011a). In the context of the RIEB, this rule will be extended to the third grade. The emphasis will be on timely compensatory actions for underachieving students, instead of grade repetition. A remarkable fact is that, when looking at international student performance data (UNESCO’s Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, LLECE), Mexico is above the regional average in reading and mathematics, both in third and sixth grades: 25% of third grade Mexican students are at or below level one in reading (below the regional average of 32%). Only Cuba, Costa Rica and Uruguay have a better performance than Mexico (UNESCO/OREALC, 2008). So evidence suggests that the Mexican approach to grade repetition is working well, as students are not lagging behind and, at the same time, they are achieving a good performance level in the regional Latin American context.

Mexico’s grade repetition rates are higher in secondary education, where 22% of 15-year-old students have repeated at least one year during their schooling (OECD, 2010). However, with 22%, Mexico shows indeed the lowest percentage within Latin American countries participating in PISA. In countries like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay, around 35% of 15-year-old students have repeated at least one year (OECD, 2010). Mexico’s figure is also lower than those for Spain and Portugal (both around 35%) (see Annex D).

The involvement of parents in their children’s learning is being promoted

During its meetings and visits to schools, the OECD Review Team formed the view that school directors and teachers in Mexico are quite aware of the importance of frequent communication with parents. Although it is possible that in some cases parents are contacted in a merely administrative manner, in every school visited there was a concern about communicating marks to parents every two months and involving them in the support to low performance students. There were also noticeable initiatives to involve parents in current efforts for promoting reading and to encourage their active participation in the Councils for Social Participation in Education.

The current implementation of a new Basic School Card is also relevant, as it intends to give clearer meaning to marks in terms of students’ expected learning outcomes. It is also positive that the new Card encourages parents’ support in the learning of their children.

Some initiatives foster the development of teacher competencies for student assessment

As described earlier, there are some incipient but important initiatives to foster the development of teachers’ competencies for classroom-based assessment. This area is increasingly present among the continuous teacher training offerings, although teachers are not yet satisfied with the quality of the courses offered. More recently, INEE and SEP started work on the development of instruments for classroom assessment which will be available on the Web. A toolbox for teachers is being developed by INEE and 1 million copies will be distributed to teachers. These initiatives are supposed to support the implementation of the RIEB and the new approach to assessment. Nevertheless, it is
important to note that it is not enough to distribute materials. The challenge is to make sure that teachers at schools have the opportunity to collectively interact with the new materials and with colleagues and try the new practices in their classrooms.

**The capacity for designing and implementing large-scale assessments is remarkable**

External student assessment is widely present in Mexican schools. For over 20 years IDANIS has been administered to students leaving primary schools and, through EXANI I, the same occurs with students leaving lower secondary education since 1994. During the 1990s, large-scale national standardised assessments were carried out in the context of the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM). Also, EXCALE and ENLACE were launched in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Millions of standardised assessments are administered, processed and reported in Mexico every year.

Although the diversity of external student assessments is somewhat confusing for teachers, as will be explained later, they contribute towards focusing teachers’ attention on students’ achievement. Teachers look at each student’s results and often focus on those with lower ENLACE results. Another effect has been teachers’ awareness of the importance of reading comprehension for students’ lives and the ability to answer test questions. Several teachers mentioned the importance for students to understand the text of the questions so that, for instance, they understand what is required in mathematics problems. Many teachers feel ENLACE results challenge their professional competence, in the sense of being pressured to improve their students’ achievement (as measured by ENLACE).

IDANIS and EXANI I also play a role in motivating students and teachers around achievement. Nevertheless, there are some issues that must be addressed around the alignment between the different external assessments and the new curriculum.

Each of the external assessments involves much technical work through a range of committees in charge of developing instruments and processing data. There is also a large logistical capacity installed. This capacity exists not only within SEP and INEE but also within CENEVAL, which has vast experience in organising standardised assessments. The experience with external assessment has relied almost exclusively on multiple-choice tests leaving room for the introduction of more complex types of tasks which could send important new pedagogical signals to teachers, students, parents and schools.

**Challenges**

**There is a need to change the culture of teaching**

Improving the way teachers assess their students involves a critical change in established teaching practices. As stated by Stigler and Hiebert (2009), teaching practices are difficult to change because they are part of a culture. Teachers learn how to teach mainly through informal participation in school and classroom practices over long periods of time – and less so during initial or continuous training programmes. Teaching is a practice that is learned by living in a culture more than through formal studies. The way teachers do things in schools is determined rather by cultural scripts which are like the DNA of teaching. For these reasons changing teachers’ practices is a complex and long-term endeavour (Stigler and Hiebert, 2009). Keeping this in mind is crucial for Mexico’s efforts to change assessment practices and make curriculum changes effective. It is not just a matter of writing a new study plan, improving the Report Card, offering new
continuous training courses or delivering new materials to schools. Instead, a major cultural change must be promoted.

The Mexican educational system is highly centralised. Schools and teachers are the subject of control by supervisors, the state and federal level authorities, as well as the teacher union. Simulation is a strong part of the system’s culture, as the more you are controlled, the more you need to simulate what you are doing to meet the expectations. During the Review visit, the word “simulation” was mentioned frequently as being part of the culture by a variety of stakeholders: authorities, supervisors, school directors, teachers and researchers. This fact should be carefully taken into account by those who are leading the changes at the central level. In such a culture it is even more difficult to introduce real changes in classrooms by decree.

**Teaching to the test is prevalent across the school system**

Teaching to the test has become a widespread pedagogical practice in Mexico. School directors, teachers and students consider that practising standardised tests is the best strategy for improving student achievement. This was consistently conveyed by personnel interviewed in all the seven schools visited by the Review Team and confirmed by many of the stakeholder groups interviewed during the Review visit. Schools motivate students for improving their ENLACE results, including through the participation in formal programmes such as “Let’s go for 600 points” (organised by the Federal Administration for Educational Services in the Federal District, AFSEDF). Several weeks before the administration of ENLACE, teachers devote considerable class time to what they call the “Pre-ENLACE”, which are testing sessions similar to the actual test using examples from previous years. Something similar happens with IDANIS and EXANI I. In some schools, teachers and students devote significant amounts of time to the practice of these tests. While ENLACE results have consequences for teachers and directors – part of their salaries depends on them (see Chapter 4) – IDANIS and EXANI I are important for students and parents as the possibility to attend a selective school depends on their results. Similarly, the SEP also strongly encourages schools to prepare students for PISA tests. The publication “Towards PISA 2012” (Hacia PISA 2012) is widely distributed in a version for teachers (250 000 copies) and another for students (4 million copies), encouraging secondary school students and teachers to practise weekly with PISA released items during the whole school year. Obtaining good results in PISA is presented to students as a matter of national pride and loyalty to Mexico (SEP, 2011e and 2011f).

The critical issue that should be carefully considered is whether the objective is simply to raise average scores (in either ENLACE or PISA) or, instead, improve Mexican children’s wide range of competencies. It is very important to make a distinction between the objective and the indicator. As Linn and Gronlund (2000) put it:

*We are almost always interested in making inferences that go beyond the specific test. We would like, for example, to be able to say something about the degree of understanding of mathematical concepts based on the score that is obtained on a math concepts test. Because the items on a test only sample the domain of interest, the test score and the inference about the degree of understanding are not the same. A generalisation is required, and it is the generalisation, not the test score per se, that is important. When the specific items on the test are taught, the validity of the inference about the student’s level of achievement is threatened.*
The nationally promoted strategy of encouraging students to practise ENLACE and PISA items may lead to an increase of scores in the short term, but it is not clear that it will lead to sustained better learning for the student population in the longer term. Regrettably, the risk is that teaching-to-the-test practices reinforce the cultural belief that practising standardised tests is the path to improving learning. This is made worse by the incentives teachers and school directors have to promote teaching to the test as ENLACE results have a direct impact on their salaries (as explained in greater detail in Chapter 4). These incentives are not necessarily aligned with the best strategies to sustain the process of improving students’ knowledge, abilities and attitudes. Important educational objectives, which are not assessed in the tests, are neglected. As standardised tests cover a limited range of competencies and cross-curricular skills, teaching to the test narrows students’ learning experiences (see Morris, 2011, and Rosenkvist, 2010, for a discussion). It would be unfortunate that teaching-to-the-test practices undermine the many positive effects ENLACE has had in the Mexican education system such as the greater focus on improving student outcomes, the greater attention to students with learning difficulties and the transparency of student results for education stakeholders (as explained earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 2).

There is an excessive reliance on multiple-choice tests

A major problem in external student assessment in Mexico is the almost exclusive use of multiple-choice tests, with potential distortionary effects on the education of children. The extent to which Mexican external student assessment relies on multiple-choice questions should be a concern for education authorities, because this can narrow students’ vision about what counts as performance. The success of the RIEB requires the introduction of more complex tasks to external assessments as well as a greater variety of assessments.

Similarly, IDANIS and EXANI I should introduce greater variety to the type of questions asked, so they can assess the competencies promoted by the RIEB. The argument that these tests assess “abilities” instead of curricular content is quite outdated. If Mexican authorities are to maintain these instruments for selection purposes (which, in itself, is debatable) or just as an effective administrative tool to distribute students across lower secondary schools (as seems to be the case in the Federal District), they should align these assessments to the RIEB’s expected learning outcomes and standards, in order to reinforce a unified message to teachers and students about what is important in learning.

ENLACE has too many objectives

As explained earlier, while ENLACE was originally supposed to be a diagnostic and formative assessment instrument, new objectives and consequences were added subsequently, the most important of which is the use of its results to provide monetary incentives to teachers and school directors (see Chapter 4 for more detail). As explained by Linn (2000), assessment systems that are useful for formative and monitoring purposes usually lose much of their credibility when high stakes are attached to them, because the unintended negative effects of the high stakes often prevail over the intended positive effects.

During the Review visit, teacher, school management, students and educational experts raised instances of some of the non-desirable effects of ENLACE. Examples include time diverted from regular curriculum for special test preparation for ENLACE;
practising test items without analysing them in depth; and difficulties in ensuring the integrity of test administration. As documented in Zúñiga Molina and Gaviria (2010) and OECD (2011b), experiments conducted in Mexico suggest that test cheating may occur at a significant level - between about 4 and 10% of overall percentages of probable test cheating cases for grades 3 to 6 in the period 2006 to 2009. As Zúñiga Molina and Gaviria (2010) put it “Each year, the ENLACE test is becoming more important in terms of social and media impact, and this might be reflected in the increase of cheating behaviours.” In their analysis of the opportunities for the further development of ENLACE for evaluation and teacher incentives in Mexico, Zúñiga Molina and Gaviria (2010) conclude:

... since its initial implementation, the [ENLACE] program results have been used for different purposes, despite the repeated warnings that appear in official documents of the program regarding the need to avoid some of those uses. In that sense, it can be argued that some of the most visible uses of the program are related to purposes that have been considered as inadequate by those who have been in charge of design and operation of the program. Such is the case, for example, of the frequent use of ENLACE, in the media, to establish national or state-wide rankings of schools, based exclusively on the average scores achieved by students at each particular school; or the occasional use that education officers, and other concerned parties, have made of the tests results as if they were an unequivocal indicator of the quality of work carried out by teachers.

Also, even if EXCALE is the student assessment specifically designed to monitor student learning objectives at a system level (over time and across states) (see Chapter 6 for further details), this function is de facto also being accomplished by ENLACE as a consequence of the use education authorities and the media make of the results. This is not desirable as ENLACE not only assesses students on much more limited curricular content than EXCALE but it also uses a smaller number of items. As stated by one of the stakeholders interviewed by the OECD Review Team, “Census kills sample”. ENLACE has become much more visible than EXCALE and is being used at all levels with a large variety of objectives (formative and diagnostic role with students, system evaluation, school accountability, state accountability, monetary incentives for teachers and school directors).

As explained earlier, ENLACE has brought considerable benefits such as further teacher concentration on student achievement, particularly that of underperforming students, or greater awareness of the importance of reading comprehension. But unintended effects of ENLACE seem to be significant. In spite of the large amounts of data collected, the extent to which those data are being used formatively is not clear. This calls for an important reflection about the uses ENLACE results should have in order for the multiple benefits of ENLACE not to be undermined.

*Teachers have a narrow approach to teaching and formative assessment*

Although teachers are aware of the importance of the formative dimension to classroom-based assessment, the OECD Review Team found little evidence of it being implemented in an adequate manner. Teachers seem to have a narrow understanding of formative assessment. Giving feedback to students is conceived as giving them marks or points for a task, telling students whether their work was acceptable or not, or asking them to revise their work or make extra effort (Ravela, 2009a). All of these are concepts profoundly embedded in teachers’ culture. Formative assessment basically consists in
giving students a general indication about what was wrong with the test or the task assessed. As stated by students in interviews with the OECD Review Team, “they explain to us what we did wrong”, and “they tell us what we need to improve”.

Formative assessment is essentially a matter of appropriate feedback. It should permeate the process of teaching and learning instead of being something that happens after learning. In the same sense, feedback and its use should not be something that occurs between assessments. It should be construed at the core of what is being assessed. Feedback should be continuous and immediate (Wiggins, 1998). During the school visits the OECD Review Team formed the view that in Mexican teachers’ culture there is lack of reflection on these issues. There is little awareness of the importance of giving feedback during the learning process and little knowledge of cognitive learning processes. For example, on analysing test results teachers focus on the items instead of the cognitive processes involved. There was also little evidence of students reflecting about their own processes of learning, as well as of authentic tasks (Wiggins, 1998). As stated in a recently published study, there is the need in Mexico for teachers to give students more descriptive feedback (García et al., 2011, pp. 33-34).

Student self-assessment and peer assessment practices are also at an early stage of development (García et al., 2011). Teachers rarely show students samples of good work so they can both understand the performance level expected of them and assess their own work. Also, teachers do not typically show samples of weak pieces of work which progressively were transformed into good quality work (García et al., 2011, pp. 75-76).

Supervisors, directors and technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs) also have a narrow approach to classroom observation. Their main concern is to control the administrative aspects of teaching. These include teachers’ punctuality; control of students’ attendance; remembering the topic of the previous class; writing on the blackboard the topic for the present class; controlling discipline in the classroom; facilitating students’ participation in classroom activities; checking students’ homework; and managing content for the 50 minutes of class. The more specific aspects of teaching and students’ learning processes receive less attention.

**Marking practices lack pedagogical significance**

As described earlier, current marking practices are deeply ingrained in the teaching culture. Marking in Mexico consists of assigning points to students across a range of tasks and behaviours and then averaging them to obtain a mark. Points for students’ work are assigned in a normative way, by comparing students within classes and giving the greatest number of points to the “best” student, regardless of whether or not the standards are indeed excellent.

Marks assigned by averaging points across a range of tasks and behaviours usually lead to a kind of grand number with no clear significance (Ravela, 2009a). Students “earn” points for attending classes, doing homework, participating in teamwork, giving a presentation and taking an exam. Points are assigned by the teacher in a quite subjective way, as there are no rubrics specifying the meaning of points for each of these activities. As a result, a “7” may mean quite different things in different schools, in different classrooms within a school and, even worse, for different students within the same classroom and for the same student in different moments of the school year. Each individual teacher determines the marking criteria but it is not guaranteed that the same teacher will be consistent in the application of the criteria across students and over time. Also, as there is not a clear statement describing the kind of performance to be achieved,
students cannot understand what is expected from them. So obtaining a high mark becomes the main objective for them, possibly distorting education efforts (Shepard, 2006). Parents are also more worried about the marks than about their children’s real learning.

An issue which deserves special attention is assigning marks by comparing students within the classroom, in absence of explicit standards or benchmarks, which leads teachers to adapt their expectations, their cognitive requirements and their teaching to the current “level” of the students in their classroom. The result is teaching less to the more disadvantaged (the issue of adaptations to different populations and cultural contexts will be further elaborated below).

The practice of combining the assessment of effort and motivation with the assessment of actual achievement is also an issue to be addressed, because it undermines academic marks as indicators of performance (Ravela, 2009a; García et al., 2011). This practice also leads to students simulating effort, as they quickly learn how to behave with each teacher in order to make a good impression. Finally, marks become a disciplinary instrument for teachers, instead of a tool to inform about learning. Controlling students’ behaviour through marks is not the same as creating a motivating learning environment (Shepard, 2006).

All these features of marking are strongly and profoundly embedded in teachers’ culture. As with every cultural practice, it will be challenging to change marking practices. A central standardised resolution for the whole country is likely not to work. Schools and teachers must have room to do their work and try new approaches to marking within the national framework. Discussions are needed at the local and school levels about the different processes involved: discipline, attendance, homework, testing, the kind of tasks and so on. As said earlier, it is also crucial to develop a more sophisticated view on cognitive processes. Every actor at every level should be involved: students, parents, teachers, directors, ATPs, supervisors and heads of sector. Otherwise, the existing cultural norms for marking will persist.

**Instruments for reporting marks need further improvement**

The instruments used for recording and reporting students’ achievement are of critical importance in every educational system and at every level. They play several functions: communicating what is expected as learning to students, teachers and parents; motivating; and giving direction to students’ efforts.

As said earlier some important changes in the report cards are being promoted by the SEP in the context of the RIEB. However, there are still a number of aspects that need to be addressed. First, as stated above, there is the need for more specific and detailed descriptions of student performance at the different levels. It is crucial to ensure that parents and students can understand the information provided by the report card.

Second, the new Basic Education Card’s approach to stating observations and orientation for students and parents seems to be too standardised. There is the need to conceive a more flexible instrument, with more room for teachers to communicate what they expect and how the student may improve.

Third, the new Basic Education Card includes some aspects of concern, particularly the standards for reading speed. The rationale for giving this indicator so much visibility is not clear. During meetings with the OECD Review Team a number of students expressed their anxiety and pointed to the meaninglessness of the measure: “To read fast
is more difficult as I can’t understand what I am reading”. The way reading comprehension features in the Basic Education Card is also of concern. Performance is considered adequate if the student answered correctly three questions out of four. However, nothing is said about the type of text, its length and complexity, or about the difficulty of the questions to be answered. There is a clear need for a more sophisticated approach to reading assessment.

Finally, it should be noted that for lower secondary education the practice of averaging marks for different subjects and units, which has no real meaning, is kept as central to the marking scheme. Also, averaging bimonthly marks into a unique final mark does not recognise students’ progress over the year (García et al., 2011).

**Student assessment leads to little interaction among teachers**

Teachers are rarely brought together around student assessment issues. Teachers typically do not interact in the preparation of assessment instruments or the development of marking criteria. In fact, the exchange of classroom practices is quite unusual among Mexican teachers: in schools teachers work in relative isolation from each other, even if less so in primary schools. Visiting each other in classrooms is rather uncommon. According to the TALIS survey only 27.5% of teachers in Mexico participate in a professional development network, being the type of activity least mentioned as a professional development activity (see Annex D). It seems that only in small communities, namely small multi-grade schools, do teachers systematically share materials, experiences and assessment instruments.

Most teachers do not exchange their assessment instruments with others, do not discuss expected learning outcomes and do not develop a shared approach to marking. This seems to be another cultural feature of teaching in Mexico which might become an obstacle for the RIEB efforts, including the implementation of a new approach to classroom assessment. Moreover, teachers in Mexico seem to be little aware of their need to learn more about student assessment. When asked about the areas in which they have a “high level of need” for professional development, only 15% mentioned “student assessment practices” and 13.7% mentioned “content and performance standards” (see Annex D).

Student assessment is not being used as a professional development activity for teachers or a way for them to improve their professional judgment. Moderation which involves authentic student work is underdeveloped and should be a key strategy for teachers training, as well as for building a new culture around classroom assessment. Moderation of assessment and marking also has the potential for establishing links to classroom practices.

**There is a lack of consistency of student assessment across schools and classes**

Schools have no explicit marking criteria and typically do not have documentation on their approaches to student assessment. This fact, together with the absence of moderation procedures for aligning the meaning of teachers’ marks, leads to a situation in which the meaning of marks differs from one region to another, from one school to the next and even from one classroom to another classroom within the same school and from one student to another within the same classroom. In the words of one student interviewed by the OECD Review Team: “The meaning of a 10 varies from one teacher to another and it depends on showing your effort”. 

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Relationships between marks assigned by teachers and ENLACE results have not been analysed. Studies of this kind would lead to a picture of the correspondence between classroom-based marks and results in external student assessments, as well as to an idea about variability in the meaning of marks for teachers.

**There are limited capacities at the state and local levels to support classroom-based assessment**

An impressive effort is being undertaken at the central level to promote the RIEB, including continuous teacher training, a novel approach to marking, a toolbox for classroom assessment, and adjustments to external student assessment and textbooks’ content. But Mexico is a large and diverse country. As teachers’ competencies for formative assessment and marking are limited, there is the need for supporting strategies on the part of state and local authorities. It will not be enough to deliver materials to schools around the country. State authorities, heads of sector, supervisors, heads of teaching must play a role.

However, at the state level there seem to be limited capacities for assisting teachers in pedagogical and assessment issues. Supervisors’ work is mainly focused on checking compliance with school regulations. There is a clear need to change the profile of supervisors and ATPs, towards a more specialised role in pedagogical issues and assessment (see also Chapter 5). At the state level, instead of replicating the functions of INEE, there is the need to develop agencies to provide direct support to individual schools, involving an interaction around pedagogical, didactic and assessment issues. This could also include strategies for schools and teachers to collaborate and exchange experiences (see Chapter 5). Alongside this, the SEP should consider strategies to improve capacities at the state level to provide much more meaningful support to schools on those aspects which bear a greater promise to improve student learning.

**Making assessment inclusive for students remains a challenge**

Basic schools in Mexico have an important proportion of students with special needs in mainstream classes with little extra support. Both ENLACE and EXCALE do not have a developed strategy for including this population. Test implementation and application variations based on educational services or adaptations for students with special educational needs are not in place, except in some particular instances for ENLACE (SEP and INEE, forthcoming) (see also Chapter 6 concerning EXCALE).

Also, there is an important concern among teachers and other stakeholders about the cultural bias of external student assessment. The OECD Review Team heard several references to the use of items which include situations or terms which are totally unfamiliar to students who do not live in urban settings or who have an Indigenous background. As explained earlier, this problem was formally recognised through the resolution by the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (CONAPRED) stating that ENLACE is culturally-biased against Indigenous students and that further work by the SEP is needed to make it a fairer assessment for those students.

The RIEB approach to diversity is adequate, as it establishes common standards and expected learning outcomes but, at the same time, gives room for local adaptations according to students’ backgrounds, needs and context. Nevertheless, there are risks in the way teachers interpret and apply the necessary adaptations. As observed by the OECD Review Team during school visits, many teachers working with disadvantaged students do not interpret the need to adapt the curriculum in a pedagogical sense. Instead, their
adaptations for those students consist of lowering their expectations of achievement and of reducing the cognitive challenge (for example, asking those students to read shorter texts or to use less complicated numbers in math calculations). Other teachers interpret the need to make adaptations as adapting their marking criteria, giving disadvantaged students a better mark than the one they would obtain with the set of criteria established for the whole class. Hence there is an important risk around the interpretation and application of adaptations, involving lower expectations for disadvantaged students.

Policy recommendations

Ensure a coherent and comprehensive strategy for the RIEB implementation

In the present context the improvement of classroom-based assessment in Mexico needs to be developed alongside the implementation of the RIEB, given the inclusion of relevant initiatives related to both formative and summative assessment. Additionally, the implementation and impact of the RIEB crucially depend on the successful introduction of changes in student assessment practices and on aligning these with the expected learning outcomes and standards defined in the new curriculum.

The implementation of a new curriculum is a long-term endeavour that should be carefully and cleverly designed. During the past two decades Latin America has had several experiences with ambitious curricular reforms with little impact in classrooms. The enterprise of ensuring that the reform reaches the classroom cannot be left solely to the central authorities, especially in a country as large and diverse as Mexico.

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the breadth of the curriculum and learning goals established in the new Study Plan is maintained in student assessment by making sure that all subject areas and objectives are given certain forms of attention. This involves not only classroom-based assessment, but also external assessments (see below). As for classroom-based assessment, teachers need to integrate in their practices a much broader range of activities and instruments, to promote and capture more complex cognitive processes.

Consolidate teachers’ command of learning and formative assessment

The successful implementation of the RIEB requires the introduction in Mexican teaching culture of a more refined vision of learning processes and didactic issues, a precondition for introducing new formative assessment practices. Teachers should receive support and training to move from a rather traditional view of teaching, conceived as explaining themes and concepts, towards a broader concept based on the facilitation of learning and the development of competencies. In this context, the repertoire of approaches to learning and assessment needs to be expanded, moving away from assigning lots of exercises and practising tests.

Formative assessment is intrinsic to good teaching practices. Any effort to improve teaching and learning in Mexico must involve the improvement of teachers’ competencies in formative assessment in a thoughtful and consistent way. Currently most teachers use three types of approaches to what they call formative assessment: (i) indicating to students their mistakes in a test or a task; (ii) asking students to make more effort; and (iii) giving students praise in order to motivate them (Picaroni, 2009; Ravela, 2009a).
But authentic formative feedback involves other things. As Wiggins (1998) puts it, Safeguarding the core premise that assessment should improve performance, not just audit it, requires that assessment embody and demand self-adjustment based on good feedback... the moment when the student understands why some part of his or her work is a mistake is entirely different from the moment when the student perceives that the teacher does not like that part of the work. The best feedback is highly specific, directly revealing or highly descriptive of what actually resulted, clear to the performer, and available or offered in terms of specific targets and standards.

Formative assessment also involves the development of instruments such as rubrics to make students reflect by themselves about the gap between what they were expected to achieve and their actual performance (Wiggins, 1998; Ravela, 2009a).

It is important to recognise that expanding teachers’ repertoire of practices and instruments for formative assessment is not just a matter of sending new materials to schools or loading them onto a website (and expecting teachers to use them). To ensure successful implementation it is crucial to create networks of teachers and develop sustained professional interaction around the new assessment procedures (Ravela, 2010). Designing and introducing good instruments and practices for formative assessment requires collaborative, continuous and interactive work.

**Develop a new approach to marking**

Taking responsibility for the certification of students’ achievement is inherent to the professionalism of teachers. Parents and society trust teachers’ accurate and comprehensive judgment about students’ achievement. External assessments may contribute to this function, but cannot replace teachers’ professional judgment.

In Mexico, marking criteria are defined by individual teachers and are not documented. As a result, the meaning of marks is quite unique to each school, classroom and student. If student marking is to be aligned with the RIEB’s expected learning outcomes and standards in a consistent way across the country, then a priority is to establish mechanisms for the moderation of marking, both within and across schools. The objective is to reduce the variations in the ways teachers assess students and set marks so that equity of student assessment is improved. Moderation strategies should include frequent interaction between teachers around the meaning of marks (within and across schools), focused on the relationship between marks and performance levels for each block in the curricular content, as well as on the kind of appropriate evidence for each of the performance levels. Moderation of marks may also include statistical analysis of correlations between teacher-based marks and student results in external tests such as ENLACE, IDANIS or EXANI I. However, moderation should not be understood as a way of standardising marking. There must be room for flexibility and locally-based decisions in assigning marks. The important issue is that the meaning of the relationships between expected learning outcomes and marks is clear and shared.

Moderation has the potential to provide a very powerful professional learning opportunity for teachers that they can relate closely to their classroom practices. Moderation also contributes to improving teachers’ professional judgments about student work and their developing a shared understanding of marking criteria or standards. Evidence of the powerful benefits of professional discussions around students’ work to improving students’ learning outcomes has been demonstrated in New Zealand’s
programmes of professional development in literacy, numeracy, and assessment for learning (Timperley et al., 2007).

The development of moderation processes should go along with the development of guidelines at the national level for assessing against student learning objectives. Teachers require exemplars of student work to illustrate achievement at different levels or marks, benchmarks or indicators of desired student achievement, optional assessment tasks, and tests.

Other relevant issues that need to be addressed are:

- The procedures to come to a decision on the mark for a particular student (other than averaging points);
- Getting away from normative approaches to marking (i.e. comparing students within a class) and understanding the meaning and importance of criterion-based assessment (i.e. giving a mark against established standards for the different performance levels); and
- Recognising the importance of reporting separately on student achievement and attitudes/engagement.

Distinct aspects of students’ performance should provide for separate assessment reporting, so what needs to be improved is clearer. For example, it is important to distinguish between the ability to understand what is being asked in a mathematics problem, the ability to do calculations or attitudes in the classroom.

Working around real problems and challenges faced by teachers when marking students may be a powerful training strategy to develop teachers’ capacities. Workshops in which teachers independently analyse and mark samples of students’ work and then compare and discuss the marks assigned by each one of them is a good example of the kind of training needed. As will be explained below, the implementation of these strategies requires a large number of specialists in assessment at the local level, continuously visiting schools and working with directors and teachers.

The ability of teachers to mark against national student learning objectives should also be assessed in the context of school evaluation. This could involve comparing teacher-based marks to ENLACE results, reviewing the instruments and criteria used for marking, assessing the extent to which marks are related to levels of performance in the expected learning outcomes, and examining whether marks are clearly communicated to students and parents.

**Develop a sound strategy for strengthening teachers’ capacities for student assessment**

Developing teachers’ skills and competencies for student assessment requires a major investment and wise planning. As stated by Crozier (1989), “investment in human resources is the most difficult to do. But in case of success, it is the most effective of all”.

Continuous professional development should be conceived as much more than teachers individually taking in-service courses. The approach to professional development should also involve interaction between teachers within schools and across schools at the local level, and be highly focused on teaching practices. According to TALIS, participating in “courses and workshops” is the most common type of professional development activity undertaken by teachers in Mexico (see Annex D). At
the same time, participation in networks is the least common professional development activity (see Annex D).

Similarly, improving student assessment skills during initial teacher education requires more than delivering courses on assessment. The core strategy for improving future teachers’ skills in assessment should be the implementation of a whole new approach to assessment in teacher education institutions. During their studies future teachers should be assessed, both for formative and summative purposes, in the same way they will be expected to assess their students: using rubrics, complex tasks, marking criteria based on performance levels, explicit expected learning outcomes, and so on. This requires considerable investment in teacher education programmes on how to give feedback and how to assign marks in a criterion-referenced approach.

The same is valid for SEP’s current efforts to provide support for teachers through the publication of documents and articles about classroom-based assessment practices, and suggested classroom assessment practices through the SEP website. While these are important initiatives, they are not enough to promote real change. This kind of strategy, if isolated, is like “shooting to the sky and waiting for a duck to fall” (Ravela, 2010).

Also, in order to improve teaching practices, there is a need to move away from the conception of teaching as an isolated activity towards a vision of teaching as a professional activity, involving interaction with colleagues and open to peer review (Ravela, 2011). Teachers should be expected to reflect on their own practice and learn from experience. At the core of a teacher development strategy there should be a space for teachers to experiment, share and reflect on their classroom practices (Shepard, 2006; Ravela, 2009b).

A significant effort is needed in training teachers in the development of assessment rubrics and other kind of qualitative instruments for assessing students’ daily work in a more meaningful way, as well as in approaches to marking learning units. An important aspect is that it is not sufficient to produce instruments at the central level and send them to the schools. Teachers themselves must be involved in producing their own instruments, within the new approach to assessment.

Redesign and strengthen the role of supervisors

The role of states and their supervision system is crucial for effecting change at the classroom level given their proximity to schools. States take responsibility for education services within their boundaries and supervisors are the main link between schools, authorities and educational policies. The success of any national reform crucially depends on the capacity at the supervision and state levels to ensure the necessary links to classrooms. In this context, there is a need to invest substantially in the capacity of supervisors, ATPs, heads of teaching and heads of sector so they can substantially contribute to the implementation of reforms. An area of particular focus should be instructional and pedagogical leadership, including sound strategies for classroom observations.

The visits to the schools by the OECD Review Team revealed two major features of the work of supervisors, as asserted by interviewed stakeholders. First, supervisors are crucial to the implementation of change, given their authority over and proximity with schools. Second, supervisors are not necessarily reliable in effecting pedagogical and instructional change given their focus on the political and administrative control of schools. The OECD Review Team formed the view that the main concerns of supervisors
seem to be related to collecting information and being in control of the activities within schools. Their pedagogical interventions are rudimentary (see also Chapter 5).

At the same time, in a system which lacks the tradition of teachers’ collective work around pedagogical issues and teaching practices, there is an enormous need for some specific agents to facilitate and lead teachers’ interaction (Ravela, 2009b). These agents should bring teachers together at the school or local levels, promote and lead the exchange between teachers, build a common framework on assessment, create spaces for collaboration, frequently observe classrooms and give teachers external feedback on their own practices. Given the present reality, the agents within the supervision structure (supervisors, ATPs, heads of teaching, heads of sector) seem to be ideally placed to become such agents. This would involve redefining their role so it concentrates much more on instructional and pedagogical leadership (see also Chapter 5). This could also include creating new positions and recruiting new people with adequate training.

Some states, such as Aguascalientes, are already developing experiences in this area. In this state, supervisors are taking responsibility for creating networks of schools and building alignment across the different levels. Another ten states are now adopting similar practices (OECD, 2011a). These correspond to current efforts to strengthen support to schools: “the reorganisation of the educational system in Mexico relies in large part on the creation of Regions for the Management of Basic Education (RGEB) which are geographical units defined around the school to support various aspects related to educational services such as planning, programme implementation, resource distribution, data collection, distribution of materials, assessment and accountability. Each region (RGEB) will have an Educational Development Centre (CEDE) charged with ensuring that the local administrative and academic conditions are appropriate to support improvement in school performance and student learning outcomes” (OECD, 2011a). It is crucial that the CEDEs have a clear emphasis on promoting school and teacher networks around pedagogical and assessment approaches, practices and instruments. It is important to bear in mind that there is an important risk that the existing culture absorbs the innovation potential of CEDEs and these become a new administrative centre for the control of schools.

Promote the formative use of standardised student assessments

A policy priority should be to promote the adequate formative use of standardised student assessments such as ENLACE and PISA, including getting away from the incentives given to schools to practise the tests. For example, a document entitled Suggestions for the pedagogical use of ENLACE results has been widely distributed. Its main objective is to use ENLACE results as a pedagogical-technical tool for teachers to improve their teaching practices and help enhance the quality of classroom learning (SEP 2011g; SEP and INEE, forthcoming). However, the extent of the use of this document by teachers is unclear to the OECD Review Team. Whenever asked about the way they tried to improve ENLACE results, the answer was most often “by practising the tests”. Also, the fact that results of ENLACE become available to students, parents and teachers only the school year following the application of ENLACE does not facilitate the formative use of results (Mendoza Trejo, 2010). In these circumstances, ENLACE results are less relevant to inform strategies to improve the learning of individual students. Hence, there should be a reflection about improving the timeliness of results’ delivery so they can inform learning strategies in the same school year ENLACE is taken.
In the case of PISA, authorities should focus teachers’ attention on understanding its framework – what PISA assesses – and on reflecting and discussing how to develop the assessed competencies in the classroom. External assessment uses for improving teaching should not be focused on test items but instead on the assessment conceptual framework. The main point is that teachers should understand what is being assessed and why, so that they reflect on ways to improve their teaching practices (Ravela, 2010, 2011).

**Develop a more articulated and coherent framework for external assessment**

While the RIEB includes a sound framework for classroom-based assessment, external assessments are quite diverse. IDANIS, EXANI I, ENLACE and EXCALE are not clearly articulated within a strategy for external assessment. Each of them emerges in a different period, in response to different historical needs, but there has not been an effort to clearly redefine and articulate their role within the student assessment framework.

It is recommended that the following issues are addressed:

- The purposes of ENLACE should be revised and clearly communicated. ENLACE is currently used for a great variety of purposes, including the monitoring of the system at the national and state levels, a task more appropriately achieved by EXCALE.

- All the external assessments should be redesigned and aligned with the RIEB’s standards and expected learning outcomes, and be oriented towards competencies. In the case of ENLACE, there is some progress in this respect and a new generation of ENLACE assessments will be introduced in 2012/13 following their piloting in 2011/12. In the case of IDANIS and EXANI I, their focus on “abilities” that “predict” future performance seems to be somewhat outdated. If these exams for selection purposes are to be kept – which, in itself, should be an issue for consideration – their content should also be aligned to the RIEB.

- EXCALE will need to develop a more complex design, in order to both maintain the achievement trends initiated in 2005 with the test aligned to the old curriculum and assess students’ achievement in the new competencies fostered by the RIEB (see also Chapter 6). It should be noted that this work has now started with the use of subsamples in 3rd grade of lower secondary education, as of 2012.

- A significant effort should be undertaken to introduce more diverse types of tasks in external assessments, not just multiple-choice questions. This includes not only the external student assessments mentioned above, but also assessments administered for teacher appraisal (see Chapter 4 for further details). If a new overall approach to assessment is to be adopted by teachers, the omnipresence of multiple-choice questions should be reduced. In teacher appraisal tests, teachers should also have the experience of being assessed with instruments and tasks that go beyond multiple-choice questions, so that they replicate that in their own assessment of students.

Although introducing constructed response items or other kind of complex tasks in large-scale assessments is quite demanding, technology today makes things more affordable. In Chile, for example, an important capacity has been developed around electronically codifying open-ended questions and students’ written responses in the national standardised test (System to Evaluate the Quality of Education, SIMCE), as well as in codifying teachers’ portfolios in the teacher appraisal programme (Santiago et al.,
forthcoming; Manzi et al., 2011). While Mexico has already developed a significant capacity in designing, administering and processing multiple-choice tests, the next challenge should be to develop capacity to introduce constructed response items and more complex tasks in large-scale assessments. Making this important shift to constructed response items and complex tasks in external assessments, together with the effort to align them with the RIEB’s focus on competencies, should be priorities for the short term.

**Develop strategies to address the detrimental effects of ENLACE**

As described earlier, ENLACE is a dominant element of Mexico’s education system. It has brought considerable benefits to student learning in Mexico but it has also generated considerable unintended effects. As a result, a major priority for policy should be the development of strategies to eliminate, or at the very least reduce, the current detrimental effects of ENLACE. This effort should be informed by an in-depth study of the impact of ENLACE on practices in schools and classrooms.

One strategy could be reducing the high stakes of ENLACE. A range of options are possible to achieve this depending on the extent to which stakes for school agents are reduced. A possibility is to rethink the objectives of ENLACE, including a return to the original motivation of ENLACE as a purely diagnostic and formative tool for student assessment. Another possibility is to add to this original objective some role in system evaluation to assess whether, at the national level, student learning objectives in the subjects covered by ENLACE are achieved or not. Most OECD countries limit the use of standardised student assessments to these two functions. If the objective of using ENLACE for school accountability (publication of ENLACE results at the school level) and teacher appraisal is maintained, then it is imperative to develop value-added techniques to capture the real impact of individual schools (for the publication of results and their use in RNAME) (see also Chapter 5) and considerably reduce the weight of ENLACE results in teacher appraisal for the reasons explained in this chapter and Chapter 4. Alongside this, it is important to monitor the potential unintended effects of the high-stakes uses of ENLACE through appropriate research studies.

Another strategy is to transform ENLACE into a tool for the external summative assessment of students, i.e. an external examination system. This would involve extending the range of student learning objectives assessed by including more subjects and broadening the range of tasks assessed. It would also have consequences for students, as with the contribution to final marks or as a certification mechanism at the end of key stages in education (such as end of educational cycles). This would introduce a strong motivation for students (Shepard, 2006; Messick, 1999) and also for teachers, because most teachers are genuinely concerned with their students’ success. As stated in a recent OECD report on lessons from countries with high performance in PISA, high-stakes assessments for students at the end of certain levels of the educational system introduce strong incentives for students and teachers. And this reinforces what is being called horizontal accountability – teachers being held accountable to their colleagues and to parents – instead of vertical accountability – teachers responding to authorities and administrative instances (OECD, 2011c). Horizontal accountability is less easily simulated than vertical accountability, because of the daily face-to-face relationships.

An approach to reduce the burden for schools, teachers and students as well as the costs of administration would be to administer the assessment only at key stages of education, such as at the end of each educational cycle (i.e. 3rd, 6th and 9th grades), instead of every single grade as is currently the case. Also, another possibility is to leave at least
part of the marking to teachers alongside sophisticated moderation procedures. This could involve exchanges of teachers between schools, centrally designed rubrics and marking manuals, the central control of the assessment administration and the central marking of a sample of schools. The experience of Sweden (Nusche et al., 2011) with its external student testing and of New Zealand (Nusche et al., 2012) with its certification system at the upper secondary level can be particularly useful.

This approach may have several advantages as it would:

• Rely further on teachers’ professionalism and promote it;
• Consist of a valuable professional learning experience for teachers;
• Involve teachers in national-level assessment and foster their understanding of the RIEB;
• Promote student effort;
• Make possible the use of a wider range of assessment tasks and questions; and
• Allow the assessment of a broader set of subjects and of a broader set of competencies within subjects.

Ensure student assessment is inclusive

Assessment systems should underline the importance of responding to individual learner needs and school community contexts, and design assessment strategies that suit the needs of different learner groups. The objective is to develop an inclusive student assessment system based on the principle that all students have the opportunity to participate in educational activities, including assessment activities, and to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competencies in a fair way. Hence, teacher assessment practices and the format and content of external standardised tests (such as ENLACE and EXCALE) should be sensitive to particular groups of students such as Indigenous students, students with special needs, and students living in disadvantaged social contexts. In the context of Mexico, this is indeed a formidable task given, for instance, the existence of 68 Indigenous languages.

The cultural background should be carefully taken into account in test design, to prevent the use of words, expressions and situations which are unfamiliar or completely unknown in certain cultural settings. It is suggested that quality assurance guidelines are prepared and practices adopted that ensure that external assessments are evaluated or reviewed for their potential bias in these respects. This may include consideration of a variety of assessment formats (test-based, performance tasks, oral, written) so that individual students/groups of students are not systematically disadvantaged; and peer review of the content of test questions. Also, there is a need to provide for special adaptations for students with special needs to take the tests.

Finally, regarding teacher-based assessment there is a dilemma around marking criteria and local adaptations of curriculum and expected learning outcomes. On the one hand, every child should achieve the stipulated expected learning outcomes for each grade and subject. This reflects the objective that teachers have the same academic expectations of children regardless of their socio-economic background. But, on the other hand, large cultural and socio-economic differences are part of a complex and unequal Mexican society. So there is the need for closely working with teachers on reaching the
right balance between not excluding students from learning (as a result of too demanding expectations) and not lowering expectations for their learning.

**Improve reporting to students and parents**

The commendable introduction of the new Basic Education Card needs to be accompanied by some adjustments so that it becomes an authentic instrument for learning. An initial adjustment is to make statements associated with performance levels more specific. At the moment, these are quite general. For example, for “C” or 6-7 (in the old marking scale), the statement is “shows a sufficient performance in the expected learning outcomes for this block”, regardless of the school grade, subject or learning block. It would be beneficial for this general statement to be grade- subject- and block-specific, in association with the concrete learning outcomes students should achieve.

Expected learning outcomes for each grade, subject and block should be clearly explained to students and parents, including with examples of what is an acceptable, a satisfactory and an outstanding performance. A version of the expected learning outcomes for each learning block should be developed for parents, so they can understand the meaning, for example, of “shows a sufficient performance in the expected learning outcomes for this block”. Chilean curricular maps of progress may be an interesting inspiration for this endeavour (Santiago *et al.*, forthcoming).

Another key issue is the need for more detailed information about individual student performance (García *et al.*, 2011, p. 90). The space dedicated to it in the new Basic Education Card might prove not that useful if teachers are not prepared to give students and parents more precise indications about how to improve the student’s performance. The risk is that this instrument may remain limited to teachers’ call for greater student effort. Valuable examples of approaches with greater potential to generate student progress are the experiences of Denmark and Sweden with individual student plans containing detailed and specific recommendations for each student (Shewbridge *et al.*, 2011; Nusche *et al.*, 2011).
Notes


3. However, it should be noted that the analysis in this report refers only to ENLACE at both the primary and lower secondary levels.

4. Basic Education Cards are available at www.boleta.sep.gob.mx.

5. Both publications are available at www.pisa.sep.gob.mx/descargas.html.

6. Basic Education Cards are available at www.boleta.sep.gob.mx/.

7. OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey was implemented in 2007/08, covering lower secondary education and with the participation of 23 countries (OECD, 2009). The results derived from TALIS are based on self-reports from teachers and directors and therefore represent their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and their accounts of their activities. Further information is available at www.oecd.org/edu/talis. TALIS results for Mexico are provided in Annex D.

8. ENLACE publications for each grade are available at www.enlace.sep.gob.mx/ba/apoyos_para_el_uso_pedagogico.


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In Mexico, teacher appraisal is comprehensive and consists of a range of components covering the different stages of a teacher’s career. Access to a permanent post is regulated through the National Teaching Post Competition which, at present, is based on a standardised examination: the National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills. While in service the teacher can be appraised, on a voluntary basis, in three different situations: to access a promotion to a management post through the Vertical Promotion System; to access salary progression within each rank of the Vertical Promotion System through the National Teacher Career Programme; and to access collective and individual monetary stimuli based on student standardised assessments results through the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality. In addition, the government is currently in the process of implementing a mandatory process of teacher appraisal covering all teachers, which is more formative in nature, the Universal Evaluation System.

Particularly positive features of teacher appraisal include the general consensus about the need for teacher appraisal; the variety of mechanisms to appraise teachers and recognise good teacher performance; the efforts undertaken thus far to develop teaching standards; the introduction of the National Teaching Post Competition; and the existence of informal teacher appraisal practices in schools. However, the development of teacher appraisal is faced with a number of challenges. These include the lack of established teaching standards; the complexity and fragmentation of the overall framework for teacher appraisal; the improvement of teaching quality not being at the centre of teacher appraisal; the concerns raised by the use of student standardised assessments as an instrument; teacher appraisal not offering the same opportunities for all teachers; the absence of a clearly defined teacher career structure; the missing links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development; and the limited involvement of state educational authorities and school leadership.
This chapter looks at approaches to teacher appraisal within the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework. Teacher appraisal refers to the evaluation of individual teachers to make a judgment about their performance. Teacher appraisal has typically two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve teachers’ own practices by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it is aimed at ensuring that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function (Santiago and Benavides, 2009). An overview of the main features of the teaching profession in Mexico is provided in Box 4.1.

**Context and features**

Teacher appraisal consists of a range of components covering most stages of teachers’ professional lives in Mexico: entry and completion of initial education, entry into the profession, and appraisal for promotion and incentives. The different components rely largely on standardised exams, but other kinds of instruments (such as teacher portfolios) are being introduced to provide a more complete perspective of teacher performance. Most of these standardised examinations are prepared by internal and external experts and agencies, such as CENEVAL (National Assessment Centre for Higher Education). Annex E summarises the main forms of teacher appraisal existing at the national level.

**Initial education**

Pre-primary and primary school teachers are mostly prepared by Teachers Colleges (Escuelas Normales) while lower secondary teachers are prepared by universities (see Box 4.1). There seems to be at least six different types of examinations to select candidates into these institutions, but the most common instruments are the IDCIEN (Diagnosis and Classification Instrument for Normal School Enrolment) – to enter Teachers Colleges – and the EXANI II (National Higher Education Entrance Exam), more commonly used to enter university. During their studies, students in some teacher education programmes may be required to take the General and Intermediate Knowledge Examinations at the end of the 4th and 8th semesters. These external assessments are low stakes and aim to establish a diagnosis of the student teachers’ strengths and weaknesses. Upon graduation, student teachers may also be required to take the EGEL (General Examination at Bachelors Degree Graduation). This assessment seeks to diagnose the level of knowledge and skills acquired by student teachers upon graduation, and each institution defines its consequences for the students.

**Entrance into the teaching profession**

To organise the recruitment into the teaching profession, Mexico established in 2008 a National Teaching Post Competition as part of the Alliance for Quality in Education (ACE) (see Box 4.1). This has been a historical step taken by Mexico to improve the quality of the teaching workforce. According to the Mexican Government, in 2008/09, 109,415 candidates registered and 80,566 actually took the examination. In 2010/11, the number of registered candidates increased to 151,688. Prior to the introduction of the competition, the allocation of teaching posts was undertaken through established selection mechanisms (in 13 federal entities) or solely the acquisition of a teacher education degree (in 19 federal entities). However, as pointed out in previous OECD analyses “the mechanisms for the selection of teachers were not transparent and sometimes perceived as unequal, corrupt or highly politicised” (OECD, 2010, 2011a).
Box 4.1 The teaching profession in Mexico – main features

Mexico has 1 175 535 teachers working in basic education, with 19% in pre-school, 49% in primary education and 32% in lower secondary education (SEP, 2011).

Employment status, salary and career structure

Teachers are salaried employees of state educational authorities. The school day in Mexico has traditionally been short to cater for the large number of students in the system. Schools typically operate on a double shift (“morning” and “afternoon”) (see Chapter 1). As a result, teachers can have one or more posts at a time (e.g. a “morning” post and an “afternoon” post), which can be of different types, or they can also have a post (or several posts) consisting of a given number of teaching hours (e.g. 10 weekly hours in one school, 15 weekly hours in another school). For example, a teacher can be a technical pedagogical advisor (ATP) in the morning and a school director in the afternoon, and vice versa. This can be at the same school building or not (OECD, 2010).

The average number of years from starting to top salary is 14, compared to an OECD average of 24 (Annex D). In a study conducted in 2002, Santibañez (2002) concludes that, in comparison with other public employees and even some other professional groups, teachers are relatively well paid by the hour. Teachers with two posts (e.g. one in the morning and one in the afternoon) earned 25% more than a mid-level professional. Nevertheless, in absolute terms, Santibañez admits that the salary level of beginning teachers with just one half-day post is below that of most professionals or technicians as the duration of the school day is short, often not more than four or five hours per day.

There are two kinds of possible promotions: vertical promotion, which entails a change of role (from teacher to roles such as school director, head of teaching or supervisor), and horizontal promotion (National Teacher Career Programme), which provides monthly salary bonuses based on a series of factors (see below).

Recruitment of teachers

Until 2008, Mexico did not have a national licensing mechanism for teaching, so the rules for the allocation of posts varied across states (see later in this chapter). In 2008, the first national entrance examination for teachers was implemented in 29 out of 31 states and the Federal District as part of a National Teaching Post Competition. At the moment, the competition covers only newly created permanent teaching posts and no posts for school directors. In order to compete, candidates should hold a degree from a higher education institution.

Initial teacher education

Initial preparation for pre-primary and primary teachers is mostly provided by special higher education institutions for teacher education, known as Teachers Colleges (Escuelas Normales). There are 493 Normales in the country (267 are public and 226 are private) (Nieto de Pascual Pola, 2009), which enrol approximately 170 000 students annually. Around 70% of the students are in public institutions and the rest in private ones (Aguerrondo et al., 2009). Presently, students in Normales spend about one-third of their education on general pedagogy, one-third on subject-specific training and one-third in school placements. Universities provide initial teacher education for both lower secondary and upper secondary teachers.

Professional development

In 2009, as part of the Alliance for Quality in Education (ACE), the government established the National System of Training and Professional Improvement for In-Service Teachers Programme (Programa del Sistema Nacional de Formación Continua y Superación Profesional de Maestros de Educación Básica en Servicio, PSNFCSP). This system involves universities, teachers colleges (Normales), international organisations, government and union (among other groups) in developing quality professional development programmes, through the National Catalogue of Continuous Training and Professional Betterment for Basic Education. The main tasks of PSNFCSP include to: co-ordinate the supply of training opportunities from different institutions; analyse the development needs based on results from standardised assessments; propose new standardised assessments as needed; establish performance profiles and standards; and ensure transparency and accountability in the use of resources.
This new national selection mechanism currently operates in virtually all states of the country. It targets all teachers with a degree from a public or private teacher education institution who seek to obtain: a permanent or additional permanent teaching post, or more teaching hours in the “hour-week-month” system.

The competition consists basically of a short standardised examination of around 80 multiple-choice items (plus 30 items being piloted), co-ordinated by CENEVAL, the National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills (Examen Nacional de Conocimientos y Habilidades Docentes, ENCHD). Four domains are covered: (i) specific intellectual abilities; (ii) knowledge of the curriculum; (iii) didactic competencies; and (iv) education norms and teacher ethics. Additionally, the government started a pilot in 2011 on the use of portfolios on a voluntary basis for teacher candidates at the pre-primary and primary school levels as a supporting tool in the selection process. At the moment, only the scores in the standardised exam are considered. Candidates with scores above state-specific thresholds receive the available posts following an expression of preference for two specific posts. It is possible that a post may not be filled due to special requirements of the post (e.g. bilingualism in the case of Indigenous education) or to incompatibility with the candidate’s needs (e.g. distance from home).

The Independent Federalist Evaluation Body (Órgano de Evaluación Independiente con carácter Federalista, OEIF) was created to establish the technical and academic profile of the competition. It establishes the structure, content and size of the evaluation instrument. This technical body has 70 experts; half of them are appointed by the states and federal authorities and the other half are appointed by the union (SNTE). They are distributed into three thematic committees: (i) qualifications; (ii) structure (instrument design); and (iii) teacher portfolios. The SEP supports these committees by providing them with documentation, data or other types of information, including external studies for specific purposes (OECD, 2010, 2011a).

It should be noted that this competition does not aim to certify “good” teachers, but rather, to identify the “best” teachers within the pool of candidates across states. This means that candidate teachers of inadequate quality (i.e. with the present system, with low scores in ENCHD) may be granted a teaching post in states where the number of applicants is low. Conversely, in states with high demand, candidate teachers of good quality (i.e. with good scores) may not obtain a teaching post. The low proportion of candidate teachers having attained a minimum acceptable score during the first round of ENCHD led to initiatives to improve the quality of initial teacher education (Barrera and Myers, 2011).

In-service training

In-service school staff (classroom teachers, management staff, supervisors, heads of teaching and technical pedagogical advisors or ATPs) can take, on a voluntary basis, the National Examinations for the Continuous Training of In-Service Teachers (Exámenes Nacionales para la Actualización de Maestros en Servicio, ENAMS). The ENAMS “assess the development of teaching competencies of teachers acquired through their participation in academic programmes of continuous training and professional development” (translated from Spanish, SEP 2010-2011). These cover the different types of teachers within the education system (depending on the educational level, position, subject or type of school). There are about 15 distinct types of ENAMS assessments, although the number may vary depending on national priorities. In the context of 2012 reforms which involve revisions to the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM, see
below) as well as the introduction of the Universal Evaluation System (see below), the ENAMS are progressively being discontinued.

These exams’ main goal has been to provide a diagnosis of teachers’ professional competencies, assisting teachers in identifying their professional development needs. However, it should be noted that it has had stakes for those teachers who are part of the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM), since it has been an input for this programme (see below). In this sense, the ENAMS have served as a mechanism to “certify” the continuous training of teachers for the PNCM (Barrera and Myers, 2011). The multiple-choice questions are more related to theoretical situations that teachers may encounter in their everyday teaching activities. Two major domains are covered: (i) the main references for teaching (e.g. competencies-based teaching, the RIEB); and (ii) subject competencies. To assist teachers in their preparation for ENAMS, the government prepared a series of brochures with: the general objective of the examination, structure, suggested bibliography, types of questions, but also practical aspects relative to the exam (e.g. what to bring the day of the examination and how to retrieve their results) (translated from Spanish, SEP 2010-2011). Teachers who took ENAMS received a booklet with an individualised diagnosis explaining their results.

More than 3 million tests have been administered over the last 13 years (the same teacher can take several tests). The number of participants has increased from 135 000 in 1997/98 to 545 000 in 2009/10. SEP has co-ordinated the overall process, which involves a large variety of actors: (i) a technical council and supporting academic bodies which define, design, prepare and correct the exam (functions under the responsibility of CENEVAL); (ii) states, which administer the exam; and (iii) SEP, which analyses data, establishes the test criteria and publishes the results.

**Promotion and incentives**

**Vertical Promotion System**

The Vertical Promotion System (Escalafón Vertical) is the oldest promotion scheme in the education system (last revised in 1973). It is a state-specific competition through which teachers, deputy directors, directors, supervisors and heads of sector (plus heads of teaching at the lower secondary level) can access the next level in the vertical system structure (see Figure 4.1). The main factors considered in the points-based Vertical Promotion System are listed in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Factors considered by the Vertical Promotion System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors considered</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge: (Highest degree) + professional and personal improvement</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptitude: Efficiency, initiative</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority: Number of years in service</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and punctuality</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ortíz Jiménez (2003).*
The system is such that promotion inevitably involves getting into management posts (deputy director and above) \((i.e.\) there is no vertical differentiation within the “teacher” category). As a result, opportunities for vertical promotion are scarce and only arise when a new management post is created or becomes vacant.

The competition for a given post involves an evaluation of each of the candidates on the basis of a “Promotion Scale Form” \((Ficha Escalafonaria)\), which records the appraisal for each candidate across the four factors listed in Table 4.1. In the case of teachers, the Promotion Scale Form is completed \(- i.e.\) the evaluation is undertaken \(- by their school director or deputy director. The process is regulated at the national level by the National Joint Committee of Promotions, which is composed of representatives from both SEP and SNTE. Since every state has its own Vertical Promotion System, there are also SEP-SNTE combined Committees at the state level. Prior to 1993 this kind of progression was the only possibility for education workers to access a better salary.

**National Teacher Career Programme**

Horizontal promotion was introduced in 1993 through the National Teacher Career Programme \((Programa Nacional de Carrera Magisterial, PNCM)\) and covers the pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels. Its operation was revised in both 1998 and 2011.\(^1\) The PNCM was created with the objective of improving education quality and providing teachers with other possibilities of career progression \(\text{or, more accurately, salary progression). Participation is voluntary and there are five progressive stimuli levels (A to E). Each PNCM level is associated with a higher salary level, which ranges from an additional 25\% of the basic salary (Level A) to 200\% (Level E). The PNCM grants teachers with access to salary progression without the need to leave the classroom. The same principle applies to any rank in the Vertical Promotion System, for instance a school director can access salary progression without having to leave his or her school.

The PNCM is relatively independent from the Vertical Promotion Scheme. This means, for example, that a teacher with “Level C” in horizontal promotion does not need to attain “Level E” to be able to apply for a school director post \(\text{vertical promotion). Moreover, if this teacher obtains a school director post, he or she will become automatically a school director with the same horizontal stimuli level he had previously as a teacher (“Level C”, in this case) (see Figure 4.1).

The 2009/10 round of this programme had 399 252 participants, the equivalent to 34\% of the overall body of basic education teachers \(\text{including directors or supervisors, for example). Only candidates holding a permanent post (or at least ten teaching hours) can participate in the programme. To be eligible for progression to the next level, candidates should have spent at least two or four years \(\text{depending on whether it is a rural or an urban context) at the previous level. The number of candidates promoted depends on the funds available that year and whether the candidate meets the requirements for promotion.}
The factors considered are mainly the same for all participants, but vary slightly depending on the type of role of the candidate (see Table 4.2). Candidates belong to one of three strands. Strand I is for classroom teachers, Strand II is for school directors and other positions in the Vertical Promotion System, and Strand III is for technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs), who can undertake their function at the school level or above. Since the PNCM started to be implemented, the direct account of student standardised assessment results (ENLACE) has grown in importance, currently accounting for 50% of the points system used in the programme. Another important recent change is the inclusion of “co-curricular” (extra hours) activities, which account for 20% of the overall score. Previously, the level gained in the National Teacher Career Programme was permanent. However, following the recent changes of 2011, the teacher may lose his or her level in PNCM if the requirements to be at that particular level are not demonstrated.
Table 4.2 Factors considered in the National Teacher Career Programme (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors considered</th>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student performance: Strand I uses average class-level student scores in ENLACE for the teacher concerned and/or other standardised instruments and strategies (for teachers not covered by ENLACE). For Strands II and III, the ENLACE score is an average performance of students in the respective school or area of work.</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous training: Training options come from the National Catalogue of Continuous Training and Professional Betterment for Basic Education and include general courses, Bachelors, Masters or Doctoral degrees. Points are given depending on the number of professional development hours taken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional preparation: Measured through a specific examination designed to this end for each of the specific roles performed by candidates in the three strands. The examination addresses three areas: (1) knowledge of curriculum; (2) education regulations; and (3) didactic approaches suggested in study programmes.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority: The number of years in service. For those candidates with two posts, the most ancient post is considered.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular activities: These are extra activities focused on improving student learning, linking the school with the community and improving learning environments (e.g. preventing addictions or promoting reading among students). Each school’s technical council (the group of teachers and school management) determines the score each candidate teacher obtains for this factor. The directors and supervisors’ scores (Strand II) depend on the average score of those hierarchically below them and the accomplishment of the work programme. For Strand III (ATPs), only the latter aspect is considered.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School management: Related to the specific activities performed by school directors, heads of teaching, supervisors and heads of sector. This factor is measured through how the programmes/activities are designed and whether goals are achieved.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational support: Refers to the support provided by the ATP: in the classroom, through pedagogical advice, during professional development activities or preparing pedagogical materials. The activities can be at the different levels of the school system, depending on where the ATP is based (school, sector, zone or education levels and modalities).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100%

Additionally, the Global Score considers the average performance of previous PNCM evaluations for the most recent years in which the candidate participated in the programme.

Source: OECD, prepared with information from SEP-SNTE (2011).

Table 4.3 shows how the importance of the different factors in PNCM has evolved with the 1998 and 2011 revisions. The growing importance of student performance, as reflected in ENLACE (and other standardised student assessments), stands out.

Table 4.3 Evolution of factors and weights within the National Teacher Career Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors considered</th>
<th>1993 (%)</th>
<th>1998 (%)</th>
<th>2011 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student performance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Strand I: 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous training</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Strand II: 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic qualifications</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Strand III: 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional preparation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer appraisal</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular activities</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School management</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Strand II only: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational support</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Strand III only: 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Information provided by the SEP.
Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality

The Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality (Programa de Estímulos a la Calidad Docente) was introduced in 2008. Two cycles of the programme took place in 2008/09 (covering primary and lower secondary education only) and 2009/10 (covering pre-primary and special education in addition to primary and lower secondary education). The programme is targeted at teachers, deputy directors, directors, as well as ATPs working within the schools. It provides collective and individual stimuli based on results obtained in national student assessments (mainly ENLACE, as stated in the 2010 operation guidelines):

- Collective stimuli are received by all teachers, deputy directors, directors and ATPs within schools that: (i) obtain one of the highest average scores in national student assessments; and/or (ii) obtain one of the highest progressions in national student assessments.

- Individual stimuli are received by: (i) teachers whose groups of students obtain the highest scores in ENLACE, implying that those eligible are only those teachers in grades and subjects covered by ENLACE (i.e. teachers in grades 3 to 6, and lower education teachers of subjects covered by ENLACE, see Chapter 3); and (ii) teachers, deputy directors and directors in pre-primary and special education with the highest scores in the professional preparation component of the National Teacher Career Programme in the previous three years.

The allocation of individual stimuli is made separately from the collective stimuli process. Candidates who want to compete for the individual stimuli need to specifically register for it. The candidate can choose the subjects, classes, schools or education level for which they would like to be considered for the programme (SEP-SNTE, 2010).

To award the stimuli, schools are grouped according to their socio-economic characteristics, such as: state, education level, school modality (general, Indigenous, or communitarian at primary, or technical, telesecundaria or for workers at lower secondary), rural or urban context, and the level of marginalisation of the area in which the school is located. Schools in rural and highly marginalised areas receive priority in the channelling of resources (1.1 to 1.0 weighting).

State education authorities are in charge of operating the programme and allocating the stimuli to the selected candidates. As part of their responsibilities, they confirm the information regarding the school staff in the participating schools, and validate the information provided by candidates applying for individual incentives. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10, the number of collective stimuli awarded has increased by 11% (from 222,805 to 248,414 incentives allocated) while individual stimuli decreased by 11% (from 36,209 to 32,068 incentives allocated). Stimuli should be no less than 2,000 Mexican pesos and no more than 20,000 Mexican pesos (OECD, 2011a).

Universal Evaluation System

The Universal Evaluation System (Evaluación Universal de Docentes) is a recent effort from the Mexican Government to introduce in-service teacher appraisal for developmental purposes covering the totality of the teaching workforce. It is at an early stage of implementation. The overall teaching body in basic education (including directors, supervisors, ATPs, etc.) is around 1,175,000 persons. About two-thirds of them are involved in the National Teacher Career Programme, but almost half of these do not
complete the process. As a result, in practice, about 60% of the total education staff in basic education does not go through an appraisal process (SEP-SNTE, 2011).

Through this programme, the government aims to cover all teachers (as well as all deputy directors, directors and ATPs) and introduce a scheme with greater developmental purposes. Its main objectives are to: increase the quality of education outcomes; strengthen the public and professional accountability of teachers and the other staff; and serve as a basis for ancillary policies and programmes based on the results of the evaluations (OECD, 2011a).

The government envisages this system as purely formative and diagnostic. The design of the system does not involve high-stakes consequences, including a potential exclusion from the education system. The diagnosis obtained will help establish the future supply of professional development for teachers. This programme will be mandatory for teachers, deputy directors, directors and ATPs and will involve an appraisal every three years. It will start in 2012 with the primary education level. Lower secondary education will be covered in 2013 while pre-primary and special education will be considered in 2014. Private education schools will also be covered.

As shown in Table 4.4, this programme considers some of the same factors (and the respective weights) as the National Teacher Career Programme, such as: student performance (50%), continuous training (20%) and professional preparation (5%). The remaining 25% of the score comes from a “professional performance” component, which will be based on standards for teaching and school management. Teacher standards, in particular, will serve the dual purpose of: (i) guiding teachers to improve their performance; and (ii) establishing a framework for the evaluation of individual teacher performance (OECD, 2011a).

The results on student performance, professional preparation and continuous training in the Universal Evaluation System will be considered for the National Teacher Career Programme. One of the main objectives is that the results of the universal evaluation system are used by the SEP to develop programmes for the continuous training and professional betterment of basic education teachers.

Table 4.4 Factors considered for the Universal Evaluation System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors considered</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student performance: Measurement will be made in a similar way as in the National Teacher Career Programme (through ENLACE and other assessments)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional competencies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional preparation (5%): Measured through specific standardised examinations, undertaken every three years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continuous training (20%): This component will be about “formative pathways focused in opportunity areas identified” (this component will be included during the second phase of the programme in 2015).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional performance (25%): Likely to be assessed through standardised examinations as well (not yet designed), in reference to teaching and school management standards and other instruments defined by SEP (to be included once the standards have been implemented).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2012 implementation of the Universal Evaluation System has encountered significant opposition from some teacher groups. These groups raise a number of concerns such as: that the Universal Evaluation System may be used to dismiss teachers; the potential modification of the Universal Evaluation System away from its intended formative function; a possibility that only considering results from standardised examinations will lead to biased evaluations; and that teachers’ opinions are not being taken into consideration in the design of this policy.

**Strengths**

*There is general consensus about the need for teacher appraisal at different levels of the system*

Teacher appraisal is recognised as an important tool to improve student learning and is central in the overall evaluation and assessment framework. This is reflected in the very comprehensive approach to teacher appraisal in Mexico, with a multitude of schemes and programmes. More recently, a particular positive development has been the consensus generated among key actors about the need to reinforce the improvement function of teacher appraisal, mostly reflected in the current implementation of the Universal Evaluation System. These actors include the government, the teacher union (SNTE), parliamentarians (through the preparation of a range of bills on teacher appraisal) and numerous civil society organisations, which have supported initiatives to implement teacher appraisal. Teacher appraisal is also a key area of the Alliance for Quality in Education (see Chapter 1), which has guided the country’s education agenda in the last few years with some emphasis on “evaluate to improve”. While there are some differences in views about the way teacher appraisal should be conducted, the idea and intention of creating an evaluation culture among teachers and developing their professional capabilities appears widely shared.

Teacher appraisal was also a central area for analysis in the collaboration with the OECD during the OECD-Mexico Agreement to Improve the Quality of Mexican Schools (see Chapter 1), where the OECD developed a proposal for an in-service teacher appraisal system (Box 4.2).

During the meetings held by the OECD Review Team, actors at different levels of the education system referred to the progress achieved in ensuring teacher appraisal is perceived positively as a regular component of teachers’ careers. Teachers are not defensive against teacher appraisal and seem generally open to external feedback from a trusted source. According to TALIS, 86% of teachers of lower secondary education agreed or strongly agreed that the appraisal or feedback received had been helpful in the development of their work as a teacher in the school. This was one of the highest percentages reported (the TALIS average was 79%), and the second highest for OECD countries, after Poland.
Box 4.2 An OECD proposal for an in-service teacher evaluation system

Key features

- Why evaluate: The main purpose is to improve teaching and thus the educational student results.

- What to evaluate: To improve student results, it is important to understand how the process of teaching practice takes place. Standards would be used to define what is expected from good teachers for students to learn.

- Who should evaluate: To be accepted by teachers, evaluators should have at minimum: (a) knowledge of the work the teachers carry out; (b) training to make the expected observations; and (c) autonomy in relation to the evaluated teacher. These potential evaluators could therefore be selected among ATPs, the personnel of the Teacher Centres, and the professors in Teacher Colleges (Normal Schools) and the National Pedagogic University.

- How to evaluate: The evaluators would perform periodical visits to schools to assess their teaching bodies. Additionally to student outcomes such as ENLACE, other instruments that could be used are: classroom observation, teacher portfolios, teacher self-evaluation, evidence of student learning, objective setting and/or teacher interviews, interviews with the director and the supervisor, available teacher knowledge tests, and student and parental information.

Main recommendations for implementation

1. Establish a leadership structure and clear rules for the governance of the evaluation system.
2. Establish a technical unit that will be responsible for the implementation of the evaluation.
3. Develop standards for teaching.
4. Design an in-service teacher evaluation model that gradually evolves from a purely formative system to one that combines formative and summative aspects.
5. Define the instruments for the in-service teacher evaluation system.
6. Develop a support system for school-based professional development that leads to the improvement of teacher practice, and a system that monitors this improvement.

Source: Mancera and Schmelkes (2010).

There are a range of mechanisms to appraise teachers and recognise good teacher performance

Teacher appraisal occurs in a variety of forms

The government has accorded great importance to teacher appraisal within the general education improvement agenda. This is reflected in the multiple mechanisms currently in place or in the process of being implemented that deal with teacher appraisal, covering the different stages of a teacher’s career: prior to entering initial education (through IDCIIEN or EXANI II), during initial teacher education (through the General and Intermediate Knowledge Examinations), upon graduation of initial teacher education...
(through the EGEL), upon entering the teaching profession (through the newly introduced National Teaching Post Competition) and while in service (through the Vertical Promotion System; the National Teacher Career Programme, for horizontal promotion; the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality; and the new Universal Evaluation System). These initiatives attest to extensive experience in appraising teachers and convey a strong message about the need for teachers to have their performance appraised at all stages of their career. However, as will be explained later, teacher appraisal has concentrated on identifying those teachers whose students have better ENLACE results and those with good results in ENAMS.

Some positive developments in the implementation of teacher appraisal

At the moment, instruments for teacher appraisal rely mostly on both standardised examinations for teachers (e.g. ENCHD, standardised examination to assess professional preparation for the PNCM) and standardised student assessments (mainly ENLACE). These standardised examinations and assessments are prepared by qualified agencies in the country, such as CENEVAL. There is also a considerable effort in providing differentiated exams for different teacher profiles. For example, for the ENCHD, 24 different types of exams covering the different education levels, subjects (for lower secondary education) and school modalities were implemented.

In addition to teacher examinations and student assessments, the government is also now introducing other elements that can help form a more comprehensive view of a teacher’s performance. Examples include the use of portfolios in initial teacher education and the 2011 pilot on the use of portfolios as an additional instrument for the National Teaching Post Competition. The latter is assessed by two evaluators and contains the following elements: (1) A lesson plan by the teacher; (2) a videotaped class; and (3) a written piece of work by the teacher describing theoretical foundations, didactic elements, assessment criteria and a bibliography. With regard to ENAMS, diagnosis reports have been provided to teachers following the appraisal. Also, the promotion and incentives schemes (Vertical Promotion System, PNCM) as well as the Universal Evaluation System attempt, in a rather limited way, to go beyond examinations and assessments in the instruments used: professional development undertaken, extra activities conducted, and the qualitative assessment of teacher aptitude, school management activities, and educational support provided.

There are also significant efforts in improving the knowledge base about teachers through the development of RNAME, the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (see detailed information in Chapter 6). More reliable data on teachers are key to providing them with more adequate support to address students’ needs.

Significant efforts to develop teaching standards were undertaken

A very significant development has been the new focus on the preparation of teaching and school management standards. The 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme specified as one of its actions “To establish performance profiles of teachers in service to guide continuous training towards the development of professional competencies needed to face the challenges of education in the 21st century”. In this context, a partnership between a civil society organisation (Businessmen for Basic Education Foundation, Fundación Empresarios por la Educación Básica, ExEB), the SEP and the SNTE was formed with the objective of developing teaching standards to serve as a reference for teachers’ self-appraisal. This work was supported by the Organisation of Ibero-American
States (OEI) and the development of the teaching standards was commissioned to three private educational research institutions. The work articulated teaching standards, standards for school management and student curricular standards. The standards were discussed with a range of education actors and trialled in 2007 by the SEP in 62 schools. In 2008/09, a “final” version of the standards was applied in 549 schools across all the states of the country. In 2010, an official document “Teaching Performance Standards in Basic Education in Mexico” was produced for consultation with education stakeholders but was not publicly released. By the end of 2011 no decision had been taken on the implementation of the standards (Barrera and Myers, 2011). The implementation of teaching standards would help provide a common reference to the system on what good teaching, school leadership and student learning mean and would contribute as an element to ensure consistency for the implementation of teacher appraisal.

Teacher appraisal aims at both improvement and accountability

Policy makers recognise the need to achieve both the improvement and accountability functions of teacher appraisal, by implementing high- and low-stakes appraisal schemes and instruments at different stages of a teacher’s career. For example, during initial education, student teachers can access a diagnosis of their strengths and areas for improvement in the 4th and 8th semesters of their studies, while other appraisal instruments are used to define completion of teacher education and entry into the profession. Also, in the National Teacher Career Programme, teachers will now need to continuously demonstrate proficiency in their skills in order to retain their stimuli level. In addition, the improvement function may also be strengthened through the more holistic perspective proposed by the Universal Evaluation System. At the moment, it is mainly linked to standardised examinations and assessments, but the government plans to eventually include components based on standards and the observation of teaching practice in the classroom.

Teacher appraisal procedures are rooted in some good principles

As explained above, the Mexican education system has developed a comprehensive teacher appraisal system that includes a range of domains of teacher performance and a wide range of instruments and data sources. The overall teacher appraisal system is based on some good principles reflecting what has been identified as good teacher appraisal practice internationally:

- **A focus on improving the quality of teachers.** Appropriately teacher appraisal has as its main objectives the improvement of the quality of the teachers, the enhancement of teaching practices in schools and, as a result, growth in student learning. Some of the mechanisms that have been used thus far, such as ENAMS, have essentially a formative function. However, the accountability function remains dominant in most teacher appraisal schemes. But there is renewed interest in expanding the formative purposes of teacher appraisal through the introduction of the Universal Evaluation Scheme.

- **The principle of career advancement on merit.** With its consequences on vertical and horizontal career progression, and the existing incentives schemes, teacher appraisal in Mexico provides opportunities to recognise and reward teaching competence and performance, which is essential to retain effective teachers in schools as well as to make teaching an attractive career choice (OECD, 2005).
Multiple sources of evidence. The overall approach to teacher appraisal is comprehensive, including a range of domains of teacher performance, and a range of instruments and sources of data. All these elements contribute to meeting the need for accuracy and fairness in the appraisal process (Isoré, 2009). It has the advantage of introducing elements external to the school, such as teacher standardised examinations, which have the potential to provide some consistency of judgment across teachers. Significantly, it also acknowledges the importance of accounting for student results, in spite of important implementation issues (see below).

A growing recognition of the importance of classroom observation. As teaching practices and evidence of learning are probably the most relevant sources of information about professional performance, it is fundamental to give a key role to classroom observation in teacher appraisal. This has not yet been properly recognised by the Mexican teacher evaluation system. However, there are encouraging developments through the consideration by the Universal Evaluation System of the introduction of classroom observation as an instrument for teacher appraisal.

The introduction of the National Teaching Post Competition provides greater transparency to teacher recruitment

A major positive development has been the introduction of the National Teaching Post Competition, in an initial stage through the National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills (ENCHD). This competition accomplishes two major functions: (i) it brings more transparency to the teacher recruitment process, significantly reducing the number of teaching posts allocated on an improper basis; and (ii) it identifies teachers weakly prepared by initial teacher education programmes (therefore offering an instrument to undertake the quality assurance of initial teacher education programmes). This is a major step in ensuring the greater quality of teachers joining the teaching profession.

There is some support and guidance at the national level

The government invests important resources in communication, to ensure that the planned changes and policies permeate the different levels of the system. This is done through websites, training courses, materials and catalogues distributed to teachers and schools, and other types of documentation. Teachers benefit from extensive documentation about each teacher appraisal scheme and have also access to materials and courses to prepare the teacher examinations which are part of teacher appraisal.

Informal teacher appraisal practices occur in schools

Informal classroom observation in schools, undertaken by school directors and supervisors, seems to occur in many schools. The OECD Review Team heard of some well-established practices in some schools. These include the development, at the school level, of appraisal criteria for classroom observation and the design of observation rubrics to be used by school directors and supervisors and which serve as a basis for the provision of feedback. This is supported by TALIS data. As shown in Figure 4.2, on average, more Mexican lower secondary teachers reported in TALIS receiving feedback at least twice a year than teachers in other countries from the following school agents: 63% of them reported receiving feedback from their director (compared to a TALIS
average of 41%); 51% of them reported receiving feedback from other teachers or members of the management team (compared to a TALIS average of 49%); and 45% of them reported receiving feedback from an external individual or body (against a TALIS average of 12%). This is an indication that teachers have access to informal feedback on their practices at the school level. However, these figures may also reflect “socially desirable answers” on the part of Mexican teachers to TALIS questions reflecting the widespread practice of “simulation” within the teaching community. While classroom observations appeared to be normal practice in the schools visited by the OECD Review Team, they are not necessarily undertaken systematically for each individual teacher within schools.

**Figure 4.2 Sources of feedback received at least twice a year by lower secondary teachers**

![Graph showing sources of feedback received at least twice a year by lower secondary teachers.](image)

*Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009).*

**Challenges**

*There is currently no shared understanding of what constitutes good quality teaching*

Even though there have been recent significant efforts to develop teaching standards in Mexico, these have not yet produced visible results and the education system currently still lacks a national framework defining standards for the teaching profession. Hence, at the moment, there is no clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. At the national level, there are no uniform performance criteria or reference frameworks against which teachers are appraised.

Professional standards are essential to guide any fair and effective system of teacher appraisal, given the need to have a common reference of what counts as accomplished teaching (OECD, 2005). The lack of such a framework weakens the capacity for the system to effectively appraise teachers. While teacher appraisal is conducted in a variety of forms, for teacher appraisal to be effective across the system it would be important that all actors have a shared understanding of high quality teaching and the level of performance that can be achieved by the most effective teachers.
The overall framework for teacher appraisal is complex and fragmented

Teacher appraisal does not send clear signals to teachers

Teacher appraisal in Mexico, consisting of a large variety of components, appears complex and fragmented. The overall system of teacher appraisal is the result of the accumulation of isolated programmes and initiatives which evolved independently of each other over time and does not come across as a coherent whole. According to Barrera and Myers (2011), the motivation to implement the different components was to maintain control over teachers and the relationship between the union (SNTE) and the government to the detriment of educational quality. As put by them, the articulation of teacher appraisal processes “is practically inexistent, which generates ambiguous signals which distort the teaching profession, because they introduce multiple references and oblige the teachers to take career decisions under a bureaucratic chaos and in the uncertainty of what the system considers as a ‘good teacher’”.

There is not enough clarity for teachers on what is expected from them and how they will be supported to reach the goals established by each of the components of the system. The fact is that, in the absence of teaching standards established as a reference for teacher appraisal, the instruments associated with the current teacher appraisal components de facto institute standards for the teachers, as they provide the sole references of what teachers should be able to achieve (Barrera and Myers, 2011). Among the more influential instruments used thus far are the ENCHD, the ENAMS, the examination determining the professional preparation of the teacher in PNCM and, of course, ENLACE. However, given the multitude of instruments and appraisal components, teachers do not receive consistent and clear signals about what they should be doing to be a “good teacher”.

There are gaps in the teacher appraisal framework

Despite its complexity and the fact that it covers multiple aspects, the teacher appraisal framework in Mexico has a number of gaps. A major one, once the teacher is in the profession, is that teacher appraisal is not mandatory and therefore a good proportion of teachers do not undergo any performance appraisal. This is now being addressed through the implementation of the Universal Evaluation System. Also, appraisal for in-service teachers who prefer to remain in the classroom is limited to schemes for salary progression (PNCM) and financial stimuli (Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality). The Vertical Promotion System only applies when teachers want to access a management role and leave the classroom. As a result, there is no formal teacher appraisal which focuses on teacher development and feedback for the improvement of practices (see below). ENAMS has essentially a formative role but it is voluntary and limited in the feedback it can provide to teachers. Informal feedback for improvement is also undertaken at the school level (through school management and supervisors) but there is no external formal validation of such practices.

It should also be noted that generally there is no probationary period for teachers who enter the profession (even if the permanent post is only granted at the 6th month following access to the post; and some states are introducing probationary periods). Hence, the school system does not have mechanisms to identify those new recruits who struggle to perform well on the job or find that it does not meet their expectations. This goes alongside the absence of induction processes for new teachers to support them as they enter the profession. In broader terms, there is the lack of a regular certification/licensing
system to confirm teachers as fit for the profession – *i.e.* processes to ensure minimum requirements are met by practising teachers. Hence, in the Mexican system, there is no quality assurance mechanism to ensure that every school is staffed with teachers with suitable qualifications who meet prescribed standards for teaching practice. The only existing mechanism is the ENCHD, but not only is it limited to the access to a permanent post, it is also not aimed at certifying “good” teachers (but, instead, at identifying the “best” candidates within the pool of applicants).

*There is some duplication in the teacher appraisal framework*

There is considerable duplication of efforts across the different components of the teacher appraisal framework. First, both the PNCM and the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality provide monetary rewards to individual teachers and, to a great extent, using the same measure (ENLACE). Hence, teachers are being rewarded for the ENLACE results of their students through two different channels. It is not clear what the individual stimuli component of the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality is actually adding to what the PNCM is already doing in terms of incentivising teachers to improve their students’ ENLACE results. Second, the differences between ENAMS and the examination to assess professional preparation within PNCM, as they have been used so far, are unclear. There seems to be room to combine these two standardised examinations, which in fact should materialise with the discontinuation of ENAMS following the recent revision to the PNCM and the introduction of the Universal Evaluation System. Finally, even if at this stage the purposes of PNCM and the Universal Evaluation seem to be distinct (salary progression versus formative focus), there seems to be considerable overlap in the instruments and sources of information used to undertake the appraisal of teachers. This also raises the question of whether it is pertinent to use similar instruments when these two components seek to achieve different purposes.

*The improvement of teaching quality is not at the centre of teacher appraisal*

Arguably, the most important area for teacher appraisal is what happens at the points where learning itself takes place. Failure to place learning and teaching at the heart of the appraisal process sends ambiguous signals about what matters and means that appraisal judgements can only be based on proxy indicators such as ENLACE and the results on standardised teacher examinations. A challenge for Mexico is that currently in-service teacher appraisal is predominantly a mechanism to award rewards to teachers mostly based on instruments (ENLACE results and standardised teacher examinations) that only indirectly measure the quality of the teaching. Teacher appraisal, as it is currently conceived, does not emphasise the promotion of teacher improvement. With the exception of ENAMS (soon to be discontinued), teachers do not receive feedback or advice for the improvement of their practices (see below). There is not enough focus on strategies for promoting improvements in the quality of teaching as a consequence of teacher appraisal. Also, it appears that in general there are few consequences of negative teacher appraisals. This means that even when teachers are identified as lower-performing, there is little pressure or incentive for them to actively work on improvement. In addition there is not enough guidance from teacher appraisal processes about what will lead to teacher improvement – *i.e.* given the lack of clear teaching standards, teachers lack guidance as to how they can improve their practices.
There is no guarantee that all teachers receive an appraisal of their work

As pointed out earlier, teacher appraisal for in-service teachers is not mandatory and is undertaken only for those teachers interested in salary progression (PNCM) and rewards (Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality). This means that, following the point of entry into the profession (through the ENCHD), a good proportion of teachers do not have their work appraised. Therefore the school system is not in a good position to identify lower-performing teachers with a view to offering them professional development plans so they have the opportunity to retain their post in the school system. This is now changing with the introduction of the Universal Evaluation System, a very positive development to ensure that all teachers in the school system are subject to a performance appraisal.

At present, the only mechanism to ensure teachers receive some feedback consists of the informal non-systematic school-level appraisal undertaken by the school management and the supervisors. Given that they are the responsibility of each individual school, school-level informal feedback practices vary across the system. The quality and extent of informal feedback in individual schools depend on the capacity and leadership style of the school directors and supervisors. In general, there is no mechanism to ensure that each individual teacher receives proper professional feedback. As a consequence, there is also no guarantee that underperformance is identified and addressed accordingly.

Teachers who are appraised receive little feedback to improve their practice

At the present time, results of teacher appraisal provide little guidance to teachers as to how they can improve their teaching practice. The only exception is ENAMS which provides a booklet to appraised teachers with an individualised diagnosis explaining their results, but this practice will stop in 2012 with the discontinuation of ENAMS. In all the other cases – PNCM, Incentives Programme, Vertical Promotion – teachers do not receive an analysis of their performance where the strengths and areas for future learning are clearly identified. As such, teacher appraisal does not lead to professional dialogue around teaching practices and has limited value for informing improvement. The different components lack mechanisms such as self-appraisal or an interaction with evaluators which could promote a reflection on own practices and a professional discussion around the teacher’s practices which could generate useful individualised feedback to inform a professional development plan. Besides, the several standardised teacher examinations are limited in terms of the feedback they can provide on pedagogical and didactic practices as the multiple-choice nature of the examinations does not allow a good coverage of didactic competencies.

Furthermore, student results in standardised assessments (such as ENLACE) may identify teachers who are ineffective or should professionally develop but do neither permit to fairly discriminate between the wide range of effective teachers nor identify which professional development activities should be established in order to improve their performance (Braun, 2005).

Teacher appraisal has limited connections to classroom practice which reflects the limited instruments used

In-service teacher appraisal in Mexico relies on instruments – mostly ENLACE and teacher standardised examinations – which are somewhat distant from learning and teaching practices in the classroom. As teaching practices and evidence of learning are
probably the most relevant sources of information about professional performance, not giving any role to classroom observation in the teacher appraisal framework seems inadequate. Similarly, appraisal processes do not lead teachers to reflect on their own practices through, for instance, a self-appraisal element or the preparation of a portfolio containing examples of lesson plans, assessed student work, and the teacher’s views on teaching and learning. In addition, the instruments currently used are limited in the extent to which they are embedded in everyday school life. Instruments such as ENLACE and standardised teacher examinations do not account for the particular context faced by teachers and ignore the specific objectives of the schools in which the teachers work. Also, no appraisal is undertaken by an evaluator who is in a better position to understand the teacher’s specific circumstances – for example, from the school management or the supervision structure – and give well-informed feedback for the teacher to better respond to local needs. In a few words, the instruments currently used lack interaction with the real school-classroom world.

An explanation for the use of the current instruments is the aim to achieve as much “objectivity” as possible and avoid giving weight to subjective assessments by individuals. This is explained by the fear that traffic of influences or favouritism could undermine the meaningfulness of teacher appraisal carried out through instruments based on the individual judgments of an evaluator (as in a classroom observation or the assessment of a portfolio). This is understandable given the context faced by school agents in Mexico. Another difficulty is to devise strategies to cover the large teaching body in Mexico. Instruments such as classroom observations and the analysis of portfolios entail a considerable cost. However, there is a need to progressively introduce instruments more closely linked to classroom practice. In this respect, it should be noted that good progress is being made with the piloting of teacher portfolios (which include classroom observations) in the ENCHD and the consideration of the use of portfolios and classroom observation in the Universal Evaluation System.

Teachers have few opportunities for feedback

Mexican teachers have few opportunities for professional feedback. As explained earlier, formal teacher appraisal processes do not offer teachers significant feedback on their practice. The main opportunity to receive feedback is the informal dialogue held with the members of school management and the supervisors. However, school directors (and to a lesser extent deputy directors) are overwhelmed with tasks at the school and, in general, they do not seem to have the time to engage properly in the coaching, monitoring, and appraisal of teachers. For example, classroom observations by school directors seem to be relatively occasional. Similarly, the interaction with supervisors tends not to concentrate on a comprehensive review of teaching practices for individual teachers (see Chapter 5 for more detail). Peer feedback also tends to be limited to the work developed within the school’s technical council and teacher academies in lower secondary schools. There are few examples of communities of practice in schools where teachers can share strategies, observe one another, collaborate on projects, all with the aim of learning from one another. Overall, there is scope for improvement in areas such as classroom observation, peer discussion, coaching, or self-critical analysis.
The use of student standardised assessments in teacher appraisal raises a range of concerns

Students’ standardised assessment scores have not been validated as a measure of teachers’ performance

In Mexico, ENLACE results function as the dominant instrument in the formal appraisal of in-service teachers. Stimuli in the Incentives Programme are based on ENLACE and in both the PNCM and the Universal Evaluation System, ENLACE accounts for 50% of the teacher’s “score”. Student learning outcomes, including student results in standardised assessments, are an appealing measure to assess teaching performance, since the ultimate goal of teaching is to improve student learning. Teacher appraisal systems based on student assessment results are supposed to strengthen incentives for teachers to commit themselves to helping all students to meet important centrally defined standards and fulfill goals within the national curriculum. As explained in Chapter 3, the high stakes of ENLACE provides incentives for teachers to improve students’ achievement (in ENLACE) and raises the awareness of the need to focus on low-performing students. Braun (2005) argues that considering student scores is a promising approach for two reasons: first, it moves the discussion about teacher quality towards student learning as the primary goal of teaching, and second, it introduces a quantitative – and thus, objective and fair – measurement of teacher performance.

In spite of its attractiveness, using student standardised test scores as an instrument for teacher appraisal is faced with numerous challenges. First, student learning is influenced by many factors. These include the student’s own skills, expectations, motivation and behaviour along with the support they receive from their families and the influence of their peer group. In addition to the quality of teachers, other factors include school organisation, resources and climate; and curriculum structure and content. The effect of teachers is also cumulative, i.e. at a given moment in time student learning is influenced not only by the current teachers but also by former teachers. As a result, in Mexico the raw ENLACE scores – as they are used for the appraisal of teachers – carry much more than the impact of the appraised teacher and also reflect, for instance, the impact of the student’s family, the student’s previous learning or the resources of the school (see also OECD, 2011b). Clearly, this puts certain teachers – such as those in more advantaged schools – at an advantage vis-à-vis other teachers in terms of receiving the rewards associated with teacher appraisal procedures. Only in the Incentives Programme is there an attempt at contextualising the results with the grouping of schools (and the associated teachers) according to their socio-economic characteristics. Hence, this raises serious issues of fairness for teachers as the actual impact of a teacher on student results is not disentangled (i.e. the value added by individual teachers is not measured).

Given that a wide range of factors impact on student results, identifying the specific contribution of a given teacher is faced with numerous statistical challenges (see Isoré, 2009, for a detailed discussion). In this respect, the development of “value-added” models represents significant progress as they are designed to control for the individual student’s previous results, and therefore have the potential to identify the contribution an individual teacher made to a student’s achievement. However, authors are not convinced that the current generation of value-added models is sufficiently valid and reliable to be used for fairly assessing individual teachers’ effectiveness (see Isoré, 2009). In order to be more meaningful for teacher appraisal, value-added models require vast amounts of data frequently collected through large-scale national-level student standardised assessment
across levels of education and subjects. At present, using student results as an evaluation instrument is likely to be more relevant for whole-school evaluation than for individual teacher performance appraisal (as suggested in OECD, 2011b). As Darling-Hammond (2012) concludes, “I have since realised that these [“valued-added methods” for assessing teacher effectiveness] measures, while valuable for large-scale studies, are seriously flawed for evaluating individual teachers, and that rigorous, on-going assessment by teaching experts serves everyone better”. She also notes that reviews by the National Research Council (2009), the RAND Corporation (McCaffrey et al., 2003) and the Educational Testing Service (Braun, 2005) have all concluded that value-added estimates of teacher effectiveness should not be used to make high-stakes decisions about teachers.

Second, standardised assessments used to differentiate students are not specifically designed for the purpose of appraising teachers. Goe (2007) suggests that student standardised assessments are not engineered to be particularly sensitive to small variations in instruction or to sort out teacher contributions to student learning. Thus they do not provide a solid basis on which to hold teachers accountable for their performance. Third, teaching impact on students is not restricted to areas assessed through student standardised assessments – generally limited to reading and numeracy – but also include transfer of psychological, civic and lifelong learning skills (Margo et al., 2008).

In Mexico, student standardised assessment scores have not been validated as a measure of teachers’ performance. To the knowledge of the OECD Review Team, no studies have been undertaken about the instructional sensitivity of ENLACE (i.e. that ENLACE scores reflect the quality of instruction). This is in addition to the limited meaningfulness of using raw ENLACE scores to make judgments about the performance of an individual teacher and the fact that ENLACE does not measure the entire set of competencies which reflect the impact of a teacher. As a result of these restrictions, it is not surprising that student standardised assessment results are not commonly used as direct sources of evidence for teacher appraisal in countries (OECD, 2005; UNESCO, 2007). In fact, in the OECD area, Mexico is the only country using raw student scores in standardised assessments to appraise individual teachers.

However, it is important to emphasise that evidence of student learning progress is fundamental as a source of information for teacher appraisal. Given the difficulties of taking it into account more mechanically through student assessment scores, there are ways to consider it in teacher appraisal using contextualised qualitative analysis of student scores or requesting teachers to provide evidence of student progress in portfolios.

The use of student standardised assessments to appraise individual teachers has potential detrimental effects

Overseas experience (particularly notable in the United States) has demonstrated that there are serious potential detrimental effects when standardised student assessment scores are used for teacher appraisal (or, in fact, for school evaluation). It can lead to strategic responses on the part of teachers and schools such as: (i) teachers focussing only on the learning outcomes that will be assessed in the standardised assessment rather than the full range of competencies of the curriculum (“teaching to the test” and “narrowing of the curriculum”); (ii) teachers ignoring the important cross-curricular learning outcomes; (iii) time diverted from regular curriculum for special preparation of the assessment – with the additional difficulty that targeted teaching to those skills that are represented on a test can raise scores without increasing students’ mastery of the broader domain (Stecher, 2002); (iv) pre-emptively retaining students and increasing special education
placements of low-performing students in special programmes which are outside the standardised assessment system; \(v\) teachers and schools encouraging only the more able students to be present when the assessment is administered; \(vi\) negative effects on teacher-based assessments and student engagement in rich curriculum tasks through which teachers can genuinely understand student learning; and \(vii\) teacher cheating as with the assistance teachers may provide students during the assessment (see Morris (2011) and Rosenkvist (2010) for a detailed discussion).

As described in Chapter 3, in the schools visited, the OECD Review Team observed that teaching to the test was extensively practised and heard of the incentives for teachers to ask low-performing students not to attend school the day ENLACE is administered and for teachers to help their students complete the assessment (as also described in Barrera and Myers, 2011). This is not surprising if part of teachers’ salaries depends on the ENLACE results of their students. In their study of opportunities for using ENLACE in incentives schemes for teachers, Zúñiga Molina and Gaviria (2010) stress the importance of devoting greater resources for ensuring the integrity of the administration of ENLACE as its consequences for teachers become more important (in a context where there is evidence of significant levels of test cheating).

The disproportionate focus on ENLACE also runs the risk of ENLACE becoming the national curriculum (particularly in primary education), when ENLACE only measures achievement in a subset of learning objectives in Spanish and mathematics. This narrowing effect is compounded by the fact that ENLACE consists of multiple-choice questions which are automatically marked, limiting further the range of competencies assessed.

Finally, the focus of teacher appraisal on student standardised tests may also lead to holding teachers responsible for the whole student performance whereas one should instead recognise that successful teaching is a shared responsibility among governments, schools and the teaching profession (Ingvarson et al., 2007). As put in OECD (2011b), “Holding all actors involved in Mexico’s education system accountable for increasing the performance of all students, in all schools, provides a clear message and a way to align efforts and resources.”

**Teacher appraisal does not offer the same opportunities for all teachers**

Current in-service teacher appraisal processes do not grant equal opportunities for teachers to secure the associated rewards. For the reasons explained earlier, appraising teachers using raw ENLACE results puts at a considerable disadvantage those teachers working in more difficult circumstances such as teachers in remote locations, Indigenous schools or Telesecundarias, and schools with a high proportion of socially disadvantaged students. As a result, current appraisal processes for in-service teachers hardly grant recognition to good teaching performance in schools facing difficult circumstances. The possible exception is the collective stimuli component of the Incentives Programme as it takes into account progress in ENLACE results (in addition to ENLACE absolute results). This can have detrimental effects such as teachers seeking more advantaged schools to be in a better position to obtain high ENLACE scores (Barrera and Myers, 2011).

Teacher appraisal processes are also more adapted to teachers “covered” by ENLACE assessments, that is all teachers in grades 3 to 6 and lower secondary teachers teaching subjects assessed through ENLACE. This is particularly visible in the individual stimuli component of the Incentives Programme, which excludes all other teachers excepting pre-primary and special education teachers. It is clearly unfair to exclude some teachers...
from the reward system. Also, it should be noted that opportunities to access a permanent teaching post through passing the ENCHD are not equally distributed as the threshold to gain such access varies considerably across states.

Another concern relates to the introduction of co-curricular activities of teachers as one element of the PNCM. This is an important effort to link teachers’ work to the activities of schools and secure greater collaboration with the surrounding communities. A challenge that arises from this initiative is ensuring that the extra activities do not take the teacher away from his/her primary pedagogic role, particularly if those activities have little relation to the professional role of teachers. Another important challenge is to ensure that teachers have equal opportunities to undertake co-curricular activities. Teachers with more than one teaching post (e.g. morning and afternoon) or teaching on an hourly basis at different schools might find it more difficult to engage in co-curricular activities. Finally, it is important to guarantee that the engagement in co-curricular activities does not involve working beyond the stipulated paid working hours.

**Teacher appraisal is not embedded in a clearly defined teacher career structure**

In Mexico, there is no career path for effective teachers. Promotion through the Vertical Promotion System consists only of advancement into a school management role, requiring the teacher to leave the classroom. In turn, the PNCM consists essentially of a salary progression which does not come with greater responsibilities or new roles within the school. Hence, within a teaching role there are few opportunities for promotion, greater recognition and more responsibility. There are no career steps in teacher development (e.g. beginning; classroom teacher; experienced teacher), which would permit a better match between teacher competence and skills and the tasks to be performed at schools. This is likely to undermine the potentially powerful links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

**There are missing links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development**

Even though the importance of professional development is recognised in national policies, the provision of professional development appears not thoroughly planned, fragmented and not systematically linked to teacher appraisal. Several of the teachers interviewed by the OECD Review Team were critical about the supply of professional development, which did not appear to them to respond to the priority needs of the system. According to TALIS, only 27.2% of teachers of lower secondary education reported that the appraisal and/or feedback they received led to a moderate or large change in opportunities for professional development activities (9th highest figure, against a TALIS average of 23.7%). In most cases, the identification of professional development needs is not a requirement of established teacher appraisal practices. In Mexico, there is no consistent means to base professional development needs on a thorough assessment of teaching practice. Without a clear link to professional development opportunities, the appraisal process is not sufficient to improve teacher performance, and as a result, often becomes a meaningless exercise that encounters mistrust – or at best apathy – on the part of teachers being evaluated (Danielson, 2001; Milanowski and Kimball, 2003; Margo et al., 2008).

There is also scope to better link teacher professional development to school development and improvement. In Mexico, professional development is predominantly a choice by individual teachers and is not systematically associated with school
development needs. Teachers engage in professional development activities based on their own assessment of professional needs, often motivated by the additional points they can earn for the PNCM. There rarely seems to be a professional dialogue with other teachers, the director or the supervisor as to what courses would best suit the teacher’s and school’s needs. School directors interviewed by the OECD Review Team rarely tracked their teachers’ professional development activities and the extent of strategic planning for professional development appeared limited. There was little evidence of school-centred professional development that would emphasise the community of learners within the school. The weak linkage between teacher appraisal, teacher professional development and school development is partly due to the limited time school leaders and supervisors invest in pedagogical leadership.

School leaders play a limited role in teacher appraisal, which reflects the relative absence of a tradition of educational leadership in schools

Teacher appraisal in Mexico does not provide school directors with leverage to lead the core business of teaching and learning in their school. School leaders currently play no role in formal in-service teacher appraisal. Only in the Vertical Promotion System are they involved in appraising the aptitude, discipline and punctuality of candidates to school management posts. Clearly, the teacher appraisal system is not designed in a way to encourage pedagogical leadership by school leaders.

In most schools, educational leadership practices are still limited. There is no mandatory pre-service training for school leadership and in-service professional development, incentivised by the points system of the Vertical Promotion System and PNCM, seems to have little relevance to practice (OECD, 2010). As put by OECD (2010) “There are real challenges in terms of developing the leadership capacity needed to ensure school progress. This is so because there has not been much investment in ensuring effective preparation and selection of school leaders or clarification of the roles that they are expected to play in combining administrative and pedagogical tasks.” Most directors have not had professional development in teacher appraisal and feedback methods, which reduces their willingness and capacity to engage in observing and guiding their teachers. In addition, the OECD Review Team saw little evidence of school leaders using the results of teacher appraisal to plan teacher professional development within the school.

School directors spend most of their time on administrative tasks and there is little distribution of leadership roles across the school (see Chapter 5 for a detailed analysis). The reduced influence of school leaders in educational leadership is also compounded by the fact that schools and school leaders cannot select their own teaching staff. Moreover, transparency in the recruitment of school leaders remains not guaranteed. School leaders do not have to go through a national post competition (such as the ENCHD) and their appointment might still occur as a result of political or industrial influences. The more limited preparation of school leaders for pedagogical leadership as well as fears of favouritism or traffic of influences leads other school agents not to see school leaders as potential credible evaluators for teacher appraisal.

There is limited involvement of state educational authorities in teacher appraisal

State educational authorities as well as their supervision structures play no visible role in formal in-service teacher appraisal. The exceptions are the responsibilities of the supervision in the assessments of aptitude, discipline and punctuality of the Vertical
Promotion System and the role played by states in the design and organisation of the National Teaching Post Competition (ENCHD). This is surprising in light of the fact that state educational authorities are the employers of the teachers. This translates into an unsuitable separation between the management of the teaching body (by state educational authorities) and the system for its appraisal and rewards (by the federal educational authorities). Indeed, it is debatable that those structures closer to the schools and with responsibility to provide support to schools (such as the provision of professional development) do not play a role in the formal teacher appraisal system.

**Linkages between school-based (informal) teacher appraisal and centrally-managed teacher appraisal are not established and there is no articulation between teacher appraisal and school evaluation**

While some school-based informal teacher appraisal occurs in most schools, these processes bear no relation to in-service formal teacher appraisal organised centrally. For instance, formal teacher appraisal systems could take into account qualitative assessments undertaken informally at the school, in particular through the involvement of school leadership in formal appraisal processes. In addition, since there are no teaching standards to guide teacher appraisal, school-based informal teacher appraisal and formal teacher appraisal are not necessarily aligned in terms of what they convey as important attributes and practices for teachers.

Also, the fact that there are no well established school evaluation processes precludes any articulation between school evaluation and teacher appraisal. This excludes developing external school evaluation processes to validate internal teacher appraisal practices, stressing the centrality of the appraisal of teaching quality across the whole school through school evaluation and using teacher appraisal results to inform school self-evaluation and school development.

**Incentive systems based on monetary rewards entail risks**

The appraisal of teacher performance constitutes an opportunity to recognise and reward teaching competence and performance, which is essential to retain effective teachers in schools as well as to make teaching an attractive career choice (OECD, 2005). In Mexico, teacher appraisal is extensively used for both salary progression (through the PNCM) and monetary rewards for individual teachers and groups of teachers in schools (through the Incentives Programme). Historically, this approach has served to compensate the low basic salary levels of Mexican teachers which, as a result, has led to its positive reception by teachers in spite of some important fairness concerns (as explained earlier).

Issues surrounding developing a closer relationship between teacher performance and reward are controversial in all countries; and research in this field is difficult and has produced mixed results. There seems to be agreement that the design and implementation of performance-based rewards are crucial to their success. As explained in Harvey-Beavis (2003), there is a wide consensus that previous attempts at introducing performance-based reward programmes have been poorly designed and implemented. Problems in developing fair and reliable indicators, and the training of evaluators to fairly apply these indicators have undermined attempts to implement programmes (Storey, 2000). One problem identified is poor goal clarity because of a large number of criteria, which restricts teachers’ understanding of the programme and makes implementation difficult (Richardson, 1999). Explanations of how, and on what criteria, teachers are assessed may be difficult to articulate. When this occurs, it is almost impossible to give constructive
feedback and maintain teacher support for the programme (Chamberlin et al., 2002). The focus of the rewards on group recognition and rewards is generally better accepted (OECD, 2005).

In addition there is wide consensus in the literature against the use of student assessment scores (as with ENLACE) to establish links to teacher pay, because this incorporates a substantial risk to punish or reward teachers for results beyond their control (Kane and Staiger, 2002; McCaffrey et al., 2003; Braun, 2005; Ingvarson et al., 2007).

Policy recommendations

The recommendations developed below draw on the strengths and challenges described above, international evidence of best practices, the knowledge developed within the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks, as well as the extensive work carried out with Mexico as part of the OECD-Mexico Co-operation Agreement “Improving Education in Mexican Schools” (2008-2010).

Consolidate teacher appraisal: draw on what has been achieved and develop a medium-term vision

Authentic teacher appraisal, by which we mean that which comes to an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of teaching, its strengths and areas for development, followed by feedback, coaching, support and opportunities for professional development, is central to establishing a high performing education system. It is also essential to celebrate, recognise and reward the work of teachers. Promoting teacher appraisal is clearly in the national interest as well as serving students and their families and communities. Mexico has undertaken significant efforts to implement teacher appraisal and develop an evaluation culture among the teaching workforce. Placing teacher appraisal at the core of school reforms achieved a large consensus among the teaching profession that meaningful teacher appraisal is indispensable. Although the development of teacher appraisal is at an early stage and is only partially successful, it is important not to lose the ground that has been gained.

As explained earlier, in Mexico in-service teacher appraisal has thus far emphasised salary progression and rewards as its main functions, does not yet cover all the teaching force, and gives disproportionate importance to raw ENLACE results as an instrument. This approach has had the advantage of raising awareness among teachers of the importance of focusing on student results. However, the development (or improvement) function of teacher appraisal whereby the results of appraisals are used to inform the professional development of teachers and foster the professional dialogue among school actors around teaching practices is yet to receive proper attention. There are encouraging signals in the current Universal Evaluation initiative that the intention is indeed to follow this path. The biggest need is to embed teacher appraisal as an on-going and indispensable part of professionalism. In the medium term, the approach to teacher appraisal which holds greatest promise of sustained high impact on student learning is one where teachers engage in reflective practice, study their own practices, and share their experience with their peers as a routine part of professional life. As expressed in OECD (2012) “the kind of teaching needed today requires teachers to be high-level knowledge workers who constantly advance their own professional knowledge as well as that of their profession”.

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Recognising the achievements to date, including the Universal Evaluation System which seeks to cover all teachers in the system and proposes a new formative emphasis to teacher appraisal, this section proposes a medium/long-term vision for teacher appraisal in Mexico. The approaches developed thus far provide a good basis for further development and the expertise gained is not to be lost. However, in our view, some adjustments are needed to bring meaningful teacher appraisal to fruition, with considerably more focus on its developmental function. The following approach is proposed:

- Implement teaching standards to guide teacher appraisal and development.
- Establish an independent body to govern the teaching profession.
- Strengthen teacher appraisal for improvement with the introduction of a component predominantly dedicated to developmental evaluation, fully internal to the school, for which the school director would be held accountable, to be used for internal performance management, and to provide an assessment (only) of a qualitative nature to inform professional development plans.
- Create a teacher career structure with different career paths associated with different roles and responsibilities.
- Establish teacher appraisal for career progression as a model of certification of competencies for practice within and across career paths, to be associated with career advancement and to include a probationary period. To some extent, this component brings together the PNCM, the Universal Evaluation System and the principles established in the Vertical Promotion System (with a career structure within teaching).
- Maintain the National Teaching Post Competition to regulate entry into the profession.
- Focus the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality on group rewards.
- Diversify the instruments used for teacher appraisal and reduce the weight of student standardised assessment results.
- Ensure links between developmental evaluation and career-progression evaluation.
- Ensure appropriate articulation between school evaluation and teacher appraisal.
- Create a separate career structure for school leaders.

Table 4.5 summarises the proposed approach. The detailed suggestions and the associated arguments are provided below.

**Implement teaching standards to guide teacher professional development and teacher appraisal**

The efforts that are being made in preparing standards for the teaching profession and school leadership should be pursued. The process launched in 2007 to prepare teaching and school leadership standards involved considerable participatory discussion among relevant stakeholders and was piloted in a range of schools, and the experience gained should not be lost.
Develop standards that define effective teaching and good leadership

Mexico needs to have a basic reference of what good teaching and good school leadership mean. As articulated previously by the OECD (OECD, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Mancera and Schmelkes, 2010), this means establishing a clear set of coherent teaching standards that signal to teachers and to society as a whole the core knowledge, skills and values associated with effective teaching at different stages of a teaching career.

Teaching (and school leadership) standards should contain quality criteria or indicators for professional teaching (and school leadership) practice and should be applied in individual performance appraisals (see also OECD, 2010). They should build on the work already accomplished since 2007 and be framed in the context of the overall objectives for schooling. Teachers’ (and school leaders’) practices and the competencies that they need to be effective should reflect the student learning objectives that the school system is aiming to achieve. Teaching (and school leadership) standards need to be informed by research and express the sophistication and complexity of what effective teachers are expected to know and be able to do. They should also express different levels of performance and responsibilities expected at different stages of the teaching (and school leadership) career (more on this below).

Mexico has been developing teaching standards through the observation of teachers’ practices in effective schools. Although this approach is innovative, it may not be sufficient if the objective is to promote teacher professionalism, as these standards may be too constraining and specific (OECD, 2010; Barrera and Myers, 2011). Barrera and Myers (2011) point out that the set of proposed standards may be too narrow: compared with the Danielson’s and Perrenoud’s models, which are more comprehensive, the existing standards focus on describing tasks at given points. They also draw attention to the fact that in Mexico there has been little discussion of the content of the standards. Nevertheless, this set of standards could be implemented as a starting point, and gradually adapted and enriched through clear feedback mechanisms involving teachers, education experts, state authorities and agencies in charge of teacher appraisal.

The consultation and validation of the standards could be undertaken as follows (OECD, 2011c):

- Setting up consultation mechanisms: a collegiate body of key social and academic actors could establish a process to monitor implementation beyond initial agreed versions.
- Develop a strategy for national consultation: a variety of actors at different levels and from different contexts should participate in the consultation process, to generate knowledge and ownership of standards across the country.
- Ensure appropriate feedback mechanisms: following implementation, standards can have periodical revisions to ensure that these remain aligned with other elements of the system, and that they are useful in the promotion of teacher professionalism.
### Table 4.5 A framework for teacher appraisal in Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appraisal Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Nature of Consequences</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National teaching post competition (entrance into the profession)</td>
<td>Competition to select candidates fit to enter the teaching profession</td>
<td>Individuals with teacher qualifications who wish to enter teaching</td>
<td>Pool of candidates competing for a given number of posts</td>
<td>Teaching standards (or graduate teaching standards); education norms; ethics</td>
<td>National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills (ENCHD); portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation (certifying fitness for profession)</td>
<td>Certification to confirm access to a permanent post</td>
<td>Beginning teachers at the end of a 1- or 2-year probation period</td>
<td>Mostly external, with an internal input and covering teaching performance</td>
<td>Teaching standards, with account of school context (including school plan)</td>
<td>Self-appraisal, portfolio, classroom observation, interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career progression appraisal within the same career path (certifying practice and access to new roles)</td>
<td>Career progression within the same career path – with input into development plan</td>
<td>All individual permanent teachers</td>
<td>Mostly external, with an internal input and covering teaching performance</td>
<td>Teaching standards, with account of school context (including school development plan)</td>
<td>Self-appraisal, portfolio, classroom observation, interviews, student results, potentially exam such as ENAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to another career path</td>
<td>Career progression to access a new career path – with input into development plan</td>
<td>Voluntary – permanent teachers for access to a new career path</td>
<td>Same as above (but teaching standards for new career path are considered)</td>
<td>Teaching standards, school development plan, school objectives</td>
<td>Self-appraisal; classroom observation; interviews with analysis of student results; potentially an exam such as ENAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental appraisal (guiding improvement of practice)</td>
<td>Continuous improvement of teaching practices</td>
<td>All individual teachers</td>
<td>Internal, covering teaching performance</td>
<td>Teaching standards, school development plan, school objectives</td>
<td>Self-appraisal; classroom observation; interviews with analysis of student results; potentially an exam such as ENAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives programme (rewards for collectives of teachers)</td>
<td>Reward to collectives of teachers for student results</td>
<td>Voluntary participation of collectives of students</td>
<td>Based on school-level indicators</td>
<td>Student learning objectives</td>
<td>Student standardised assessment value-added results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Articulation between school evaluation and teacher appraisal**

School evaluation (both self- and external evaluation) to include an assessment of school internal mechanisms to assess the quality of teachers and teaching. In particular the external evaluation of a school should include an assessment of the school’s teacher developmental appraisal procedures in a formal validation procedure, provide recommendations for improvement and hold the school director accountable if such procedures are deemed inadequate. School evaluation should also include an assessment of the quality of the teaching and learning at the school. Another articulation consists of ensuring teacher appraisal results feed into school self-evaluation. Also, school self-evaluation needs to put emphasis on assessing the appropriateness of mechanisms both for internal developmental appraisal and for following up on the results of appraisal for career progression.
Use the standards to guide key elements of the teaching (and school leadership) profession

The teaching standards should be developed in a way as to provide a common basis to guide key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher professional development, career advancement and, of course, teacher appraisal (including the alignment of its different components). Clear, well-structured and widely supported professional standards for teachers can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the various elements involved in developing teachers’ competencies (OECD, 2005). The same applies to school leadership standards in relation to school leadership.

Socialise standards and the appraisal system to help teachers embed these in their regular practice

Another objective is that these standards and the appraisal system are clear to teachers. This “making sense” of standards by teachers is essential to transform their practice. This will facilitate embedding the desired principles in teachers’ everyday work in the classroom. Extensive socialisation of standards can be done at several stages of teachers’ careers (NBRC, 2010):

- During initial teacher education courses so that beginning teachers already have a clear understanding of what is expected from them.
- In induction and mentoring programmes to ease the transition between initial education and school-level practice (Hobson et al., 2009, in OECD, 2010).
- In-service teachers must receive training on the use of standards and their implications for classroom practice. The training should tackle aspects expected to be demonstrated by an effective teacher, such as: knowledge, skills, behaviours, attitudes and results (Mancera and Schmelkes, 2010).

Establish an independent body to govern the teaching profession

In Mexico the teaching profession is large and complex, its management is unco-ordinated and often involves influences other than the educational ones, and significant resources are invested in teacher appraisal as a dominant component of the evaluation and assessment framework. This reality might call for the creation of an independent body at the federal level to co-ordinate efforts in the management and improvement of the teaching workforce in the country. At the time of the Review visit, the Senate was discussing a proposal to create a “Professional Teacher Service” (Ortuño, 2011). The discussion of this initiative by the relevant actors could be a good starting point to define the main characteristics of this independent body. Given the complexities of the teaching profession in Mexico, achieving consensus on the nature and configuration of such an independent body might be challenging. It can, however, be seen as an aim for the medium term with great potential to significantly advance the co-ordination of the teaching profession in Mexico, that all stakeholders should strive to reach.

Such a body could take on responsibilities such as:
- Development and implementation of teaching standards;
- Establishment of a career structure for teachers at the national level;
• Institution of a teacher appraisal system covering all the teachers in the country;
• Development of tools and guidelines for schools to establish internal developmental teacher appraisal;
• Supporting state authorities in the management of their teaching workforces; and
• Using relevant research developments and providing evidence-based advice to develop teacher policy.

This body should have its technical capacity as its main foundation – in a way similar to INEE for the overall education system. Its membership should include all the relevant stakeholders such as the SEP, state educational authorities, the SNTE, representatives of initial teacher education and professional development providers, academic experts, and distinguished teachers and school leaders. One particular important aspect is to recognise the centrality of state educational authorities in the management of their teaching workforces and in taking responsibility for the school-based teacher appraisal components more focused on improvement and development (see below).

Valuable references exist in other countries. For instance, Spain is currently working on a similar initiative to foster the professionalisation of the teaching body, inspired by a similar system for the medical profession. In Portugal, the Ministry of Education set up in 2007 the Scientific Council for Teacher Evaluation as a consultative body to supervise and monitor the implementation of teacher appraisal (Santiago et al., 2012). Furthermore, in Nordic European countries such as Sweden (through the Skolverket) and Finland (the Ubildningstyrelsen), there is a tradition of drawing on professionally-oriented agencies for educational policy development.

Create a teacher career structure with distinct pathways and salary steps

We have noted that the absence of career opportunities for effective teachers undermines the role of teacher appraisal. In Mexico, there are no opportunities for promotion or to diversify roles for teachers who would like to remain in the classroom. As a result, schools and teachers could benefit from a career structure for teachers that comprised (say) three career pathways: competent teacher, established teacher, and accomplished/expert teacher. The different career pathways should be associated with distinct roles and responsibilities in schools associated with given levels of teaching expertise. For instance, an established teacher could assume responsibility for the mentoring of beginning teachers and an expert teacher could take responsibility for the co-ordination of professional development in schools. Voluntary access to each of the career pathways should be associated with formal processes of appraisal through a system of teacher certification (see below). Also, each of the career pathways should be organised according to steps indicating a clear salary progression. A teacher who would like to remain in the classroom and not assume new responsibilities should be given the opportunity to progress within the “competent teacher” career path. Such progression should be regulated through a process of teacher certification (see below).

The career structure for teachers should match the different levels of expertise reflected in teaching standards. Such alignment would reflect the principle of rewarding teachers for accomplishing higher levels of expertise through career advancement and would strengthen the linkages between roles and responsibilities in schools (as reflected in career structures) and the levels of expertise needed to perform them (as reflected in teaching standards). A career structure for teachers reflecting different levels of expertise
is likely to enhance the links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

Aim for a greater balance in the long term between the summative and the formative functions of teacher appraisal

Embed appraisal for teacher development and improvement in regular school practice

There needs to be a stronger emphasis on teacher appraisal for improvement purposes (i.e. developmental appraisal). Given that there are risks that the improvement function is hampered by high-stakes teacher appraisal (to take the form of a certification process as suggested below), we propose that a component predominantly dedicated to developmental appraisal, fully internal to the school, be created. As explained in OECD (2005),

Ongoing, informal evaluation directed at teacher improvement must be distinguished from the evaluation needed at key stages in the teaching career, such as when moving from probationary status to established teacher, or when applying for promotion. Such evaluations, which are more summative in nature, need to have a stronger external component and more formal processes, as well as avenues for appeal for teachers who feel they have not been treated fairly.

This development appraisal would have as its main purpose the continuous improvement of teaching practices in the school. It would be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers, and the school management. The reference standards would be the teaching standards but with school-based indicators and criteria. This appraisal should also take account of the school objectives and context. The main outcome would be feedback on teaching performance which would lead to a plan for professional development. It can be low-key and low-cost, and include self-appraisal, peer appraisal, classroom observation, and structured conversations and regular feedback by the school management and experienced peers. An instrument similar to the ENAMS could also be used to identify the professional development needs of individual teachers (in an improved version with tasks which capture better instructional competencies of teachers). It could be organised once a year for each teacher, or less frequently depending on the previous assessment by the teacher. The key aspect is that it should result in a meaningful report with recommendations for professional development.

There are advantages to having the school leaders and/or other teachers as the assessors in developmental appraisal given their familiarity with the context in which the teachers work, their awareness of the school needs and their ability to provide quick and informed feedback to the teacher. However, it might prove difficult for directors to undertake the thorough assessment of each teacher in the school. In addition, most directors (or other members of school management) have no prior training in evaluation methods and might not have the content expertise relevant to the teaching areas of the teacher being evaluated. Hence, it might prove valuable to build capacity in appraisal methods at the school level by preparing members of the management group or accomplished/expert teachers to undertake specific evaluation functions within the school.

In order to guarantee the systematic and coherent application of developmental evaluation across Mexican schools, it would be important to undertake the external
validation of the respective school processes. An option is that future school evaluation processes (as recommended in Chapter 5), in their monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, include the audit of the processes in place to organise developmental evaluation, holding the school director accountable as necessary. The supervision structures and state-level agencies with responsibility for school evaluation would play an important role of support ensuring that schools develop ambitious developmental appraisal processes to be properly documented in school activity reports.

**Set up a system of teacher certification to determine career progression, which includes entrance requirements and a probationary period**

The summative function of teacher appraisal that is currently being achieved through the PNCM, the Universal Evaluation System and the principles of the Vertical Promotion System (in the sense of career stages within teaching) could be brought together into a single process of teacher appraisal for career progression through a certification process associated with the teacher career structure suggested above – with progression within career paths and access to distinct career paths. This would formalise the principle of advancement on merit associated with career opportunities for effective teachers bringing together both vertical and horizontal promotions.

Each permanent teacher in the system would be required to periodically (say every four years) be the subject of a formal appraisal for certification (or re-certification). The purpose would be to certify teachers periodically as fit for the profession. The appraisal would also influence the speed at which the teacher progresses within a career pathway (e.g. if excellent, the teacher would progress two salary steps at once; if good/regular, the teacher would progress one salary step; and if poor, the teacher would remain in the same salary step). In this way teacher appraisal would determine salary levels only indirectly through career advancement (instead of generating teacher salary bonuses). This is a desirable option as direct links between teacher performance and pay have produced mixed results, according to the research literature (Harvey-Beavis, 2003; OECD, 2005). Such appraisal would also identify underperformance – i.e. if poor appraisal, a mandatory professional development plan would be established and a new appraisal would be required one year later; and two consecutive poor appraisals could lead the teacher to be removed from the post.

Once teachers meet certain requirements (related to experience and performance), they could also voluntarily request a formal appraisal to access a new career path (as “established” or “accomplished/expert” teacher). Both the appraisals for certification and to access a new career path, which are more summative in nature, need to have a strong component external to the school and more formal processes. These processes could be governed by an accredited commission organised by the state-level agency with responsibilities for the management of the teaching profession (which could be the agency taking responsibility for school evaluation, as suggested in Chapter 5). Such commissions could be formed by distinguished teachers and recognised school leaders as well as representatives of state educational authorities. The appraisals of a given teacher should also be informed by the input by the respective school director and supervisor.

Teacher appraisal for certification (or career progression) would have as its main purposes holding teachers accountable for their practice, determining advancement in the career, and informing the professional development plan of the teacher. This approach would convey the message that reaching high standards of performance is the main road to career advancement in the profession.
The appraisal system associated with the certification process should be founded on the national framework of teaching standards. However, it is important that teacher appraisal for certification (or career progression) takes account of the school context, including through the views of the school director and the school supervisor. Schools have to respond to different needs depending on the local context and face different circumstances, especially in a system as diverse and decentralised as Mexico. Hence it is desirable that an individual teacher is appraised against reference standards with criteria that account for his/her school’s objectives and context.

As the opening step in the certification process, the National Teaching Post Competition should be kept and refined. This initiative is very positive and can help ensure some quality control of initial teacher education programmes (in the absence of a good quality accreditation system in higher education). Further to previous recommendations in this area:

• The competition should apply to all teaching posts and a similar process should be established to access school directors’ posts (OECD, 2010).

• The National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills (ENCHD), currently 80 items long, should be made more comprehensive, to cover the key areas a good candidate needs to master.

• Other instruments such as the current portfolios proposed should be used to complement the ENCHD and provide a more comprehensive view of the candidates’ teaching potential.

As a second major step in the certification process, a formal probationary process for new teachers should be introduced, as suggested previously by the OECD (2010). It can provide an opportunity for both new teachers and their employers to assess whether teaching is the right career for them. The satisfactory completion of a probationary period of one to two years teaching should be mandatory before certification (at the first level of the certification system as “competent” teacher), leading to the confirmation of the permanent teaching post. Beginning teachers should be given every opportunity to work in a stable and well-supported school environment, and the decision about certification should be taken by an accredited commission which is well trained and resourced for assessing new teachers (as suggested above).

Ensure links between developmental appraisal and career-progression appraisal

Developmental appraisal and appraisal for certification cannot be disconnected from each other. A possible link is that appraisal for certification needs to take into account the qualitative assessments produced through developmental appraisal, including the recommendations made for areas of improvement. Developmental appraisal should also have a function of identifying sustained underperformance. Similarly, results of teacher certification appraisals can also inform the professional development of individual teachers.

Diversify the instruments used for teacher appraisal, and reduce the weight of student standardised assessment results

In Mexico, there is a need to diversify the instruments used for teacher appraisal and give greater prominence to those instruments better capturing the quality of teachers’ practices in the classroom. There is a great tradition of the use of ENLACE results to
infer the quality of teachers but this needs to be complemented by sources which are richer to inform the improvement of teaching practices. Mancera and Schmelkes (2009) developed a detailed proposal for an in-service teacher appraisal system in Mexico, which has the school and the classroom at its core (Box 4.2). They propose a variety of instruments to better reflect teachers’ actual classroom practices, such as: classroom observation, teacher portfolios, evidence of student learning, objective settings and interviews. The National Board Resource Center (NBRC, 2010) also proposes multiple sources of evidence, such as: performance on authentic tasks that demonstrate learning of content; presentation of packages of evidence from formative assessments that show patterns of student improvement, along with contributing indicators like attendance, enrolment in advanced courses, graduation rates, pursuit of higher education, and workplace success.

Teacher appraisal should be firmly rooted in classroom observation. Most key aspects of teaching are displayed while teachers interact with their students in the classroom. It should also involve an opportunity for teachers to express their own views about their performance, and reflect on the personal, organisational and institutional factors that had an impact on their teaching, through a self-appraisal instrument. A portfolio would also allow teachers to mention specific ways in which they consider that their professional practices are promoting student learning, and could include elements such as: lesson plans and teaching materials, samples of student work and commentaries on student assessment examples, teacher’s self-reported questionnaires and reflection sheets (see Isoré, 2009). Given the high stakes of appraisal for certification, decisions must draw on several types of evidence, rely on multiple independent evaluators and should encompass the full scope of the work of the teacher.

As described earlier, ENLACE results are dominant as an instrument for teacher appraisal, leading to serious issues of unfairness across teachers and potential detrimental effects to pedagogical practices in schools. The particular context of Mexico which calls for “objective” measures to be used as well as the need to convey a strong message about the importance of student results, should continue to grant ENLACE results an important role in teacher appraisal. However, as school- and state-based capacities for teacher appraisal grow, ENLACE results can increasingly be taken into account in more qualitative ways as with the analyses of portfolios, self-appraisals and interviews to the teachers. Hence, we suggest that the weight of ENLACE results used in a “mechanical” way to appraise individual teachers be progressively reduced as capacity grows in the use of more sophisticated instruments such as classroom observation or portfolios. Of course, while ENLACE results continue to be “mechanically” used to assess individual teachers, there is a need for an urgent effort to contextualise the results for each teacher using the “value-added” techniques that are feasible at an individual teacher level (OECD, 2011b).

ENLACE results can be used more meaningfully at an aggregated school level, especially if “value-added” techniques are used (as suggested in OECD, 2011b). This suggests keeping the Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality in its component of collective stimuli, particularly if student progress (rather than student absolute results at a point in time) is used to measure each school’s merits. The elimination of the individual stimuli component of the Incentives Programme is recommended as it is faced with serious fairness issues (not all teachers can participate and ENLACE results do not reflect a teacher’s contribution to student learning) and rewards for ENLACE results are already provided in other components of the teacher appraisal system.
Secure linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school improvement

The linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school improvement need to be reinforced. Teacher appraisal is unlikely to produce effective results if it is not appropriately linked to professional development which, in turn, needs to be associated with school development if the improvement of teaching practices is to meet school’s needs. The schools that associate the identified individual needs with the school priorities, and that also manage to develop the corresponding professional development activities, are likely to perform well (Ofsted, 2006). Schools can learn from the strengths of effective teachers and implement professional development programmes that respond to their weaknesses.

This will require considerable improvements in the planning and provision of professional development in Mexico. As analysed in OECD (2010), Mexico needs to better prioritise the most effective types of professional development, and better co-ordinate the supply of programmes. At present, schools generally do not benefit from enough resources, capacity or autonomy to organise school-based training. This barrier could be overcome through:

- Strengthening networks of supervisors and technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs), and providing additional guidance to schools and directors on identifying needs and finding appropriate training; and
- Encouraging pilot projects on school-based training in some states and granting time allowances to teachers to participate in this training.

Ensure states are actively engaged in the design and implementation of teacher appraisal

A move towards a greater emphasis on the improvement (or developmental) function of teacher appraisal inevitably requires a greater involvement of the education structures closer to the schools, where the learning and teaching process takes place. A centrally-managed teacher appraisal system cannot capture the complexities of the learning and teaching process as well as the context in which it takes place. Feedback for improvement and recognising the circumstances of teachers’ work necessitate the involvement of local players.

This without doubt asks for a greater involvement of state educational authorities in teacher appraisal processes. Reflecting their responsibilities for the employment of teachers, state educational authorities should take the lead in organising teacher appraisal processes. This should be done in the context of a national framework with guidance, support and co-ordination from federal-level authorities (possibly the independent body suggested earlier to manage the teaching profession in Mexico). This would require establishing a state-level structure, possibly within an agency to take responsibility for educational evaluation in the state (as recommended in Chapter 5), to manage the teaching profession and teacher appraisal. This structure would organise accredited commissions to take responsibility for career-progression appraisal and would develop capacity in the supervision structure to support schools in their teacher appraisal processes. It could also take responsibility to externally validate school-based teacher developmental appraisal.
Develop capacity at the local level to engage in teacher appraisal and prepare teachers for their appraisal

The recommended greater emphasis on teacher appraisal procedures based on instruments closer to classroom practice entails the need of a significant investment in local capacity to lead teacher appraisal processes. Considerable time is needed for explanation of the system, communication, consensus building with the educational field about the indicators and norms that make up school or teacher quality, preparing and training of evaluators in terms of methodology, techniques and approaches, as well as providing time and resources for instrument development.

The approach suggested for career-progression appraisal requires considerable capacity at the state level to be developed in the agencies managing the teaching profession as well as significant training of the accredited commissions in charge of undertaking the appraisals. Evaluators in these commissions need to receive specific training for this function, in particular in standards-based methods for assessing evidence of teacher performance, and would need to be accredited by the proper organisation (i.e. the state agency managing the teaching profession). The success of the teacher appraisal system will greatly depend on the in-depth training of the evaluators. Experience from other countries suggests that evaluators should have a range of characteristics and competencies, including: (i) background in teaching; (ii) knowledge of educational evaluation theories and methodologies; (iii) knowledge of concepts of teaching quality; (iv) familiarity with systems and procedures of educational and school quality assurance, including the role of teaching quality in school quality and the role of teaching quality in personal development; (v) understanding of instrument development, including reliability and validity of observation and other assessment tools; (vi) awareness of the psychological aspects of evaluation; (vii) expertise with the quantitative rating of an assessment; and (viii) mastery of evaluation-related communication and feedback skills. Evaluators for career-progression evaluation should, in particular, be highly qualified in all these areas.

Evaluators should be trained to also provide constructive feedback to the teacher for further practice improvement. This is particularly important in the case of school leaders and supervisors as responsible for teacher developmental appraisal. A training offer targeted at school leaders and supervisors could focus on human resources development and school quality assurance, including school self-evaluation. This would involve personnel management, including aspects such as structured interactions with teachers, setting of objectives, linking school objectives to personnel development plans and providing feedback. Also, substantial activities for professional development on how to best use appraisal processes should be offered to teachers. It is vitally important that teachers are provided with support to understand the appraisal procedures and to benefit from appraisal results. It is also expected that appraisal and feedback become core aspects offered in initial teacher education.

Build pedagogical leadership capacity and give school leaders a role in teacher appraisal

Effective operation of teacher appraisal and its contribution to school development will depend to a great extent on the pedagogical leadership of school directors. It is difficult to envisage either productive teacher appraisal or effective school development without such leadership. Other education systems have increasingly recognised the importance of school leadership in raising standards, as substantiated in an OECD report.
Teacher appraisal will only succeed in raising educational standards if school directors take direct responsibility for exerting pedagogical leadership and for assuming the quality of education in their schools. Directors (as well as other members of the school management team) are also more likely to provide informal continuing feedback to the teacher throughout the year. More generally, they are essential to make performance improvement a strategic imperative, and help considering teacher appraisal indispensable to teacher and school broader policies (Heneman et al., 2007; Robinson, 2007; Pont et al., 2008). Hence, it is vital that school directors (and other members of the school management team) play a role in teacher appraisal. This has been suggested above through their leadership of school-based developmental teacher appraisal and their input into teacher appraisal for career progression.

The centrality of school leaders implies establishing a well-defined career for them, separate from that for teachers: defining clearly what is expected from a good school leader, encouraging initial leadership training, promoting a transparent selection and recruitment process, organising induction programmes, designing an appraisal process (as recommended in Chapter 5), and ensuring adequate in-service training. The concept of shared leadership needs to be more firmly embedded in schools to support existing directors, allow them to concentrate on their pedagogical role, but also promote the development of these skills among the school teachers (OECD, 2010).

Connect teacher appraisal to school evaluation

Analysis from TALIS (OECD, 2009) suggests that school evaluations can be an essential component of an evaluative framework which can foster and potentially shape teacher appraisal and feedback. Given that the systems of school evaluation and teacher appraisal and feedback have both the objective of maintaining standards and improving student performance, there are likely to be great benefits from the synergies between school evaluation and teacher appraisal. To achieve the greatest impact, the focus of school evaluation should either be linked to or have an effect on the focus of teacher appraisal (OECD, 2009). This indicates that the external evaluation of schools should comprise the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Also, as indicated above, school evaluation (along the lines suggested in Chapter 5) should comprise the external validation of the processes in place to organise developmental appraisal, holding the school director accountable as necessary. Linkages between school evaluation and teacher appraisal would also greatly benefit from the improvement of skills and competencies for evaluation within states, namely in the supervision structure and through the creation of an agency for evaluation.

In the context of school self-evaluation, it is also important to ensure the centrality of the appraisal of teaching quality and the appraisal of individual teachers. The quality of teaching and the learning results of students are predominantly regarded as a responsibility of groups of teachers or of the school as a whole. In this light, school self-evaluation needs also to put emphasis on assessing the appropriateness of mechanisms both for internal developmental appraisal and for following up on the results of appraisal for certification (or career progression).
Notes

1. The description in this section accounts for the most recent revision of 2011.

2. The level of marginalisation is measured by the Marginalisation Index of CONAPO (the National Population Council). It has four basic dimensions: 1) Education (illiteracy, proportion of the population without primary education completed); 2) Housing (houses without basic services such as drainage, running water, electricity, concrete floor, or whether the household is overcrowded); 3) Distribution of population (proportion of the population in localities with less than 5 000 inhabitants) and; 4) Income (proportion of the population earning less than two minimum salaries). For further information see CONAPO (2010).
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Chapter 5

School evaluation

There is no well-established, systematic approach to school evaluation in Mexico. School-level aggregated data, including results in ENLACE assessments, provide general information on student performance against state and national averages, but not on the context faced by schools. Schools are encouraged to engage in self-evaluation and advice and instruments are provided nationally. Involvement is voluntary except in those cases where the school takes part in one of the federal education programmes, such as the Quality Schools Programme. No systematic external school evaluation exists. There is a long-established tradition of oversight of school work by supervisors and other personnel external to the school, but their role has been largely associated with ensuring schools’ compliance with regulations and other administrative tasks.

Particularly positive features of school evaluation include the increasing policy attention to school evaluation; the growing emphasis on training in school leadership; the support for school self-evaluation provided at the federal level; the potential of existing human resources to evaluate schools and promote improvement; and the potential of the new management information system (RNAME) to include both quantitative and qualitative evaluative statements at individual school level. The key challenges for Mexico are to improve the role and function of supervisors; introduce more systematic school-level evaluation; build capacity among directors, other school leaders and school supervisors; ensure more focus on the quality of learning and teaching and not only outcomes in tests; provide greater levels of autonomy to schools; improve the appraisal of school leaders; and establish clear lines of accountability for the ways in which that autonomy is exercised.
This chapter analyses approaches to school evaluation within the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework. School evaluation refers to the evaluation of individual schools as organisations. This chapter covers both internal school evaluation (i.e. school self-evaluation) and external school evaluation. It considers the brief history of evaluation in the school context and describes attempts over the last 20 years to introduce elements of evaluation practices, notably those associated with school self-evaluation. It sets out the challenges which remain to be faced if Mexico is to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to school evaluation which will contribute to school improvement and hence to improvement in the life chances of Mexican students.

**Context and features**

**Overview**

Mexico, as a federal country, has devolved the responsibility for school evaluation to states. Decisions on whether school self-evaluation should be mandatory, on how self-evaluation may be complemented by some form of external evaluation and on how the impact of school evaluation may be measured, all rest with states.

There is no well-established, systematic approach to school evaluation in Mexico. School-level aggregated data, including results in ENLACE assessments, some over a three-year period, provide general information on student performance against state and national averages, but not on the context within which outcomes are being achieved. Schools are encouraged to engage in self-evaluation and good-quality advice and instruments have been provided nationally. Involvement is voluntary except in those cases where the school takes part in one of the federal education programmes, such as the Quality Schools Programme (PEC). In this case, schools are required to produce a report on quality and an improvement plan as a condition of receiving the additional resources available through the specific programme. No systematic external evaluation approach exists to support and comment on self-evaluation or to report on the quality of education in non-programme schools. There is a long-established tradition of oversight of school work by supervisors and other personnel external to the school, but their role has been largely associated with ensuring schools’ compliance with statutory duties and other administrative tasks. Schools have little scope to determine their own ways of meeting the needs of their students and their local community. School directors may lack the capacities required to drive school improvement and are said to spend most of their time on administrative tasks.

**School management and leadership**

In Mexico, the school director is the person in charge of the functioning, organisation and management of the school. The Country Background Report for Mexico’s participation in the Review (SEP and INEE, forthcoming) indicates that the main tasks of school directors are: guiding the schools’ pedagogical transformation; analysing progress of student learning; and supporting staff development (as defined in the set of desirable competencies professional development should promote in school directors, according to the National System of Continuous Training and Professional Betterment of Basic Education In-service Teachers).

The director is typically not the only person taking a leadership role in schools. At the lower secondary level, there is also a deputy director. Larger primary schools and lower secondary schools may also have dedicated technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs) or
benefit from the services of ATPs covering several schools. The role of ATPs varies considerably across schools ranging from administrative roles to pedagogical leadership (see Chapter 1 for further details). Some administrative functions in schools are also undertaken by teachers who do not, however, have formal responsibility for these functions (OECD, 2010). An additional advisory body established in schools with at least four to five teachers and chaired by the director is the School Technical Council (Consejo Técnico Escolar), which makes recommendations in a range of pedagogical areas. Also, in lower secondary schools it is typical to establish academies (academias) bringing together all the teachers belonging to a given academic area or specialty (see Chapter 1 for further details).

Schools also have a School Council of Social Participation (Consejo Social de Participación Social) to ensure the participation of the school community in the school’s activities. The council has a wide membership, including parents, teachers, union members, members of school management, and members of the relevant community. These councils have some administrative, pedagogical and relational roles but these are not fully implemented (see Chapter 1 for further details).

*A tradition of supervision as the external component of school evaluation*

Each state organises its own system of supervision of schools which links individual schools to state educational authorities. Practices vary across states but follow a common pattern. School administration by states is structured according to geographical areas at two levels: sectors (sectores) and zones (zonas). Sectors consist of a number of zones (about 10) and each zone comprises a number of schools (typically between 8 and 20 schools). Supervisors (or Inspectors, as commonly called at the lower secondary level) take responsibility for each zone (and the respective schools) and report to Heads of Sector (Jefes de Sector, sometimes also called General Supervisors or General Inspectors). Supervisors function as the direct link between schools and educational authorities, assess the compliance of schools with educational policies, promote school development and support the activities of schools (UNESCO-IBE, 2010). Another function at the lower secondary level of a more instructional nature is that of Head of Teaching (Jefe de Enseñanza), to assist the work of the supervisor in specific disciplinary areas. Supervisors cover specific subsectors (e.g. technical lower secondary schools, Indigenous primary schools, communitarian courses) and the relevant private schools in their zones. There are also technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs) and technical administrative advisors (asesores técnico-administrativos, ATAs) at the zone and sector levels who support the work of supervisors and heads of sector in pedagogical and administrative issues respectively. In addition to the supervision structure, other groups provide external support to individual schools: state support teams to implement specific educational programmes; teacher training centres; and support for the education of special needs students. The appointment of school directors, heads of teaching, supervisors and heads of sector is done according to the Vertical Promotion System (Escalafón Vertical), which has been in place since 1973 (see Chapter 4 for further details).

Mexico has a long tradition of school supervision dating back to the later decades of the 19th century. As with many long-established inspectorates, in Mexico supervisors had a number of roles and functions, relating to regulations, control, administrative operation of schools, though also, unlike other inspectorates, supervision of the political and ideological standpoints of teachers. The history of supervisors’ roles through almost 140 years is well documented in the INEE report *Hacia un nuevo modelo de supervisión escolar para las primarias mexicanas* (INEE, 2008). The final note in the history, relating
to 2008 onwards – that is, in the wake of the Alliance for Quality in Education (ACE) agreement – indicates that supervisors’ functions and tasks will be to bring proportionate support to schools and be involved in systematic ways in school evaluation. However, again unlike other long-established inspectorates, such as in England, Scotland and the Netherlands, supervision principles and processes in Mexico have not gone through steady and consistent changes decade on decade so that duties and tasks remain in step with current educational need. The result would appear to be that supervisors’ roles do not respond appropriately to the needs either of the educational system or of young people in the Mexico of the 21st century.

**A range of initiatives to promote school self-evaluation**

**Guidance and tools for school self-evaluation**

Mexico has, at federal level, made a number of valiant attempts over the last 12-15 years to provide some focus on school self-evaluation and to develop models and specific support materials to that end. In a laudable, outward-looking approach, research was undertaken in the early years of the 2000s to find ideas from other countries which were further along the path of school evaluation. This work resulted in the production of a series of support materials for self-evaluation. These included:


- An adaptation for the Mexican context of materials, including quality indicators, developed in Scotland and known by the title *How Good is Our School?* (HMIE, 1995, 2002, 2006 and forthcoming), translated as *¿Qué tan Buena es nuestra Escuela?* (SEP, 2003). These materials and indicators were intended to provide support for schools engaging in self-evaluation and had a print run of 40 000 copies.

- A publication underlining the key features of schools with the highest academic results – *How Can I Improve my School?* (*¿Cómo Puedo Mejorar mi Escuela?*) (SEP, 2007), and including a further adaptation of aspects of the Scottish system representing indicators used by inspectors in that country (which in that country are the same as those used for self-evaluation). One hundred thousand copies were distributed.

**Self-evaluation as a requirement of federal education programmes**

Over the last 15 years a number of federal educational programmes have been put in place, all with the intention of improving schools through a focus on management, self-evaluation and planning, and with a concomitant focus on the development of a school project. Individual programmes relate to educational management (*Programa de Gestión Escolar*, introduced in 1995), quality in schools (*Programa Escuelas de Calidad*, 2001), security in schools (*Programa Escuela Segura*, 2006) and full-time schools (*Programa Escuelas de Tiempo Completo*, 2006) (see Chapter 1 for other examples). These are compensatory federal programmes providing support for individual establishments, mostly in the form of additional federal resources. It is a condition of involvement in such...
programmes that a school carry out a self-evaluation exercise and produce a strategic plan for school improvement. This plan is variably known as the strategic plan for school transformation (Plan Estratégico de Transformación Escolar – PETE), the school project (Proyecto Escolar) or strategic plan for school improvement (Plan Estratégico de Mejora Escolar). An annual plan of work (Plan Anual de Trabajo) is also a requirement. The Country Background Report (SEP and INEE, forthcoming) indicates that some 66 000 schools are involved in the major programmes, and it can be assumed that at least this number engage in some form of self-evaluation.

Recent developments in self-evaluation and accreditation of quality

In 2007, the federal government saw the need to introduce an education element to the general total quality management approach to services (National Model for Total Quality in Mexico, Modelo Nacional para la Calidad Total de México). This educational element – “System for School Self-evaluation for Quality Management” (shown in Box 5.1) – was published in 2007 as a collection of guides, support materials and instruments for self-evaluation and distributed to all primary and lower secondary schools in the country. Most recently, the SEP recommended to state education authorities in 2010 that they draw up and implement a strategic plan for the use of the system in all state educational establishments.

**Box 5.1 System for School Self-evaluation for Quality Management**

(Sistema de Autoevaluación de Centros Escolares para la Gestión de Calidad)

The system suggests an introduction of self-evaluation by working through four phases of activities in each school relating to:

- Awareness-raising among school staff of key elements of the purposes and practice of self-evaluation, with a recommendation for supporting training sessions;
- The formation of a school self-evaluation working group charged with co-ordinating activities relating to gathering, analysing and interpreting evidence;
- Implementation of self-evaluation through a process of identifying school strengths and weaknesses from the evidence gathered and analysed, producing a self-evaluation report and establishing improvement priorities; and
- The creation of an improvement plan and improvement groups to develop action plans and stimulate improvement through the implementation of these plans.

Detailed advice on how to carry out evaluations are included and intended to be applied in eight key aspects of school work, namely in resources, leadership, planning, information and knowledge, personnel, processes, social responsibility and competitiveness. Each of these aspects is to be awarded a number of points to give a school total. Questionnaires for teachers, students and parents are included in the materials.

**An initiative on the accreditation of schools currently in progress**

Since 2009, the SEP has been considering the development and introduction of an accreditation system for school quality – the “National Accreditation System for Basic Education Schools” (Sistema Nacional de Acreditación de Centros Escolares de Educación Básica, SNACEEB). Through SNACEEB, the intention is to focus on management standards in support of school self-evaluation and to introduce a more formalised approach to external school evaluation. The dimensions taken into
consideration by the management standards are presently: institutional philosophy; management of senior staff members, teachers, support and administrative personnel; teaching and learning processes, and social relationships. This would appear to be drawing on principles established by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), in which the ISO 9000 series deals with the fundamentals of quality management systems. In the paper presenting this project, authors make clear that standards will first have to be established, and then a way of assessing whether these standards have been reached will require to be developed.

**INEE supports school evaluation with tools and relevant information**

INEE is contributing to school evaluation in two main ways. The first consists of the development of conceptual and methodological tools for self-evaluation, to be used by school agents – supervisors, directors, teachers, students and parents. These are in addition to those developed by the SEP. The tools include application manuals with information on the theoretical foundations, considerations and recommendations for their application, marking procedures, interpretation of the data gathered and activities suggested for the use of evaluation results to improve schools. Some examples include: (i) “Series of tools to assess functions of the primary school principal”; (ii) “Assessment of parental participation in primary schools”; (iii) “Assessment of the school’s overall functioning”; (iv) “Series of tools for assessment of the school environment in primary schools”; and (v) “Series of tools for assessment and self-assessment of primary school education agents”.

The second relates to studies about the conditions for the provision of educational services in collaboration with state authorities and schools. These involve data gathering by means of context questionnaires directed to parents, directors, teachers and students, and applied at the same time as the EXCALE assessment. Aspects analysed include the sufficiency and pertinence of didactic materials, the quality of education infrastructure, the adequacy of resources (human, financial and organisational) and school processes (teaching, management, teacher training and relationships with the community).

**Use of data for school evaluation**

A newly developed management information system – the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (Registro Nacional de Alumnos, Maestros y Escuelas, RNAME) has been introduced in the education system (see Chapter 6). The “schools” (“Escuelas”) part of this database – “School Information National System” (Sistema Nacional de Información de Escuelas) – contains useful information about most schools in the country and represents a significant step in opening up information on schools to the general public and to parents in local communities. Each individual school entry includes administrative information, covering:

- Basic details, such as the type of school, its address and location, including a map, and the name of the director;
- Numbers and groupings of students, numbers of teachers and other education workers in the establishment;
- An indication of the federal educational programmes in which the school is involved; and
- Information about school resources and infrastructure.
In addition, a number of pieces of information which start to get to quality issues are also included. These comprise:

- Indicators showing percentages of students who leave school early (deserción) and who repeat a year of schooling (reprobación); and
- In some cases only at the moment – relating to primary schools – a statistical annex with information on:
  - The percentages of students, by grade, obtaining each of the four possible performance levels in ENLACE assessments of Spanish and mathematics over three years and of history for 2010, set against state and national averages;
  - The ENLACE averages achieved by all the students in each grade across each subject, with state and national comparators; and
  - The percentage of schools with ENLACE averages below those noted for the school in question.

**Strengths**

*Improving school management and creating conditions for strengthened school evaluation has received significant policy attention*

Overall, it is clear that the quality of school management with a focus on improvement has been receiving some significant attention from policy makers. Developments over recent years have built on established efforts, such as the Quality Schools Programme (PEC) (see Chapter 1). This national education programme is logical and laudable in principle, with its requirement to focus schools on good decision-making, shared leadership, teamwork, community participation and accountability. The fact that each participating school is required to engage in self-evaluation which results in a school improvement plan (Strategic School Transformation Plan, PETE) and an Annual Work Plan (PAT) has encouraged activity in these important aspects of school work. Next steps will be to ensure that there is more general coverage of such principles in all schools and that a system is put in place to ensure that the self-evaluation and improvement planning work are of good quality and have a clear impact on school outcomes and learning processes.

In this context also, the current development of standards for the management of schools and the plan to create a school accreditation system by SEP-DGEP demonstrate a continuing recognition that improving the quality of leadership and management in schools must contribute to improvement. These could constitute a good basis to strengthen self-evaluation processes and to introduce a comprehensive model of external school evaluation. It will be important for those responsible for operationalising the accreditation system to build on existing good work rather than creating an entirely new set of principles and materials.

*There is a good focus on training in school leadership as a stimulus to self-evaluation and improvement*

There are some initiatives to strengthen school leadership programmes and training courses for school directors. Over the last few years, leadership training has taken place for directors of schools in the upper secondary (media superior) sector, and the intention
is that such training be rolled out to directors of basic education schools. The OECD report *Improving Schools: Strategies for Action in Mexico* (OECD, 2010) describes the situation as follows:

*In the case of school directors in basic education, some steps have been taken to develop certification for directors within the realm of the PEC programmes. Director certification involves creating a set of standards that describe the competencies or levels of performance required of directors. The objective is to prepare a Technical Norm of Labour Competency for School Directors of Basic Education (Norma técnica de competencia laboral para los directores de educación de básica), currently being developed. The Technical Norm is to include three types of competencies that the school director should have to co-ordinate: elaboration; execution; and follow-up and evaluation of the five-yearly strategic plans of schools (Plan Estratégico de Transformación Escolar, PETE). For 2012, the government’s goal is to certify 50 000 school directors through collaboration with SNTE and civil society, although these developments are slow and have not yet been introduced.*

The awareness among policy makers of the key role of leadership in the improvement agenda is well sustained and there is still an intention to carry out leadership and management training. Action, however, has not yet been taken.

**School self-evaluation is well supported at federal level**

Over the last 10-15 years there has been considerable focus on school self-evaluation as one way of drawing attention to quality and promoting improvement. Mexico has shown itself open to outside influences and there has been good research on systems and practices in other countries relating to self-evaluation. A useful decision was made to look at the Scottish model particularly and adapt instruments and some of the processes for the Mexican context.

The materials produced in support of self-evaluation at school level are detailed, comprehensive and of good quality. They include advice, instruments and options for self-evaluation and for the construction and implementation of an effective school improvement plan as one of the outcomes of the self-evaluation process. These instruments and materials could easily and usefully also serve as instruments for the accreditation system planned or for other forms of external evaluation of schools, since there is a need to ensure that all players in the system speak a common language of quality. In addition the tools developed by INEE are a good complement as they permit schools to engage in the more detailed self-evaluation of particular aspects of schooling such as the school environment or relations with parents.

Another positive development has been the development of the System for School Self-evaluation for Quality Management by the SEP (see Box 5.1). In its overview form, the system conforms with established practices relating to self-evaluation and school improvement planning in many countries. The associated instruments and advice, which are developments of previous materials, are practical, suitable and of good presentational quality. The system suggests the introduction of a points system, which may be helpful, although it may unnecessarily complicate matters. It may have the unintended outcome of contributing to an assumption that self-evaluation is a rather mechanistic process with easily applicable quantitative elements leading to a pseudo-statistical overall evaluation. In reality self-evaluation is very difficult, requiring the gathering of appropriate evidence,
triangulation of different sets of evidence and fine judgements of quality which inevitably have a contextual if not subjective element.

**Existing human resources have considerable potential to evaluate schools and promote improvement**

A number of key school agencies and types of personnel already exist in Mexico with the potential to support self-evaluation in all schools and undertake new roles in a more complete effective school evaluation model. These include:

- Supervisors, technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs) and other zonal and sectoral personnel as described earlier, whose roles might be clarified, redefined and made more consistent and systematic within an evaluation framework; and

- The School Technical Council (*Consejo Técnico Escolar*) in each school, new Teacher Academies and the School Council of Social Participation (*Consejo Escolar de Participación Social*), all of which might, from their differing views and understandings, contribute qualitatively both to school evaluation and to resulting action on priorities for improvement.

There is evidence of some supervisors working effectively in classrooms, accepted by teachers, providing feedback and discussing observations with school directors, although the OECD Review Team also heard evidence that supervisors lay most emphasis on administrative and bureaucratic details which prevent a clear focus on learning, teaching, student outcomes and general school improvement. The OECD Review Team also heard evidence of the positive impact in one state of local teacher centres which are running specific workshops for teachers and contributing to the spread of good practice.

**There are examples of significant developments at state level in school evaluation**

Indications from interviewed personnel from the SEP Undersecretariats, Directorate Generals, UPEPE and INEE and the evidence from the Country Background Report (SEP and INEE, forthcoming) suggest that there are some examples of activities in a small number of states which focus on aspects of school-level evaluation. Some initiatives were reported not to have been sustained. Others were reported to be modest in nature. Yet others may have the promise to expand into more coherent and systematic approaches with the potential for impacting the quality of provision. The OECD Review Team met state personnel (in Puebla and the state of Mexico) who were actively seeking to improve their knowledge of schools and ways of evaluating the quality of provision and outcomes. However, it is clear that states require to be more active and accountable in this aspect and that more information is required at federal level on related state activities.

**The new management information system (RNAME) has much potential to include both quantitative and qualitative evaluative statements at individual school level**

The newly established database of information (RNAME) provides useful information on each school, including quantitative data on student outcomes in the ENLACE assessments. These arrangements represent a good step forward in providing parents, local communities, educationists and the general public with some key information about schools both globally and individually. The inclusion of school-level data on students’ results in ENLACE assessments over a three-year period is a very
useful start to school evaluation, which must have, at its centre, evidence from the quality of student outcomes. Further developments in showing these results not only against state and national averages but also against the averages of schools with similar characteristics are at an embryonic planning stage.

The potential is there to include, at some later date, information relating for example to the quality of learning processes, of partnership with parents and the community and indeed of school leadership, all of which will contribute to a more rounded picture of the quality of an individual school and promote the celebration of successful schools, whatever their context and circumstances.

Challenges

There is no permeating culture of school evaluation

The notion of school evaluation is not well embedded in Mexican education principles and practices. On the contrary, it appears that attempts to introduce evaluation in this context have had first to counter strong feelings of apprehension and wariness among teachers and school directors. Evaluation or inspection has been associated with negativity and censure, not with improvement. This pronounced conceptual belief has detracted from efforts at federal level to introduce a system of school evaluation and may have resulted in an over-reliance in the power of weakly supported self-evaluation to effect change. Mexico therefore has a considerable task ahead to overcome previous negative associations and craft an approach which is more like the approach, current in many countries, which associates inspection and evaluation with development and improvement.

Overall, there is as yet limited understanding and even awareness, beyond that of a few experts, of key issues relating to school evaluation which, when well done and including all the necessary system components, can:

- Have the power to drive an improvement agenda;
- Encapsulate other forms of evaluation, using them also to present a balanced view of what constitutes school quality;
- Help empower key stakeholders, providing them with insight, informed views and ownership of issues which they can affect and thereby improve;
- Help harness the potential of parents and the community to support the school’s drive for improvement;
- Provide parents and the general public with well-founded reports on quality, responding at the local level to their right to know the quality of education provided at their local school;
- Facilitate, within an accountability framework, the production of qualitative reports at broader levels – municipalities, zones, state, national – to lay alongside quantitative data and reports, such as from international student assessments; and
- Contribute in an informed way to needs analyses at system levels to inform local, state and national policy makers both on the true impact of educational policies and to indicate potential future policy needs (see Chapter 6).
A comprehensive system of school evaluation is lacking, including a meaningful approach to external school evaluation

The key challenge for Mexico is to develop a comprehensive system of school evaluation. Overall, key components of a successful policy development and implementation for school evaluation and improvement are missing from the approaches currently adopted in Mexico.

A sustained meaningful system of external school evaluation is lacking. Currently, the external monitoring of schools is undertaken by the supervision system in place in the different states. However, this system does not constitute an authentic approach to external school evaluation. Supervisors may or may not have an educational background and may play one or more of a number of roles, depending on municipal and state arrangements and at times on arrangements made at more local levels. Their roles may include: observing individual teachers and discussing teaching and learning strategies; discussing learning and teaching with school directors; supporting school directors and other managers in the creation and implementation of a school plan; and appraising the work of school directors. The OECD Review Team had evidence of all such activities happening across the schools visited in the course of the Review visit. However, it was reported that in general there is much variation in the quality of advice and support supervisors may be able to offer schools. The capacity of supervisors in general to engage in school evaluations in ways which may promote school improvement as well as resulting in accurate evaluation of the quality of a school’s work is limited under present conditions.

An evaluative report of a study of supervision in Mexico, undertaken under the auspices of UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (Calvo Pontón et al., 2002), drew attention to the lack of solid information about numbers, positions and roles of supervisors, leading to superficiality and subjectivity in strategic discussions about supervision. It indicated that supervisors might well fulfil a useful role in supporting school staff and in promoting improvement. However, it suggested that in reality the conditions for effectively fulfilling such functions were lacking. It further highlighted the lack of a strong core of professionally trained supervisors, and a tendency for supervisors to focus on administrative, bureaucratic and syndicate activities which take schools’ time and focus away from the improvement of outcomes.

That report goes on to describe three promising supervision development projects at the time in the states of Aguascalientes, Chihuahua and Nuevo Léon. The OECD Review did not include a visit to these states, or others, including Veracruz, Chiapas and Oaxaca (only the states of Mexico and Puebla were visited), mentioned at federal level as having made some progress in school evaluation, or at least evaluation of the educational projects undertaken by schools in federal programmes. However, from discussions held with personnel from SEP, INEE and others, and from study of the Country Background Report (SEP and INEE, forthcoming) associated with the Review, it would appear that far from moving steadily forward, some promising projects have withered. No strong, modern system of school evaluation appears to be existing or planned.

There are opportunities for states to make flexible and innovative use of existing human resources, including technical pedagogical advisors (ATPs), heads of teaching, supervisors, or heads of sector in ways which can galvanise and transform schools, engaging in forms of school evaluation which are likely to lead to school improvement. However, little evidence was brought forward to the OECD Review Team to suggest that the development of an external school evaluation model using the considerable numbers of such personnel is on the horizon.
What currently exists focuses well on student outcomes. They are and remain key in any evaluation of quality. However, a clear challenge for Mexico is to evaluate the quality of those outcomes in ways which provide meaningful information to stakeholders and to include other outcomes and processes in a more holistic evaluation. The present system does not include qualitative aspects which are reliable and validated and which contribute to telling the full story of any school. Without external evaluation, there is a danger that judgements of school quality will be made on the basis of very narrow information. External school and system evaluation provide a narrative which can encompass the complexity of a school and give stakeholders and the general public a rounded view. Within the process should sit the school’s self-evaluation which together with external evaluation can work towards making a difference for children.

As previously indicated, Mexico has sensibly looked outwards to other countries for ideas about school evaluation and, in particular, has adapted features of the self-evaluation processes from the Scottish educational system. That system has other components, however, which are critical factors in its success in leading to school improvement and which include support and challenge from local authorities and a rigorous system of external evaluation.

Also, without a clear focus on outcomes and learning processes, consistent and systematic models focusing on these key outcomes, good state planning, adequate staff development and training for all personnel and some additional objective verification procedures based on real contact with schools, it is probable that the most recent approaches and plans will have at best only very minimal impact on school quality and student outcomes and at worst generate an industry of work which continues to detract time and effort from the most important features of successful education.

School self-evaluation practices remain incipient

The instruments and materials produced by SEP for self-evaluation purposes are very good. However, the challenge for Mexico is to ensure that these useful materials are well understood, are used consistently in all schools, have sustained and significant impact and play a broader role in use by personnel for external school evaluation. The reality is that this work did not result in any sustained and consistent approach to self-evaluation across the country. Indeed, the plethora of guides, materials and instruments, however well-conceived and valuable, will undoubtedly have confused schools as they searched for the recommended approach and were faced with too many options. Federal personnel were unable to provide the OECD Review Team with any even rough figures on the numbers of schools which have used the materials or engaged in self-evaluation in general. Some data are available on the numbers of schools in various federal programmes which require self-evaluation as a condition of acceptance into the programme, but beyond that, no indication of penetration of the materials or concept was available. In the small sample of schools visited by the OECD Review Team, few directors and teachers had any knowledge of these materials whether or not they were involved in national programmes.

In the context of self-evaluation undertaken as part of federal educational programmes, no evidence was presented to the OECD Review Team about the quality of that self-evaluation and resulting school improvement plans and little on the impact of the programmes themselves as a whole. The plans seen in a number of schools were certainly comprehensive, but with an over-emphasis on administrative work and under-emphasis on the quality of learning and teaching and other key aspects liable to contribute to improved student outcomes. In addition, the association of self-evaluation with federal
educational programmes may leave other schools with the impression that self-evaluation is only for schools in difficulties or requiring much support in building up infrastructure or resources.

Regarding the development of the National Accreditation System for Basic Education Schools (SNACEEB), if it is introduced, it will be important for the SEP not to reinvent a wheel which they have already reinvented more than once. Choosing indicators already developed (such as those proposed in the System for School Self-evaluation for Quality Management) would be a sensible approach in the shorter term. In addition, a clear challenge for the designers of this system will be to create a forward-thinking, challenging model which eschews the rather mechanistic and quantitative approach of total quality management systems and focuses instead on flexibility, innovation, fluidity and responsiveness to local need in the context of education, not the business world.

**There is a current lack of reporting on qualitative aspects of schools’ work**

A clear challenge for the Mexican system is to find effective ways of reporting on the quality of education at all levels. There is a current lack of reporting on qualitative aspects of the work of individual schools for parents and other stakeholders. There is as yet no way of reporting on the quality of educational processes and in general interpreting the quantitative data in ways which provide a fuller picture presenting the actual quality of education at school level. There are therefore no good opportunities to aggregate school-level reports to present a picture of the quality of education at local, state-wide and national levels, such as exists in many countries. These reports might usefully be carriers of good practice, specifically helpful to school directors and to classroom teachers.

An accepted purpose of evaluation is to inform policy makers of the real impact of policy at the point of delivery (the school and classroom) and provide informed qualitative views on priorities for future policies. Without a reporting system in place providing such qualitative information, there is a danger that policy makers may be over-dependent on ideology or pseudo-scientific assessment data and as a result thrash around looking for the latest “educational remedy”.

Also, the data which became publicly available through RNAME represent an undoubted advance in reporting on the quality of outcomes in individual schools. An especially good feature is the inclusion of data over three years, which allows the reader to see trends and make some conclusions about improvement. However, without more sophisticated quantitative analyses or a qualitative element to place alongside the data, there is the risk of simplistic interpretation of what constitutes quality at school level, arising from an incomplete narrative telling the “story” of the school in its particular context and circumstances.

**Student outcomes published at the school level are not contextualised**

Another concern relates to making fair comparisons of student outcomes across schools. At the moment, raw averages of ENLACE assessment results are published at the school level, inevitably leading the media to publish school rankings which do not take account of schools’ specific circumstances. This can considerably distort considerations about the effectiveness of each school as raw results do not reflect the value added by schools to student results. The dangers of using raw league table rankings to compare the performance of schools (and therefore making ENLACE results “high stakes” for schools) are wide-ranging and should be recognised and avoided. As discussed and documented in Chapter 3, these result in teachers and schools adopting
practices that maximise the “result” for their class/school, such as: (i) teachers focussing only on the learning outcomes that will be assessed in the national assessment rather than the full range of competencies of the curriculum (“teaching to the test”); (ii) teachers ignoring the importance of cross-curricular learning outcomes; (iii) classroom time being spent practising for the test; and (iv) schools encouraging only the more able students to be present when the test is administered, etc. (see also Santiago et al., 2011). See Morris (2011) and Rosenkvist (2010) for a detailed discussion.

Federal personnel informed the OECD Review Team that some thinking was being done about developing models to compare schools with similar characteristics and models to measure the value-added of schools so that some comparisons of school results could be made more meaningfully. This would help to prevent school-level student assessment results merely confirming the well-established fact that young people from more socio-economically advantaged backgrounds perform at higher academic levels than those from less advantaged backgrounds. Specific planning for the development of these kinds of statistical data was not yet in place.

**Schools have limited autonomy**

Despite the national claim that decentralisation has been a feature of the Mexican education system for 20 years, it appears that schools have little real autonomy in what they do and how they do it, in terms, for example, of the curriculum and of meeting students’ needs (see Chapter 1 for further details). In basic education, textbooks are created at federal level and the curriculum is prescribed from the centre (see Chapter 2). This, together with the concentrated preparation for ENLACE and PISA, may be resulting in curricular content which does not relate to local circumstances. The OECD Review Team found evidence of advice to teachers on how to improve test results by getting students to practise test items (see also Chapter 3). Although the desired outcome is very acceptable, the narrow focus on improving test results by increased practice in completing test items is liable to have a significant narrowing effect on learning programmes and takes away much of the limited existing school autonomy in providing a curriculum responsive to the locality and to individuals. In addition, the strong tradition and focus in Mexico on school compliance with regulations, intended for the good of students, has had the unintended outcome of directing school attention and activities away from the most important tasks of improving learning processes and meeting students’ needs.

Schools have little autonomy in other important areas, which has a significant impact on their capacity to take steps to improve. Critically, this includes the recruitment and appointment of teachers and control of enough of the school’s finances to promote ownership of decision-making and responsibility for the impact of actions taken.

**Accountability of states for the provision of quality education is scarce**

At state level, considerable autonomy already exists. However, an important challenge is to find ways of ensuring that states are effectively accountable to federal government and the Mexican people for the quality of provision in their schools and the outcomes achieved. Although responsibility for school evaluation has been devolved to states, federal arrangements do not require state governments to report on the quality of basic education in their schools, a lack which undoubtedly affects the seriousness with which state governments approach school evaluation. There is apparently no recognisable means of directly determining how well – or otherwise – states are able to report on the
quality of the education in the establishments in their jurisdiction. There are no systematic and consistent approaches to school evaluation at the state level. Also, no study of the value-for-money achieved through current arrangements relating to school supervision has been forthcoming, with the result that there is no clear indication of how effectively the large sums of money involved are being spent.

A number of states have set up an evaluation agency, similar to INEE at federal level, but it appears that little consistent work has so far been done to ensure that such agencies play a significant role in stimulating improved quality of processes and outcomes, evaluating outcomes in a variety of ways, spreading good practice examples and reporting both to their general public and to federal authorities on the quality of schools and education in general.

School directors’ work is too focused on ensuring compliance with administrative requirements

The set of desirable competencies for school directors developed by the SEP are wide-ranging and highly aspirational. However, there appears to be a dislocation between, on the one hand, the stated tasks and expected competencies and, on the other, the reality of the work undertaken by school directors on a day-to-day basis and the competencies they have or are able to demonstrate in practice. Administration of school services such as ensuring safe infrastructure and compliance with legislation appears to be the actual focus of school directors’ work. While such aspects are important for the context of learning and for a certain type of accountability, they leave little time for school directors to focus on aspects which have a greater effect on quality.

Many research papers and other reports such as the McKinsey Report (McKinsey & Company, 2007) on the world’s top-performing systems clearly support the view that, in order to improve student outcomes, personnel in schools must have a clear focus on learning. The point is well presented in the Donaldson report on the future of teachers and teaching in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011):

The importance of leadership for school improvement is well researched and documented. The findings from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (OECD, 2009) suggest that effective school leadership makes an important contribution to the development of other teachers in a school. The findings of McKinsey & Company suggest that, “the overall performance of a school almost never exceeds the quality of its leadership and management”. School leaders who demonstrate strong leadership are more likely to use further professional development to address teachers’ weaknesses, foster better student-teacher relations and teacher collaboration, and recognise teachers for successful innovative teaching practices.

The appraisal of school leaders is not adequate

There does not appear to be a rigorous and transparent system for the appointment of school directors. In addition, the quality of their work once appointed is generally evaluated through their voluntary participation in the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM). Within that context, directors are appraised through a section of test items relating specifically to school management. Such a system may allow authorities to gain a view of some directors’ knowledge of law and theories of management. However, it could not come close to showing levels of those types of leadership qualities required to engage the school in effective school self-evaluation, drive improvement in key processes
such as learning and teaching, galvanise parents and the locality to be part of the learning
community and, as a result of such actions, improve both the outcomes and the life
chances of the young people served by the school. It is reported that school supervisors
may have a role in appraising such director activities, but that such functions are not
routinely fulfilled.

**Policy recommendations**

The scale of the challenges faced by Mexico in modernising and improving its
education system for the benefit of young people and the country as a whole is
undoubtedly extremely daunting. Policy makers have made many attempts to improve the
system over the last 20 years. The time is appropriate to focus on a number of key issues
which are likely to support improvement and sustain it into the future. In the context of
school improvement based on effective school-level evaluations, a number of
recommendations are made below.

**Develop a long-term plan and take action to introduce a comprehensive and
objective system of school evaluation**

Longer-term planning should include the aim of the introduction of a comprehensive
system of school evaluation. This involves taking the positive individual elements which
already exist and developing them into a fully-rounded model of school evaluation, with
all the necessary components. These would include at least the following elements:

- Ensuring that national advice on self-evaluation penetrates the system and
  promotes the involvement of all schools;
- Reinforcing the awareness not only of self-evaluation processes but of the rigour
  required to make self-evaluation lead to improvement;
- Ensuring that all states recommend or require all schools to be involved in self-
  evaluation;
- Promoting and encouraging states to have mechanisms through which they can
  engage in external evaluation of schools using transparent and known criteria;
- Ensuring that key messages from other forms of evaluation and assessment –
  students' results, teacher appraisals and school director appraisal – are linked to
  create a holistic evaluation of the school;
- Strengthening and broadening the role of supervisors as potential external
  evaluators – to play a key role in school evaluation and thereby support
  improvement at classroom and school levels; and
- Using the results of school evaluations to create authoritative reports for policy
  makers at state and federal level on the impact of policy and on system needs.

Any comprehensive system of school evaluation should have a number of purposes,
including, for example, to:

- Judge the value-for-money achieved from the educational service;
- Ensure that key stakeholders are informed about the quality of educational
  provision;
• Provide useful, reliable and insightful evidence to policy makers on the effects of policies and on current and future needs;

• Use the evaluation process to drive school and educational improvement; and

• Ensure that educational provision is of the highest possible quality.

Because of the implications for recruiting new, well-trained staff to teaching, director and supervisor posts and ensuring that existing teachers, school directors and supervisors develop appropriate capacities, this cannot be a short-term goal. Other personnel, including at state level, should be brought to an understanding of the function and purposes of school evaluation and how to make it a permeating component of the work of all. Staff development should also provide support in how to use the other existing evaluations – of students’ outcomes and of the work of individual teachers – as components of evidence-based school evaluation which takes account of the local context. Building on current principles, the school councils of social participation should be further empowered to support school evaluation activities, whether in self-evaluation or external evaluation contexts. Such an objective requires the long-term commitment of policy makers, a fresh look at existing procedures, effective staff development of all, including supervisors, and an attitudinal change of key players in the education system.

Ensure that self-evaluation permeates the system, is adopted as common practice in all schools and is supported through staff development to be an effective and significant part of school improvement

At the moment, self-evaluation at school level is clearly associated with the education programmes such as PEC which have been in place for some time. The challenge here is to support and consolidate what is already there and take action to make it permeating, consistent and sustained. All schools should be involved in self-evaluation, not just those in federal education programmes. This implies a shift from voluntary to obligatory involvement in all schools. Such a move also challenges Mexico to provide substantial support mechanisms within a framework of focused staff development. Schools should be encouraged to see self-evaluation as a means of gaining more control and ownership of their activities, with processes which become an instinctive component of all work, not an added administrative burden.

Consolidation of this part of the school evaluation model would be a good starting point in expansion of the concept, to which other aspects, as mentioned above, can be aligned. For this to happen, Mexico must work to ensure that the right people, with appropriate knowledge and experience of school evaluation, are mobilised at all levels and able to use their experience in evaluation of quality to build capacity throughout the system at federal, state, sectoral, zonal and school levels. In this connection all personnel will have to develop appropriate capacities.

• School directors must have the capacity to lead in school self-evaluation and have a career structure which promotes their professional development. Training for leadership would have to ensure that all school directors develop the competencies required to co-ordinate and drive school, parental and community efforts to evaluate the quality of the school as a whole. School directors must become leaders for learning whose focus of activity is the improvement of learning rather than compliance with administrative requirements.
School staff, including all teachers, must understand the principles of self-evaluation or reflection and be supported in this context through relevant staff development in and out of school and through hearing about good practice elsewhere. School directors and local and state personnel must harness information drawn from teacher appraisals (in a good teacher appraisal system), and use it both to evaluate strengths and weaknesses which are common across a school and to create appropriate and relevant teacher professional development courses in local and state-wide contexts. In working on school evaluation, it should not be forgotten that the most powerful agent for improvement is the quality of teachers and teaching within the school, and that supporting teachers to improve learning must lie at the heart of evaluation activities (McKinsey & Company 2007; Scottish Government, 2011).

In addition to school directors and staff, all other key players should experience professional development to equip them with the appropriate capacities not only to support and challenge school directors and teachers in their learning-focused roles but also to play their part in a comprehensive school-level evaluation process. This would particularly refer to supervisors and other equivalent personnel at local, sectoral and state levels.

Box 5.2 shows findings of a project by the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates of Education (SICI) in Europe on features of effective school self-evaluation systems.

**Box 5.2 Outcomes of SICI’s Effective School Self-Evaluation project**

The Effective School Self-Evaluation project, undertaken by the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates of Education (SICI) with European Commission funding, involved analysis of the quality and effectiveness of school self-evaluation in 14 member states within the European Union. The project concluded that self-evaluation required a number of elements of national support if it was to be fully effective as a driver for improvement. Five main elements of this national support were highlighted:

- The provision of high quality data on student outcomes and key processes, analysed and presented to schools in ways which make it easy for them to benchmark themselves appropriately against similar schools.
- The development and maintenance of a common set of quality indicators, along with tools and guidance to support their use, establishing a shared language and shared criteria for evaluation.
- Programmes of professional development and other support for teachers and school leaders which equip them with the skills to undertake self-evaluation and improvement effectively.
- National or regionally organised programmes of occasional external reviews or inspections to moderate and calibrate self-evaluation consistently across the country and provide the basis for the development of national indicators and tools.
- A coherent national framework of legislation, policies and advice that places appropriate duties and responsibilities on schools to evaluate and improve their provision.

*Source: SICI (2003).*
Shift the focus of school directors’ work towards learning and improvement and redefine school director standards

An important priority is to ensure that school directors have or develop the capacities to fulfil such a role. Ways will have to be found to release them from excessive burdens of administrative work, allowing them to focus more on students, teachers and learning. This implies the development of leadership training programmes, involving such components as in-school practical projects, self-evaluation support and action research, mentoring or coaching from successful school directors and the reduction of non-productive work or administrative work which could be better undertaken by professional administrators.

There should also be a new look at the role, function and existing capacities of school directors. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, school director tasks have been defined and the competencies required of them drawn up. This could provide a basis for the definition of standards achieved against these competencies. Steps should be taken to ensure that these standards are met by introducing programmes of staff development in leadership, mentoring and coaching activities, the spreading of good practice examples and support and challenge activities by school supervisors and other external leaders and managers.

Develop a detached system of school leadership appraisal

Appraisal of the work of school directors should be separated out from teacher appraisal and should include evaluation of appropriate subsets of the standards, including such aspects as staff teamwork, learning and teaching improvements, improvements in student outcomes at school level, the quality of partnership with parents and the community and overall school ethos, none of which can be evaluated effectively through written test or interview.

Strong school leadership capacity is key to effective school self-evaluation and school improvement. Further enhancing the performance appraisal of school directors is one way to contribute to building and enhancing the role of school directors as educational leaders. Effective school director appraisal should help provide constructive external feedback, identify areas of needed improvement and offer targeted support to improve practice.

In order to strengthen school leadership appraisal, the development of a school leadership framework or standards to provide a credible reference for the appraisal of school directors is recommended. Such a framework can help enhance the objectivity and fairness of the appraisal process and avoid complacency among leaders that may perform well but still can improve their practice (Reeves, 2009). Such standards need to be informed by research and express the complexity of what effective school leaders are expected to know and be able to do. At the same time, it is important to recognise the situational nature of school leaders’ tasks and allow for standards to be balanced with local ideas (Pashiardis and Brauckmann, 2008; Kimball et al., 2009). The national framework or standards for school leadership should not be seen as a template or checklist against which directors are to be appraised. Rather, they should be a point of departure for reflection on locally relevant criteria in relation to national reference points (for more detail, see Radinger, forthcoming). For school leadership standards to be relevant and “owned” by school directors in Mexico, it is also important that school leadership professionals strongly participate in developing them.
Finally, the recruitment of school leaders into schools needs to be rendered more transparent. A first step to ensure such transparency would be to ensure that school leaders are required to take an examination similar to the National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills (ENCHD) as part of a national competition to gain their permanent post as a school leader.

**Redefine, in the shorter term, the role of supervisor in order to stimulate greater focus on their support to schools for self-evaluation and to include an external evaluation component**

Self-evaluation is not enough to ensure that improvements are made to school processes including, most importantly, the overall quality of learning and teaching and through that to student outcomes. To encourage self-evaluation to be of good quality and to have impact, an external school evaluation aspect should be introduced in more consistent and focused ways across the country. The existing system using supervisors of education at local levels has potential to be used in flexible, innovative ways to evaluate the quality of education at school level. However, for this to have any chance of success, it will require a rebranding exercise, a redefinition of the role of supervisors away from checking administrative processes and towards a greater focus on supporting schools in self-evaluation while also challenging them to improve. This involves intensive training of supervisors in post on how to conduct school evaluation and transparent recruitment procedures which ensure that new personnel appointed to the role are capable of undertaking this complex task.

**Create conditions for greater autonomy in schools and develop and intensify accountability at all levels in the education system**

In practice, schools in Mexico have little autonomy in what they do. The reasons for this are understandable, as governments at national and state levels seek to ensure basic levels of quality through compliance with legislation. Other national systems show, however, that it is possible to improve quality through providing more autonomy within which local need can better and more flexibly be addressed. Steps should be taken to increase school autonomy in terms of the curriculum, of teaching materials, of aspects of finance and of staff recruitment. However, with greater autonomy comes the need for increased accountability at all levels. Within schools, self-evaluation processes, with quality judgements based on secure and meaningful evidence, is a key starting point. In tandem with external evaluation, it can incentivise schools to accept ownership for the quality of their work and for future improvement. Reports from schools on the quality of their provision and their key priorities for development and improvement should be published for parents and the local community. The outcomes of external evaluation should likewise be published for individual schools.

Beyond school level, federal government has devolved to states the responsibility for school evaluation and hence for the quality of educational provision. However, the federal government has not retained the concomitant responsibility to ensure that states are accountable for the quality of school evaluation and of improvement. Apart from test score results (ENLACE), reliable information on the quality of education across the country or at individual state level could not be provided. The federal government should take steps to ensure that states are accountable to the Mexican public in general, that they have effective systems to gather evidence on quality, to stimulate improvement at state
and local levels, and to report adequately and effectively on the overall quality of education in their schools.

Consideration should be given by all states to the creation of an agency for school evaluation, perhaps attached to state evaluation institutes where such are in existence. These state agencies would be responsible for planning and undertaking external evaluations, validating self-evaluation, spreading good practice and offering suggestions for required areas of staff development of teachers, school directors and the supervisors themselves, resulting from analyses of evaluations conducted.

Within the overarching framework for evaluation in Mexico, these state agencies should link to a national body – which could be a new agency or an extension of INEE focusing on aspects of quality and the national programme of evaluation of schools. This agency would use state qualitative data results to produce, as a longer-term objective, reports on the quality of education in Mexico to set alongside other data such as EXCALE and ENLACE results and Mexico’s performance in PISA and to provide evidence-based information for policy makers (see below).

Report at all levels on the quality of schools in ways which are supportive but have impact for schools and for policy makers at state and federal levels

A comprehensive reporting system should be another longer-term goal. A number of components are necessary, relating both to evaluation activities and to reporting on the outcomes of these activities with each building on the previous component:

- School-level evaluation processes supported by supervisors with appropriate capacities to support and challenge school self-evaluation;
- School annual reports and summary improvement plans published and available to all parents;
- Information on self-evaluation validated by supervisors through external evaluation, within an individual school report;
- School reports aggregated into a local-level report with common strengths and aspects which need to be developed;
- At state level validation of local reports by a quality agency or appropriate personnel and aggregation to produce a report on the quality of education at state level; and
- State-level data aggregated at federal level by appropriate personnel or agencies, such as INEE, to produce a national report on the quality of education, with recommendations for action at national and state levels.

Reports might be overarching in nature or focus on the impact of specific, high-level educational policies. Such “thematic” reports on aspects of education across samples of schools might, as in a number of countries, sit alongside more comprehensive, “state of the nation” reports on overall quality.

For example, a thematic report might be prepared on the use and impact of technology in learning and teaching, which has been a recent focus of policy. In some schools, although computers exist, they may be old or not well maintained. In addition, teachers may not have the capacity to use technology effectively as a support for learning. Although there may be exceptions, this aspect is not evaluated within the teacher
appraisal arrangements and does not appear to be a focus of school self-evaluation or any form of external evaluation carried out by supervisors. The point is particularly important in the case of the televised lower secondary schools (Telesecundarias), where delivery of the whole curriculum depends on good quality, well-maintained technology, used skilfully by teachers. The issue is not to be solved merely by acquiring new computers, interactive whiteboards or other technologies – although they undoubtedly help, their provision requires a back-up infrastructure of maintenance, repair and teacher staff development. A thematic report might include sections on:

- Evaluating technological provision and maintenance in schools;
- Its use in teaching, including case studies and good practice examples; and
- The impact on students’ learning against the undoubted high cost of new technology, maintenance and renewal and supportive staff development.

Another example might relate to the use of class libraries. It is reported that four out of five urban primary classrooms have a class library. Those seen during the Review visit by the OECD Review Team were modest in the range of reading material provided. Effective use of additional reading materials to support an enrichment of the curriculum for students across the spectrum of abilities is an issue about which teachers may readily learn from one another through a thematic report.

The clear challenge in the development and implementation of such a quality reporting system lies in ensuring that appropriately skilled personnel are in place to undertake the relevant activities, in choosing an appropriate timeframe for each stage and in putting strategies in place to ensure that the system is streamlined, quality-controlled, effective and not overly time-intensive at all levels.

**Expand the school information system to include more, and more sophisticated, quantitative data and, in due course, qualitative statements**

Steps should be taken to develop additional effective ways of using school-level statistical data already available by expanding the schools information system (RNAME). Developments could include, alongside the existing raw test scores in ENLACE, quantitative data such as comparison of an individual school’s outcomes with the averages achieved by schools with similar characteristics. In addition, a measure of value-added for individual students across grades in primary and from the end of primary through to the end of basic education schooling at lower secondary would provide a meaningful narrative to data. Such additional features would require to be explained in straightforward terms for both schools and the general public. There should also be a long-term aim to include some qualitative aspects in the reports on individual schools, or a link to a report from a school’s external evaluation.

**Make meaningful comparisons across schools if student assessment results are published at the school level**

In Mexico, average raw results of ENLACE assessments are published at the school level with no correction for the socio-economic context of the schools. Improving the data on the students’ socio-economic background (see Chapter 6) and developing the associated indicators at the school level would permit the comparison of student results for “similar” groups of schools (schools with students from similar backgrounds). As explained earlier, some work is currently being undertaken in this area by the SEP.
Also, the longitudinal dimension of ENLACE provides potential for measures of the value added by the school to be developed, a possibility that is currently being explored. In England, schools are expected to meet targets for student expected progress between specified key stages of schooling. Such progress measures are complemented by a statistical indicator of “Contextual Value Added (CVA) score”. Such scores show the progress made by students from the end of a key stage to the end of another key stage using their test results. CVA takes into account the varying starting points of each students’ test results, and also adjusts for factors which are outside a school’s control (such as gender, mobility and levels of deprivation) that have been observed to impact on student results. Several systems in the United States also attempt to measure “adequate yearly growth”. Various models have been researched and used in practice. In value-added models, students’ actual test scores are often compared to the projected scores, and classroom and school scores that exceed the projected values are considered as positive evidence of instructional effectiveness. In this way, value-added models can be used to identify teachers and schools that have met above expected growth despite various challenging circumstances. It is important to note that value-added models are still under development, and therefore they are prone to error (Koretz, 2008), though they are considered fairer than the use of raw results in terms of school averages. Best practices in measuring the value-added of schools are described in OECD (2008).

In previous work with Mexico, the OECD supported the pertinence of using value-added models to assess the performance of a school and provided advice on how to implement such models. Four different phases were suggested for the process of establishing value-added modelling (OECD, 2011):

- Stratification of similar schools (based on type and socio-economic or other relevant information) for within-group comparisons of average results of raw scores;
- Internal value-added modelling exercises conducted by education authorities to select models and address technical issues with data;
- Public information, awareness and engagement with stakeholders on the merits, challenges and opportunities of value-added modelling; and
- Attributing consequences (low stakes at first) for underperforming schools (further exploration, observation and assistance), as well as for high performers.

Ensure that good practice in all aspects of school activities is gathered and made available to professional staff

Helping schools and their staff help themselves is a key feature of autonomy and a means to devolving greater levels of ownership of the responsibility for improvement. A good starting point would be for schools to holding regular in-school meetings in which teachers can focus on learning and teaching strategies and share ideas. Similarly, occasional local meetings of school directors with a focus on leadership, management of personnel and school improvement strategies could help prevent feelings of isolation and stimulate the spreading of useful ideas. Similarly, occasional local meetings of teachers by grade or type of school, led by local authority personnel and again with a focus on learning and teaching strategies, would support improvement. Such meetings would require to be supported through financing of location hire and travelling expenses. They would also need to be included as staff development obligations. They have, in other
systems, promoted the expression of new ideas and improved classroom teaching and learning, given their highly practical focus and short duration.

There might also be a long-term aim to collect and publish good practice examples at state and national levels. Part of the materials in How Can I Improve my School? (¿Cómo Puedo Mejorar mi Escuela?) provided an analysis of the characteristics of schools which were successful in student national assessments. It was reported to the OECD Review Team that subsequent attempts to formulate case studies of good practice had disappointing outcomes. However, small beginnings at school and local levels may eventually promote the idea of spreading good practice well beyond individual schools. A long-term aim might be to develop an Internet portal with examples, case studies, and video clips, which focus on quality and improvement in specific aspects of provision, classified by school type and student stage, as has been developed in Scotland. As a companion to the National Catalogue of Continuous Training and Professional Betterment for Basic Education such a database of good practice examples accessible online could reduce the amount of time teachers and school directors would have to spend away from school.
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Chapter 6

Education system evaluation

The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) is responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the education system with the support of the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE). A range of tools are used to monitor performance of the education system. Information on student learning outcomes is collected from Educational Quality and Achievement Tests (EXCALE) at the end of pre-primary education and in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 covering Spanish, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. The monitoring system also includes a range of statistics on education based on snapshot data collected from schools on a standardised format. These are the basis for annual publications with system-level indicators on education. Also, international benchmarks of student performance provided by international student surveys such as PISA have been influential in driving policy development at the system level. Individual states complement national level initiatives with their own approaches to the evaluation of their sub-system and some have created an evaluation institute.

Particularly positive features of system evaluation include the attention it receives within educational policy; the well established national statistics and registry system; the existence of credible system-wide information on student learning outcomes; the autonomous perspective of a national institute dedicated to education system evaluation; and the significant efforts to systematically undertake programme evaluations. However, system evaluation is faced with a number of challenges. These include the room to better exploit system-level information; the limited internal accountability of states; the need to strengthen the relevance of EXCALE; the limited attention to thematic studies; some data gaps in the national monitoring system such as the socio-economic context of schools; and the non-systematic use of programme evaluation.
This chapter looks at education system evaluation within the Mexican overall evaluation and assessment framework. It refers to approaches to monitor and evaluate the performance of education at the national and state levels. The main aims of education system evaluation are to provide accountability information to the public and to improve educational processes and outcomes.

Context and features

**Responsibilities for evaluation of the Mexican education system**

The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) is responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the education system. According to the General Education Law (LGE), the federal education authorities are in charge of conducting regular systematic assessments to ensure that teachers and education authorities respect students’ rights. The SEP also conducts and evaluates global educational planning and programming and sets guidelines for assessments to be undertaken by state or local authorities. Within the SEP, the Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE) is in charge of developing the National System for Educational Evaluation (SNEE) at the federal level. It does so in collaboration with other units within SEP, the states, specialised agencies and competent administrative units.

System evaluation at the national level is further supported by specialised technical agencies, in particular the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE). The INEE was created with the mission of contributing to education improvement through the evaluation of education quality with a view to inform decision-making, pedagogical improvement in schools and accountability. Other important agencies include the National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (CENEVAL), a not-for-profit civil association, and the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), an autonomous decentralised agency of the federal public administration.

The state authorities have the power to complement national evaluations and assessments with their own approaches. The LGE indicates that both national and state evaluations should be systematic and results be used to inform policy measures. Since the establishment of the National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education (ANMEB) in 1992, there has been a focus on creating and strengthening state evaluation responsibilities as well as agencies responsible for evaluation at the state levels. To date, five states have autonomous evaluation institutes and nine states have their own state-level assessments. Moreover, all states take part in international assessments such as TIMSS or PISA and 26 states consider evaluation in their state education legislation.

**Major tools to monitor performance of the education system**

**National assessments of student performance**

Progress towards the achievement of national curriculum goals is measured at key stages of education via the Educational Quality and Achievement Tests (Exámenes de la Calidad y el Logro Educativos, EXCALE). The tests have been implemented by INEE since 2005 and cover the subjects of Spanish, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. They are applied in grade 3 of primary education and in the final grade of each of the educational cycles (grade 3 of pre-primary; grade 6 of primary; grade 3 of lower secondary; and grade 3 of upper secondary education). Since 2009, EXCALE follows a
set four-year cycle for each of the grades involved. Hence, EXCALE is conducted every year, but assesses one or two different grade levels each year. For example, in 2013 the tests will be applied in grade 6 in primary education and in 2014 they will be applied in grade 3 of primary education (see Table 6.1). There is also the possibility to conduct additional tests in between the four-year cycles (shaded cases in Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1 EXCALE assessment cycles**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd pre-primary</td>
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<td>E, M</td>
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<td>3rd primary</td>
<td>E, M</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>E, M</td>
<td>E, M</td>
<td>E, M</td>
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<td>3rd lower secondary</td>
<td>E, M</td>
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<td>3rd upper secondary</td>
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Notes: E = Spanish, M = mathematics, N = natural sciences, S = social sciences

*Source: INEE (2005).*

The tests are applied to a representative sample of students in each state. To cover a broad range of items without overburdening individual students, several groups of students are created for each subject, with each group being tested on a limited number of tasks. There are about 130 test items for each grade level. Most of them are multiple-choice, but some constructed response items have been added gradually to assess more complex skills. The tests are criterion-referenced (i.e. marked against reference standards). There are four performance levels: “advanced”, “average”, “basic” and “below basic”.

From 2003 to 2006, the results along with the context indicators (based on student questionnaires filled at the time of the test) have been reported in an annual report on the *Quality of Basic Education in Mexico*, published by INEE, for each of the areas assessed. These reports are public, free of charge and available both on line and in print. Since its fifth edition, in 2007, the annual report no longer provides a general overview of the quality of basic education, but reports EXCALE results with a focus on a specific topic each year. Recent topics have included the education for vulnerable student groups (2007), tendencies and perspectives of basic education (2008), the right to education (2009) and the challenges facing upper secondary education (2010-11).

In addition, even though ENLACE (see Chapter 3) is not designed to fulfil a system evaluation function, its results are *de facto* also frequently used to analyse the performance of the national education system and its sub-systems. For example, the SEP aggregates ENLACE results by state and the results are used to compare the educational performance across states. The state representatives interviewed by the OECD Review Team referred to ENLACE as the most important tool for them to monitor the quality of their state education systems. It appears that given its full cohort coverage and the high stakes attached to it, ENLACE has gained more visibility than EXCALE as a measure of education system outcomes (more on this below).
**System-level indicators**

For the purpose of overall system-level monitoring, a wide range of administrative and socio-demographic data are collected nationally. The SEP collects statistical snapshot data from schools through the so-called 911 Questionnaire. These data collections bring together information on the number of students, personnel, teachers, classrooms and family expenditure for education. The data provided by schools are checked and officialised by the Secretary or Director of Education in the respective state and then validated nationally by the SEP’s Directorate General of Planning (DGP). Based on this validated information, the SEP calculates education indices, such as coverage, failure and dropout rates. The information from the 911 Questionnaires also feeds into a range of databases, which are available on line through the National Education Information System (SNIE). The system offers an interactive consultation of basic statistics, historical series and prognoses nationally and by state.

Going further, there has been joint work of DGP and INEE to build a common National Education Indicator System (SININDE) for both agencies, with the purpose of evaluating the quality of education and improving policy. This work has fed into the development of an Education Indicator System (SIE). This system brings together a wide range of data collected from multiple information sources including the 911 Questionnaires, EXCALE, the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM, see Chapter 4) and socio-demographic data collected by the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI) on areas such as housing, income and employment. This information is brought together in SIE to calculate social context indicators and education results. The indicators are grouped into five categories: (1) social context; (2) agents and resources in the system; (3) access and trajectories; (4) educational processes and management; and (5) educational outcomes. They are also disaggregated based on a range of criteria, such as state, type of locality, education level and gender. All indicators are available on line and a selection is published annually in the *Educational Overview of Mexico: Indicators of the National Education System* report (*Panorama Educativo de México. Indicadores del Sistema Educativo Nacional*).

An interesting aspect of system monitoring in Mexico is the strong participation of civil society organisations in the development of education indicators. The pressure from civil society organisations to receive information from schools has contributed considerably to the development of SNIE. In addition, a range of civil society organisations develop their own indicators. The organisation *Mexicanos Primero*, for example, publishes the annual report *Goals: the State of Education in Mexico* (*Metas: Estado de la Educación en México*), which includes a range of equity indicators for the education sector.

**Policy and programme evaluation**

In recent years, there has been increasing focus on the evaluation of policies, programmes and actions implemented by public agencies in Mexico. The CONEVAL holds responsibility for evaluations of federal social development programmes, which includes education sector programmes. CONEVAL issues an Annual Evaluation Programme (PAE) that determines which programmes must be evaluated in a given year. In the evaluation of federal education programmes, CONEVAL co-operates with the Secretariat of Civil Service (SFP), the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP) and with a range of SEP agencies, in particular the UPEPE and the Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP).
For the evaluation of federal education programmes, the SEP and state authorities jointly establish a Unit Responsible for the Programme (UR) to co-ordinate with CONEVAL in each stage of the evaluation process including programme definition, hiring, supervision and follow up of the evaluation. This UR is not connected to the operation of the programme itself.

Programmes that were evaluated several times are included in the UPEPE’s Information System for Monitoring Federal Programmes susceptible to evaluation (SISEPF). This allows capturing and analysing information on federal programmes within the SEP. The information system also permits the verification of the programmes’ compliance with regulations and informs the follow-up and decision-making process regarding federal programmes.

**Evaluation of resources and processes**

As part of evaluating the overall quality of the Mexican school system, INEE also conducts occasional evaluations of schooling resources and processes. This includes qualitative evaluations of issues regarding human, material and organisational resources, access to education and student trajectories, classroom practices and educational leadership. The purpose of such evaluative studies is to go beyond the measurement of outcomes through student assessment and the information that can be collected through the EXCALE context questionnaires (INEE, 2008).

Table 6.2 gives an overview of the resource and process evaluations published by INEE so far. The large-scale studies published by INEE on its website have concerned topics such as infrastructure and equipment in primary and lower secondary schools; violence, discipline and addiction in primary and lower secondary schools; teaching practices to develop reading comprehension in primary schools; and student assessment practices in primary schools. In designing and implementing these reviews, INEE draws on a range of evaluation instruments including questionnaires, observation guides, document analysis and interviews (INEE, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>Lower secondary</td>
<td>Management, implementation of lower secondary education reform</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Lower secondary</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Violence, discipline, addiction</td>
<td>22 369</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Lower secondary</td>
<td>Violence, discipline, addiction</td>
<td>6 171</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Teaching practices: reading comprehension</td>
<td>5 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Educational offer</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Educational offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Student assessment practices</td>
<td>3 534</td>
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</table>

**Table 6.2 INEE evaluations of educational resources and processes**

In addition to the studies published on the website so far, INEE has conducted an evaluation of student learning in Spanish and mathematics in pre-primary education and an evaluation of the contribution of tutoring to the learning of adolescents in lower secondary education. The review of pre-primary education involved an analysis of EXCALE results along with a large-scale evaluation of teaching practices, where teachers described their practice and the support they received. The purpose was to identify relationships between teaching practices and student outcomes in EXCALE. The evaluation conducted in lower secondary education involved the construction and validation of student and teacher questionnaires regarding tutoring practices. After applying the questionnaires, INEE triangulated the responses of different groups.

**Participation in international student assessments**

Mexico is an active participant in international surveys that measure and compare student achievement across different countries.

- Mexico has participated in the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) since its inception in 2000. PISA measures the reading, mathematics and science literacy of 15-year-old students. In the last two applications in 2006 and 2009, there has been much focus in Mexico on including representative samples of individual states. There has also been more complex analysis of the results and additional efforts to disseminate results to different audiences.

- Mexico also participates in the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)’s Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which measures the mathematics and science literacy of students in Years 4 and 8. Mexico has taken part in TIMSS since its first assessment round in 1995, even though the results of 1995 were not made publicly available. Since 2003, the TIMSS results of the assessment are analysed and transmitted to the public by INEE.

- Finally, Mexico participated in both rounds of UNESCO’s Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) in 1997 and 2006. In 1997, LLECE covered reading, writing and mathematics skills in Years 3 and 4. In 2006, it assessed the same areas in Years 3 and 6, plus an optional assessment of natural sciences for Year 6. The LLECE tests are designed based on common curriculum areas of Latin American countries, along with a focus on “life skills”, as promoted by UNESCO.

Participation in such international surveys provides international benchmarking information on the education system’s performance and also allows monitoring its progress over time, for example through the trend data available for PISA. The results from these studies, and in particular the PISA results, have been very influential in driving both education policy and practice in Mexico. For instance, the 2007-2012 Sectorial Education Programme established a target in terms of national achievement in PISA 2012 (see Chapter 1), and the education authorities have published guidance material for teachers encouraging them to use “PISA-type” assessment items in their regular classroom assessment work (see Chapter 3).
Participation in international reviews

Further, Mexico participates in the OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). TALIS collects information from teachers and directors in lower secondary schools in order to provide a comparative overview of the characteristics of teachers and teaching in lower secondary education. It provides information on areas such as teachers’ professional development, beliefs and attitudes regarding teaching, as well as perceptions regarding their own practice, their learning environment and the school contexts in which they work. Nine states participated individually in TALIS in its first 2008 round. Mexico has also participated in international reviews of education policy, including recent participation in the OECD Learning for Jobs Review and the OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes.

Strengths

System evaluation is a priority in Mexico

The monitoring of education system quality is a well-developed component of the Mexican approach to evaluation and assessment. There has been a lot of attention among policy makers and the civil society on developing indicators at the national and state levels in order to measure the quality and progress of the education system as a whole. In 2000, education policy gave a strategic role to evaluation and assessment as an essential part of the planning, follow-up and accountability of education authorities (SEP and INEE, forthcoming).

This key focus on system evaluation is reflected in the establishment of comprehensive information systems and sample-based national assessments that have been continuously refined over the last decade. It is also visible in the transparent reporting of indicators and education outcome measures in online databases and annual publications on the state of the education system. Since the 2000s, there has been increased attention to publishing and disseminating information widely and in different formats among educational authorities, school professionals, families and the general public.

There is wide acceptance of the principle that education policies and programmes should be continuously monitored and evaluated in order to inform future policy development and educational planning. In addition, there is a high degree of openness towards external evaluations and international student assessments that can help benchmark Mexico’s educational performance in relation to other countries. Mexico has been participating in a range of international student surveys and has made efforts to use the results internally. International good practice is also closely followed and experts from different countries are frequently invited to provide input and external views into the national debate.

Policy objectives and indicators to report progress towards them provide a reference for system evaluation

The focus for education system evaluation is determined through the priorities set in the government’s National Development Plan 2007-2012 and the Education Sector Programme (Programa Sectorial de Educación, PROSEDU) 2007-2012. The PROSEDU sets six clear policy objectives for the education sector for this period. In a nutshell, the objectives refer to: (1) raising the quality of education; (2) reducing inequalities among
social groups; (3) promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICT); (4) offering holistic education including the formation of civil, democratic and intercultural values; (5) emphasising social responsibility and workforce participation; and (6) developing an institutional environment that promotes the participation of local and school stakeholders in decision-making (see Chapter 2).

Around these six policy objectives, the PROSEDU provides a set of 41 indicators, out of which 22 refer to basic education. For each indicator, the programme determines the unit of measurement as well as a target to be achieved by 2012. For example, for Objective 3 about the promotion of ICT in education, the 2012 goals refer to equipping media rooms, increasing the number of computers per student, establishing Internet connections in libraries and training teachers in the educational use of computers and ICT (see Chapter 2 for other examples). The establishment of clear policy objectives along with indicators and targets helps provide a reference in relation to which the relevance and effectiveness of education policies can be measured. It also ensures greater focus on the main challenges the education system is facing and encourages stakeholders at all levels to develop strategies responding to these.

**A comprehensive national statistics and registry system is well established**

A key strength of Mexico’s approach to system evaluation is its focus on building a comprehensive national statistics and indicators system. As described above, the development of the SNIE, SININDE and SIE reflect major efforts to collect data on education performance and the various factors influencing it, to monitor trends over time and analyse the state of the education system. In recent years, there has been strong focus on integrating information from a range of different sources and databases so as to improve the accuracy and usefulness of information for analysis and decision-making.

The most recent policy initiative to strengthen information systems has been the development of the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (Registro Nacional de Alumnos, Maestros y Escuelas, RNAME). This development is the outcome of a series of legislative and administrative reforms implemented in 2011. RNAME aims to consolidate and improve registration information on students, teachers and schools. As one part of RNAME, the National Registry of Students now comprises an individual student identifier that tracks individual information on enrolment, transfers and results from ENLACE. Also the National Registry of Teachers includes data on many aspects of the individual trajectory of teachers, including information on salary, participation in appraisal programmes and performance in the exam associated with the National Teaching Post Competition. It is planned to establish linkages between the student registry and the teacher registry in order to facilitate analysis of factors influencing teaching and learning (see Chapter 5 for more detailed information on the Schools part of RNAME).

The potential benefits of the new RNAME system include improved possibilities to conduct longitudinal analyses and identify trends and risks. It can help facilitate reporting by education agencies, analysis of student and teacher data over time, moving data between different information systems and applications and issuing of documentation that students may need to present to education institutions or employers. The more accurate and updated information on student and teacher movements across schools will also allow for more efficient allocation of resources to the schools that need them the most. Overall, the integrated system has great potential to contribute to improving transparency and accountability of the education system.
Credible system-wide information on student learning outcomes is in place

EXCALE provides system-wide information on student learning outcomes. One of the strengths of these assessments is their clarity of purpose. EXCALE aims to provide a national picture of learning outcomes at key stages of education rather than to report on individual students, teachers or schools. The primary purpose is to obtain and analyse information on student learning outcomes so as to monitor the progress of the national education system and state sub-systems and to provide information to improve education policy and practice. Several elements make EXCALE particularly well suited for this purpose.

First, EXCALE is referenced to the Mexican curriculum, and as such it allows to measure progress towards national education goals and to broaden the national debate beyond results in international surveys. The tests do not measure cross-cutting competencies but focus on particular content covered in the subjects that are being assessed. In Mexico, the identification of nationally expected learning outcomes is facilitated by the facts that the curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials are provided nationally and that the teacher education system is relatively uniform across the country. The tests are criterion-referenced, i.e. scores describe student performance relative to national student learning objectives.

Second, EXCALE’s matrix design aims to ensure a broad coverage of the curriculum. Test items are grouped by blocks and not all students answer the same questions. This allows for a wider range of knowledge and skills to be tested without overburdening individual students. Also, because it is a four-yearly sample-based study applied to a relatively small proportion of the student cohort, there are greater possibilities to include constructed response items than, for example, in ENLACE which is applied to millions of students every year. The items included in EXCALE are more complex and require students to demonstrate higher levels of cognitive development. The results thus provide a more detailed account to the education authorities and the public regarding the competencies developed in the national education system.

Third, EXCALE not only measures outcomes but also gathers information on the characteristics of students and on factors that may contribute to explaining their results. Students participating in the assessments are sampled in a way as to allow a breakdown of results by education service, state, gender and age. This allows insights into differences in achievement for these groups. The assessments are accompanied by context questionnaires for students, teachers and school directors. The collection of this context information facilitates the identification of social and school factors potentially associated to achievement.

A major strength is the autonomous perspective of a national institute dedicated to education system evaluation

The Mexican evaluation and assessment framework has been considerably strengthened by the creation of the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación, INEE) as a dedicated body responsible for education system evaluation. INEE is responsible for evaluating the quality of the education system but it has no mandate to evaluate individual students, teachers or schools. The presidential decree creating the INEE in 2002 cites among the functions of the new institute: development of a national indicator system and learning outcomes assessments; design of evaluation instruments adapted to each level of the education system; collaboration with the SEP and state governments in assessment and
evaluation; development of a school evaluation model; stimulation and strengthening of an evaluation culture; dissemination of results; capacity building at different levels; evaluation of selected projects and development of research regarding evaluation. As described in Chapter 2, the 2012 revision to the 2002 Presidential Decree reinforces INEE’s autonomy, strengthens its technical expertise, and provides further independence from the SEP.

A key strength of having a national institute responsible for education system evaluation is its technical autonomy from the education authorities. This autonomy provides it with the necessary distance from political decision-making to conduct rigorous and reliable analyses of data, confront the education authorities where necessary and be impartial in its conclusions about the education system. Hence, it can provide a fresh and constructive external point of view informing the national debate. An important institutional guarantee of this technical autonomy is the composition of INEE’s Technical Board and Specialised Technical Councils, which comprises distinguished academics and education specialists from across Mexico and other countries (INEE, 2006a).

The creation of INEE also went in line with a change in policy towards greater transparency in the dissemination of evaluation and assessment results. INEE holds close relationships with both educational authorities and stakeholder organisations with a view to influencing both policy and practice. Its communication strategy comprises several elements. A key element is the preparation of publications in a range of different formats including books, annual reports, technical booklets, brochures, information sheets and posters providing information in different degrees of detail and complexity. The publications are indexed in a catalogue and all of them are available on line. In addition, INEE organises large conferences bringing together on average about 500 individuals including representatives of state authorities, supervisors, heads of sector, civil society organisations and education specialists. It is also engaged in capacity building with state evaluation authorities with a view to strengthening the technical, statistical and analytical skills of evaluation teams at the state level. Finally, INEE has also established strong relationships with the media and aims to inform the national education debate through press releases, interviews and courses for journalists on the interpretation of education data (INEE, 2006b).

**There are significant efforts to systematically undertake programme evaluations**

Another strength of the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework is the systematic approach to programme evaluation, which was embodied in the creation of the CONEVAL in 2005. The basic principle that federal education programmes should be evaluated is widely accepted at all levels of policy making in Mexico. According to the legislation, all programmes that are subject to operation rules should be evaluated. There are three types of programme evaluations: design evaluation, performance evaluation, and impact evaluation, with the first two being more frequently applied than the evaluation of impact. CONEVAL is in charge of approving and overseeing the evaluations and has promoted the importance of programme evaluation in the social sector, including in education.

There is also good attention to following up on programme evaluations. All recommendations provided by the evaluator need to be responded to by the programme provider. The next evaluation will then pick up on the recommendations previously made and monitor progress of the programme in attending to them. The evaluation reports and recommendations are forwarded to CONEVAL, the Federal Public Administration, the
National Audit Office and the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies itself may also conduct programme evaluations and based on the results, it may ask for additional funding for particular projects.

While there are a number of challenges in the implementation of programme evaluations in the education sector (more on this below), the strong political will to make programme evaluation a systematic component of Mexico’s evaluation and assessment framework is an important strength.

**Challenges**

*There is room to strengthen the use of system-level information*

The focus on education system evaluation in Mexico is commendable and there has been important progress in collecting data on the national and state education systems, including on student learning outcomes. A large amount of information is now available through different databases and the national and state information systems will be further strengthened through the introduction of RNAME. The key challenge identified by the OECD Review Team is, then, to ensure that stakeholders across the system make effective use of the available data.

*Use of data to inform policy planning and development*

System-level data are not well exploited to inform the development of policies. Currently, most focus nationally is on the collection of data and the operation of assessments, with less attention paid to how such results could be used to determine priorities and inform strategies. There seems to be limited capacity and/or interest at the state and national levels to engage in deeper analysis and interpretation of results. Representatives of state and national authorities indicated that they did not have information in a format that would be immediately useful for policy development. When we asked about future priorities in system monitoring, there appeared to be much focus on gathering more information and integrating different information sources, but there was little reflection on how such information might be used to improve policies and practices to achieve better learning outcomes for students.

*Use of information systems at the local and school level*

Another challenge is to facilitate the use of data by professionals at the school level. Given Mexico’s strong centralised tradition, the flow of data in the system goes mostly into one direction, from the schools towards higher levels of the educational administration, but there is limited interaction and feedback for schools regarding the information they provide. While schools do receive their raw student assessment results, more could be done to support them in their internal analysis and further planning, for example by allowing them to track their own results over time and benchmark themselves against schools with similar student compositions (see Chapter 5).

The national database “School Information National System” (*Sistema Nacional de Información de Escuelas*) provides basic information on each school’s enrolment numbers, infrastructure, failure rates and average ENLACE results, thus offering a potentially valuable data source available on a consistent national basis (see Chapter 5). Some limited analysis is presented nationally, for example comparison of the school’s ENLACE results against state and national averages. This school information system provides both the public and school staff with easy access to basic data and results for
their own school. However, the OECD Review Team encountered limited awareness and use of this system among school leaders and supervisors suggesting that it was not seen as a significant source of support for the schools’ own evaluation and planning processes.

**The internal accountability of states is limited**

The states are given an important role in Mexico’s framework for education system evaluation. They collect data from schools, apply the national student assessments at the state level and may complement the national evaluation system with their own state-level approaches. As described above, there have been important developments within some states regarding the collection and use of data, with some states creating their own evaluation institutes, developing state-level assessments or participating in international student surveys. Also, there is a legal obligation for the state administrations to have a six-year strategic plan defining goals and priorities for the state education sector.

However, from the interviews of the OECD Review Team it appears that the extent to which individual states are taking ownership of evaluation and assessment and design their own evaluation strategies remains limited. Many states do not have specialised local teams responsible for evaluation and assessment and there is limited capacity at the state level for the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data. Few states have their own information systems; it is more common for states to draw on the information that is compiled and disseminated by the federal authorities. There has been little focus on analysing and using results to inform improvement strategies. It appears that the key purpose of working with indicators and evaluation results is to inform financial decision-making, i.e. how to distribute and manage funding, rather than to analyse what works and develop policies.

While the states could potentially play a powerful role in setting up and/or supporting local school and teacher evaluation systems, this is not currently the case. States typically monitor the results of schools in national student assessments, but there are no indications that they are involved in systematically evaluating school processes or supporting schools in their own self-evaluation work. Typically, the monitoring of school quality by the state education authorities is indicator-based and there has not been much, if any, focus on conducting more qualitative evaluations of school processes (see Chapter 5).

**Ensuring the continued relevance of the EXCALE assessments requires further improvements**

The current suite of EXCALE assessments predates the latest curriculum reform (the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education, RIEB). In 2011, Mexico introduced a new curriculum, articulated in a “study plan” (plan de estudios), for basic education covering all 12 years of basic education from pre-primary through to lower secondary education. It provides continuity in four key curricular domains (language and communication; mathematical thinking; exploration and understanding of the natural and social world; personal and social development) and aims to facilitate transitions from one level of education to the next. The study plan defines expected learning outcomes as well as curriculum standards for key stages of education. It is more focused on the development of complex competencies rather than the acquisition of isolated knowledge and skills (see Chapters 1 and 2).

In this context, one of the key challenges is to ensure that EXCALE adequately reflects the new expected learning outcomes and curriculum standards. The current EXCALE test items are not adequately adapted to a curriculum focused on the
development of competencies. EXCALE comprises mostly multiple-choice and a few constructed response items which assess written expression but do not capture the broader competencies, or “life skills” (competencias para la vida) that are outlined in the curriculum. Currently, it is not clear to what extent the suite of EXCALE assessments will be changed so as to reflect the new curriculum requirements. The fact that the assessments will need to be considerably revised poses important challenges for the longitudinal monitoring of results.

Another challenge is to optimise the use of EXCALE to monitor the equity of learning outcomes across student groups on a national level. There are a range of cultural and linguistic equity questions around EXCALE that need to be closely considered. Currently, EXCALE exists only in Spanish, even though work is now on-going to translate the assessments into different Indigenous languages. Also, there are concerns about the validity of test items for different cultural groups, as some of the questions may contain cultural references that do not make sense for all groups of students. In addition, there are no special provisions for students with special needs. While individual annual reports by INEE – in 2007 and 2009 – have focussed on the educational outcomes of vulnerable student groups, there appears to be no regular annual reporting of the EXCALE results of specific at-risk groups compared to the mainstream population.

Finally, the relevance of EXCALE as the key instrument for system monitoring is also threatened by the disproportionate attention paid to ENLACE results at all levels of the system, including the state and national level. As discussed in Chapter 3, while ENLACE was originally designed for diagnostic and formative assessment, it is increasingly being used for the evaluation of teachers, schools and the state and national education systems. The use of ENLACE for system evaluation is not appropriate for several reasons. Not only does it cover a more limited range of learning outcomes than EXCALE, there is also less central supervision over the administration of the exams in the classroom, which makes them more vulnerable to cheating (Vidal, 2009). There is a need for the national and state authorities to ensure that each national assessment system is used for its designed purpose and that EXCALE remains the primary tool for monitoring education system outcomes.

**Thematic studies require further development**

While system evaluation in Mexico focuses strongly on the collection of data regarding inputs (enrolment numbers, infrastructure, equipment, etc.) and learning outcomes (as measured by standardised assessments), there is relatively less attention to the evaluation of school processes from a national or state-level perspective. There is much room to further develop more qualitative types of evaluation regarding the different aspects of schooling that are likely to influence teaching and learning outcomes (see also Chapter 5).

With the exception of the thematic evaluations conducted by INEE, there has not been much focus on gathering evaluative evidence on specific education topics, which could serve to inform policy and practice. A range of aspects of schooling would deserve more in-depth investigation, for example the implementation of the new curriculum at the school level, didactics in particular subjects, special education approaches, psycho-social environments in schools, school self-evaluation approaches, the use of formative assessment practices by teachers, etc. There is currently no national agency specifically responsible for conducting such thematic studies and the individual state authorities and
state evaluation institutes have not engaged in collecting thematic evaluative evidence from their schools.

**Some data gaps remain in the national monitoring system**

The development of registry and information systems has been a key priority for the Mexican information system and much work has been accomplished. To facilitate the analysis and use of results for improvement, there are some areas where the collection of data should be further developed.

**Some gaps in school information systems exist**

Keeping track of individual student and teacher trajectories remains an important challenge in Mexico, although RNAME will go a long way to addressing this challenge. Mexico has been facing difficulties in collecting accurate and up-to-date information on its 30 million students, 1.45 million teachers and 240,000 schools (SEP, 2011) and particularly in following the movements of individual students and teachers between schools, municipalities and states (OECD, 2012). There are high rates of internal migration within Mexico, which cause student numbers within each state to fluctuate considerably over the school year. According to the state and national representatives we spoke to, there is a need to better capture this internal migration in school statistics. In some cases, the state and national authorities also lack knowledge about the exact infrastructure of schools. These uncertainties make it challenging for authorities to allocate resources in an efficient and fair way.

**There are challenges in monitoring the equity of learning outcomes**

In the national reporting of education system information, more attention could be paid to systematically reporting on inequities in the learning outcomes of different student groups, e.g. students from different socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds. For example, the EXCALE results reported in the *Educational Overview of Mexico* report are typically provided by state, gender and school type, but they are not disaggregated for particular student groups, such as Indigenous students, migrant students, students with a disability or students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. While the 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme (PROSEDU) states clear ambitions to “decrease inequalities among social groups, close gaps and promote equality” (Objective 2), the concrete goals and indicators provided to measure progress refer to input factors rather than student learning outcomes. The indicators provided mostly refer to scholarships provided to disadvantaged students, equipment in disadvantaged schools and enrolment rates at different educational levels. Insufficient attention is paid to monitoring how different groups of students perform.

**The school socio-economic context is not adequately measured**

Another data gap concerns the measurement of the school socio-economic context. In reporting results from national assessments, there have been efforts to contextualise school outcomes by establishing a classification of schools into “zones”, based on a number of indicators (urban or rural location, primary or lower secondary education; Indigenous or general education; *telesecundaria*, general or technical school; and level of marginalisation/poverty of the area in which the school is located). However, such area-based indicators may well not reflect the actual student composition of a given school. In Australia, a report commissioned by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment,
Training and Youth Affairs warns against the use of an area-based measure of socio-economic status (Marks et al., 2000). The report argues that the use of an area-based measure of socio-economic status to estimate an individual’s socio-economic background: is subject to considerable misclassification error, especially in regional and rural areas; is not cost effective; often relies on out-of-date information; undermines conclusions about between-system and over-time differences in the importance of socio-economic background on educational outcomes; cannot be used to categorise individual socio-economically disadvantaged students when reporting student outcomes; and does not allow analysis “controlling” for differences between different student groups, e.g. Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, within a school (Santiago et al., 2011).

**Little information on student well-being and learning environment is available**

Not much information is available on broader aspects of education quality, such as student attitudes, motivation and well-being and the overall teaching and learning environment in schools. Such measures are important as the learning environment is likely to influence student achievement and progress. Confident and motivated students are more likely to go on to continue in the education system and learn throughout their lives. Information on stakeholders’ views of the learning environment would allow analysis of the association between student performance and more qualitative aspects of the school environment. The information currently available comes from context questionnaires distributed in EXCALE assessments and international surveys such as PISA. The only work in this area is developed by INEE through its studies about the conditions for the provision of educational services based on the EXCALE context questionnaires. These address aspects such as the quality of education infrastructure, the adequacy of resources or relationships with the community. However, there is no large-scale collection of student, parent or teacher perceptions in Mexico through centrally organised surveys.

**Programme evaluation is not yet sufficiently systematic**

While, as described above, there is a strong intention to systematically evaluate federal education programmes, this is not always done. According to CONEVAL, while about 70% of SEP programme providers are asking for impact evaluations, such evaluations are implemented only for a small proportion of programmes due to a range of financial and feasibility constraints. First, a programme may not be evaluated because there are insufficient resources to conduct thorough evaluations for each of the existing programmes.

Second, programmes that predate the current legislation and the creation of the CONEVAL often do not have an evaluation component in their original concept and design. Where evaluation has not been built into the programme from the beginning, it often proves difficult to develop an evaluation model *ex post*. The programme may not be conceived in terms of indicators and there may not be a control group or baseline in relation to which progress can be evaluated. In these cases, programme evaluation is often perceived as an imposition from outside coming at the end of the process rather than an internal “thermometer” that is used to monitor progress and adjust processes.

Third, the sheer dimension of the Mexican education system may make the evaluation of federal programmes complicated. In fact, it is optional for individual states to participate in federal programmes and it is the states that are managing the participation of individual schools. In some cases, the implementation at the state level does not
correspond to the federal rules established for the programme. For example, there are indications that some schools were included in federal programmes designed specifically for marginalised schools even though they did not have the characteristics required for participation (i.e. they were not marginalised). The fact that the beneficiaries of the programme were not part of the initial target group makes it very difficult to conduct meaningful impact evaluation.

Fourth, there also appears to be room for improvement in the follow-up and use of programme evaluation results. In fact, the SEP, which initiates federal education programmes, is not in a position to make decisions about whether a programme should be replicated or terminated. The key decision-making power about programme continuation lies with CONEVAL. However, it appeared to the OECD Review Team that it is unlikely for CONEVAL to be able to get into the details of each of the programmes. While CONEVAL plays a key role in providing independent evaluation and advice to support decision-making, it would seem to be more logical for the SEP to have the power to change, replicate or terminate the programmes it has designed, based on the results from the evaluation.

**Policy recommendations**

**Optimise the reporting and use of system-level data to inform policy and practice**

Over the last few years, Mexico has put in place a national information system including a wide range of statistics and indicators. The OECD Review Team commends the Mexican authorities on the continuous work to strengthen the national information systems. As outlined above, much of the data collected nationally are currently still underused. At this stage, the national education authorities together with INEE should devise a strategy to optimise the use of existing system-level data by stakeholders across the system.

**Strengthen the use of data to inform policy development**

A priority should be on further improving the use of system-level information for educational planning and policy development. While, indeed, large amounts of system-level information exist in Mexico, the key focus in the coming years should be on drawing from this information to develop strategies for the improvement of education at the state and national level. Further studies should focus on the key challenges that education policy makers, supervisors and local education professionals need to address in order to improve the quality and equity of education outcomes and provide examples of where this has been done successfully. INEE should consult with key interlocutors in the State Evaluation Areas on how it can best report existing information in a format that best fits state policy maker needs. Such consultation may reveal limitations of existing information, but can feed into future plans to collect data that best suits local demands. Further communication efforts are also necessary to ensure that the results of assessment tools are used for their designed purpose, in particular to avoid the misuse of ENLACE results for system evaluation. As will be explored in more detail below, this also requires further investment in developing analytical capacity at the level of state education departments.
Enhance the use of data at the school level

Further steps could also be taken to communicate results from the national monitoring system more effectively to encourage their use by different stakeholders. As Tolley and Shulruf (2009) point out, to optimise the use of data across the education system it is essential that schools are not merely seen as data providers but that they become part of a collaborative process of data sharing and analysis. This means that information would not just flow upwards to the educational authorities but that analyses and feedback would also flow from the educational administration back to the local and school level. While Mexico has developed some good national information systems, their full potential is not realised at the local and school level as a result of limitations in the way the data are analysed and presented, combined with the relatively low level of competence in the use of data at the local level.

To strengthen the use and impact of nationally available school data, the SEP in collaboration with INEE should explore ways of presenting analyses in user-friendly ways, designing interfaces and presentational approaches which give non-technical users help with the interpretation and use of specific analyses. It could be helpful to develop tailored access areas for different users to provide a set of adapted data and analyses responding to the needs of various groups such as schools supervisors, heads of sector and municipal authorities. To be credible at the school level, it is important that analyses facilitate “fair” comparisons between schools. To this end, work could be undertaken to explore the potential for giving schools access to “value added” or “similar schools” comparisons, which help avoid the sometimes unhelpful effects of comparing schools with non-typical learner populations with crude national averages (see also Chapter 5).

The national authorities in collaboration with state governments should also establish a development programme designed to substantially raise the awareness of information systems and the data they contain. Efforts should be directed towards increasing the skills of school and local staff in the use and interpretation of their own data for school improvement. This should involve both training resources and development programmes working with groups of schools, higher education institutions and teacher education programmes. The state education departments and evaluation institutes, being closer to schools than the national level, should play the key role in engaging in meaningful professional dialogue with schools and supervisors based on the information available at the state level.

Build evaluation and assessment capacity at the state level

The state education authorities have a key role to play in education system evaluation in Mexico. Given the dimensions of the Mexican education system, the possibilities for the central level to develop richer evaluation processes are limited. If evaluations are designed and implemented centrally by the national government, they are likely to be restricted to standardised student assessments and collections of data. In order to go beyond standardised instruments and promote the deeper study and analysis of school quality, it is important to count on entities that are closer to the school level. The management of education sub-systems by the state authorities offers the potential for closer monitoring of school practices than a fully centralised system would allow, while also providing opportunities to recognise regional realities and constraints.

The state authorities can also play a key role in supporting the creation of networks among municipalities, school zones and sectors, allowing professionals at the local level to meet with their peers. Such networks can be a platform to share experiences across
schools, analyse results in national student assessments, discuss local approaches to school self-evaluation, teacher appraisal and student assessment and develop common projects, materials and approaches. They can also be a starting point to identify professional development needs at the local level and develop common strategies for capacity development. In some states, there is incipient activity by state evaluation institutes to organise regional meetings and workshops with a focus on building evaluation and assessment capacity. In the state of Mexico, for example, such regional meetings were organised with a focus on the schools with the lowest results.

While the capacity of state education authorities in evaluation and assessment is still limited, there appears to be growing awareness and interest in these functions. The creation of state-level evaluation institutes provides an excellent opportunity for state authorities to take more ownership of evaluation and assessment and build professional dialogue with local and school professionals. To optimise the role of state education authorities, it is important to clearly define the role of different actors in the monitoring of the education system and sub-systems. To this end, the OECD Review Team recommends developing a strategic plan which clarifies the role of each administrative level in the evaluation and assessment framework (see Chapter 2). In particular, it is important that the state evaluation institutes (or equivalent departments with such responsibilities) do not simply replicate what INEE already does at the national level. The evaluation institutes should be much more closely involved with the evaluation of individual teachers and schools and provide support to schools in their self-evaluation and internal appraisal activities. Clearly, since the states are in charge of managing the teaching staff, they should also take greater responsibility in managing the teacher appraisal processes (see Chapter 2).

The strategic plan for evaluation and assessment should be developed in collaboration between the SEP, INEE and state authorities and provide competency descriptions for evaluation and assessment staff at each level. In collaboration with higher education institutions and teacher education programmes, the plan should be followed up with efforts to develop professional development opportunities for educational administration staff at different levels, including the state authorities, municipalities, heads of sector and supervisors. It is important that each level understands their role as not only collecting data from lower levels of the administration, but also to provide analysis, feedback and support back to the school and classroom level with a view to improve practices.

**Continuously review EXCALE and ensure its relevance in relation to national education goals**

The OECD Review Team commends the Mexican authorities on the development of EXCALE as a sample-based survey focussed in particular on monitoring learning outcomes at the national level. However, the introduction of the new curriculum for basic education in 2011 (the RIEB) poses challenges to the existing EXCALE assessments, as outlined above. It is, therefore, important to clarify the ways in which the current set of EXCALE assessments will be revised in order to reflect the new curriculum and standards, and in particular their more explicit focus on developing integrated competencies. It would be important to review the EXCALE assessments in relation to their alignment with the new curriculum requirements to ensure that the assessments stay relevant for system evaluation and longitudinal monitoring of results.

While EXCALE includes some constructed response items, the assessments are currently not able to capture broader competencies, or “life skills” as outlined in the 2011
curriculum. Hence, in the medium and longer term, Mexico may wish to consider introducing assessment items that are in a better position to assess broader student competencies and reflect student performance in authentic situations. In New Zealand, for example, the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) includes one-to-one interviews, work stations and teamwork requiring students to transfer learning to authentic close-to-real-life situations (Nusche et al., 2012). However, the implementation of such performance-based assessments would of course considerably add to the cost of the current system in Mexico as it requires interaction between trained assessors and individual students. In Sweden, on the other hand, performance-based national tests that capture competencies such as oral communication and collaborative problem-solving are implemented by the students’ own teachers. While this reduces the cost of implementing such assessments, it does raise concerns about the reliability and fairness of marking across the country (Nusche et al., 2011a). There are other options to broaden the range of learning outcomes that are covered even in keeping a standardised written assessment format. In Australia, for example, the triennial sample assessments include an assessment of civics and citizenship skills. In Finland, a national survey is used to monitor students’ “learning to learn” skills.

It is also important to review the responsiveness of EXCALE to different linguistic and cultural groups in Mexico. Assessment results may be biased for certain Indigenous and other student groups if the assessment tool measures language skills or cultural references at the same time as it measures other subject matters. While reliability and validity of assessment are necessary conditions for any effective assessment, one cannot assume that these conditions are met or transferable to all different subgroups of the population. Evidence of differential validity is required to determine whether separate test validities are needed for each group (Shultz and Whitney, 2005). This is why issues of translation and adaptation of assessment tools are so important in linguistically diverse systems such as Mexico. There are three main options to make student standardised assessments more relevant, especially for Indigenous settings: (1) translating and adapting the existing assessment tools; (2) developing assessment instruments specifically for Indigenous schools; and (3) developing anchor points in assessment instruments developed in different languages, for example through having a core of items that are the same (except for translation and adaptation) and other parts of the assessment which are unique to each group. Each of these options requires a lot of care and resources and collaboration with bilingual teachers and experts who moderate the test construction in different languages (Nusche et al., 2012). Also, EXCALE should be made more inclusive by developing special adaptations for students with special needs.

There is also scope to make greater use of EXCALE to monitor the progress of the Mexican education system towards achieving its equity objectives. To this end, INEE should consider to systematically report disaggregated results for relevant groups of students, such as Indigenous students, students with a migrant background and students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The purpose would be to evaluate the success of the education system to respond to the needs of diverse students.

**Develop thematic evaluations as a key element of education system evaluation**

Currently, national thematic reviews of different aspects of schooling are an underdeveloped component of Mexico’s system evaluation framework. Such reviews would be helpful for the national and state education authorities to gain deeper understanding of certain priority topics and to develop educational policies. Building on the methodologies already used for its recent reviews, INEE should more strongly...
develop its thematic evaluation capacity. If the states develop enhanced external school evaluation systems, the evaluations of individual schools could also feed into wider thematic studies on a range of priority topics (see Chapter 5).

Thematic evaluations should rely on evaluative findings gathered in schools, based on observation of practices and/or collection of stakeholder perceptions through interviews or surveys. They should also draw on national and international research and involve specialists on the topics under evaluation so as to develop adequate indicators for the evaluation of school processes. The national evaluation findings could be based on a sample of schools that are externally reviewed, or they could rely more strongly on a case study approach providing detailed information about practice observed in high performing schools. In New Zealand, for example, there are three different types of thematic evaluations: reports on national evaluation topics, good practice reports and reports prepared by specialist education teams (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1 National Education Evaluation Reports in New Zealand

**Reports on National Evaluation Topics:** National Evaluation Topics (NETs) reflect current issues of interest to the government. To report on NETs, the Education Review Office (ERO) gathers evaluative findings as part of individual school reviews. National Evaluation Topics provide lenses through which ERO investigates key aspects of individual school performance, while also gathering information that is synthesised into a National Education Evaluation Report. The collection of evidence for NETs usually takes place over one or two school terms. ERO has some on-going NETs that are always a part of ERO reviews in schools; these include *Success for Māori students* and *Success for Pasifika students*. ERO reviews approximately 600 primary and secondary schools each year, so the education evaluation reports reflect the findings from a substantial number of schools.

**Good Practice Reports:** Some of the schools identified in the NETs evaluations may be used to produce National Education Reports that focus on Good Practice. Typically these reports use a case study approach to identify, in more detail, the nature of effective practice in schools. These reports help provide a quality benchmark for school leaders and those in policy.

**Reports prepared by specialist evaluation teams:** Other National Education Evaluation Reports may be prepared by specialist evaluation teams. These involve small groups of ERO staff who have expert knowledge in the area being evaluated. Recent examples of this include ERO’s evaluations of primary school science education and *Te Reo Māori* teaching. These specialist teams develop the evaluation methodologies, questions, indicators and information collection tools. Some of these investigations may also use a good practice approach, such as ERO’s recent reports on Boys’ Education and Good Practice in Alternative Education.

*Source: Nusche et al. (2012).*

Such thematic evaluation reports on school processes could also be useful for schools to improve their management, organisation, teaching, and student achievement. In New Zealand, for example, thematic evaluation reports contain a variety of tools for educators and parents, depending on the nature of the evaluation. For example, they may provide the indicators that the review officers used to make their judgments about quality; provide focus questions for school self-evaluation; describe examples of high and low quality practice and propose questions for parents to use when discussing related issues with school-level professionals.
It is also important to build overall closer links with the research community and ensure that qualitative education research can feed into policy and practice. INEE could strengthen links between the research community and policy development by, for example, collecting reviews of research on different thematic areas. It could also conduct systematic overviews of research and share results in an easily accessible format with schools.

**Respond to information gaps in the national monitoring system**

As outlined above, there is much scope to engage in further research and analysis of the information that is already available at the national level. At the same time, a concurrent focus should be on reviewing gaps within the current data collection system and developing a medium- and long-term strategy to improve data collection and measurement tools to respond to remaining information needs. In the context of changing social, economic and environmental demands, the development and reporting of relevant indicators will always be work in progress and keeping track of emerging priority demands poses an on-going challenge to any monitoring system. During the Review visit, the OECD Review Team identified a number of areas where collecting further information would help improve system monitoring.

First, there is a need for education policy makers at the local, state and national levels to have a better understanding of the basic numbers and movements of students and teachers across schools, municipalities and states. The development of RNAME is intended to respond to this challenge by administering large quantities of data and allowing different information systems to communicate among one another. This project is commendable and likely to considerably improve the possibilities to exploit national data for more in-depth analyses and research studies. A particular focus needs to be on improving the quality of the data reported by individual schools.

Second, there is room to give more prominence to the monitoring of inequities in learning outcomes between specific student groups. The value of annual monitoring reports could be further enhanced by regularly reporting information on student learning outcomes for groups where there is evidence of system underperformance. This would allow tracking the education system’s progress in responding to the needs of diverse groups. In New Zealand, for example, standard reporting data are disaggregated for the three major ethnic groups (European, Māori and Pasifika) and progress towards the achievement of government goals for the educational success of Māori learners is reported in a series of annual reports (Nusche et al., 2012).

Also, when providing student assessment data at the school level, it is important to contextualise results in relation to the actual socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of students in a given school rather than area-based measures of marginalisation. This will encourage more insightful forms of benchmarking, in particular analyses that allow comparing the performance of schools with similar socio-economic profiles. Such analyses do promote good use of data at the school level, not least because they are more likely to be seen as “fair” comparisons by school staff, but also because they can act as a catalyst for networking among schools facing similar issues in their local environments (see also Chapter 5).

Third, there should be consideration on how to best include the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the teaching and learning environment in the national monitoring system. One option for doing this is to administer a national-level questionnaire to a sample of students, parents, school directors and teachers in the system to collect views and perspectives about a range of aspects such as attitudes to learning and assessment,
perceptions on the implementation of policies, well-being, engagement, satisfaction, etc. In Norway, for example, a Student survey was introduced in 2005 and the results constitute a key part of the national reporting on the education system. In the annual summative report on education in Norway (*The Education Mirror*) there is always a clear presentation and analysis of results from the survey and these feed into the national policy debate (Nusche *et al.*, 2011b). The use of student and parental surveys could also be encouraged at the school level through the development of a template at the national level to which schools could add issues more related to their specific circumstances.

**Ensure systematic programme evaluations and follow-up**

Mexico’s commitment to systematically evaluating federal education programmes is commendable. More could be done, however, to ensure that programme evaluations are consistently conducted for all education programmes and to allow the effective use of their results. To facilitate the evaluation of programme effectiveness and impact, it is important that all new programmes have an evaluation component in their original design. New programmes should be approved only if the programme plan includes elements to facilitate its evaluation, such as targets and baseline indicators. Also it is important that programmes actually benefit their original target group. Hence, the federal programme providers should ensure that only schools meeting the required characteristics are allowed to participate in a given programme.

Finally, it would be important to review the role of the SEP in using programme evaluation results and making decisions about programme continuation, replication or termination. The SEP, as the programme designer, should be in a position to use the results to make strategic decisions about programmes. The evaluations will only lead to future improvements in programme design, development and implementation if the provider is given sufficient room to use the results for public policy design. While it makes sense for an independent body like the CONEVAL to oversee the evaluations, the OECD Review Team recommends providing greater scope for the evaluation results to inform strategic decision-making at the federal education level.

**Notes**

1. Information feeds into the following systems: the Basic Statistics of the National Education System (EBSEN), the Systems for Education Statistics Analysis (SISTESEP) and the Statistical Information System of Basic Education (SIEEB), as well as the Detailed Programming (PRODET) which gathers information on the increase of enrolment and need for new teaching positions and schools.

2. While information on the results of Indigenous schools is provided, this does not capture the Indigenous students attending other school types.

3. In New Zealand, for example, the national monitoring survey was discontinued in Māori-medium schools because the tests used were direct translations of the English items and not considered well adapted to the Māori-medium sector. The New Zealand Ministry of Education is now collaborating with Māori assessment experts to develop a national monitoring survey specifically for the Māori-medium sector (Nusche *et al.*, 2012).
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Conclusions and recommendations

Education system context

Student learning outcomes are below the OECD average but show some progress

Student learning outcomes in Mexico are considerably below the OECD average. In 2009, achievement levels of Mexican students in the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were statistically significantly below all other OECD countries in the assessed areas of reading literacy, mathematics and science. However, trend analyses of PISA results have shown some encouraging improvement in student learning outcomes, particularly in the area of mathematics. Despite the impressive expansion of the education system in the last few decades, educational attainment remains a challenge. It is the third lowest in the OECD area for the working-age population with 35% of 25-to-64-year-olds having attained at least upper secondary education in 2009 (against an OECD average of 73%). The high share of students leaving the education system too early with low skills remains also a major problem.

There are concerns about strong social inequities in the school system

There is evidence that student results are strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors. Research by the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE) on national student assessments in basic education shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between student performance and the family’s social-cultural conditions. This investigation concluded that: (i) there are enormous educational gaps between students within the same grade, which may reach the equivalent of over four schooling years; (ii) to a great extent such gaps are the product of social inequities, which are closely reproduced within the education system; and (iii) the socio-cultural conditions of students explain most of the variations in educational performance in Mexico.

A range of policy initiatives reinforce the role of evaluation and assessment

The role of evaluation and assessment as key tools to achieve quality and equity in education is reinforced by a range of policy initiatives. Mexico has recently introduced an extensive curricular reform to improve the coherence of the system and its focus on student achievement: the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB). The reform involves the preparation of updated study plans and programmes, focusing on pertinent teaching and with clearly defined expectations of skills to be acquired by grade and subject; improved training provided to school directors and teachers; and participative processes of school management. Also, the federal government funds public education partly through targeted educational programmes. These typically require an application by individual schools,
involve additional resources for schools and include an important evaluation component. In addition, the Alliance for Quality in Education, a national pact on education signed in 2008 by the Presidency and the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE) has helped to shape education policy since its creation, with initiatives addressing the modernisation of schools, the professionalisation of education agents, and educational evaluation.

Strengths and challenges

There is a range of initiatives to strengthen the evaluation and assessment framework which nonetheless remains incomplete and not integrated

Mexico has made a remarkable progress in developing the foundations of a framework for evaluation and assessment. As of the early 2000s, educational policy conferred a central strategic role to evaluation and assessment as indispensable tools for planning, accountability, and policy development. Milestones in the development of evaluation and assessment in Mexico were the creation of the National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE) in 2002 and the implementation of national standardised assessments: on the basis of a sample (EXCALE in 2005) and census-based (ENLACE in 2006). Currently, evaluation and assessment remains a priority of educational policy. The 2007-2012 Education Sector Programme (PROSEDU) places evaluation and assessment as a transversal issue across all education objectives with three main functions: accountability of education agents; information to parents; and support for public policies. The centrality of evaluation and assessment in the education agenda has resulted in the recent development of a range of initiatives which have the potential to strengthen evaluation and assessment in the school system. However, at the present time, there is no integrated evaluation and assessment framework. As in other OECD countries, the different components of evaluation and assessment have developed independently of each other over time. There are provisions for student assessment, school evaluation, teacher appraisal and system evaluation, but these are not explicitly integrated or aligned. The existing framework is not perceived as a coherent whole and it does not connect all the different components.

There are common references at the national level but further work is needed to align with the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education

There are common references to provide the basis for evaluation and assessment. At the system level, federal governments in office establish priorities for educational policy, which provide the framework for policy development. Education targets to be achieved by 2012 have also been established with associated indicators to permit the monitoring of their achievement. These are important references to shape the evaluation and assessment framework and inform, in particular, system evaluation. The General Education Law also provides clear aims for education emphasising the development of individuals and the promotion of values and attitudes. At the level of student learning goals, there is a basis for common expectations of outcomes from schooling. In basic education, there is a national curriculum supported by the general 2011 Study Plan for basic education and the grade- and subject-specific 2011 Study Programmes. These have been revised as part of the Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education (RIEB), a wide-ranging reform with the potential to have long-lasting effects on student learning in Mexico. It puts emphasis on
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concepts such as assessment for learning, expected learning outcomes, collaborative learning, project-based work, student self-assessment and peer assessment and criterion-referenced marking, all of which place students at the centre of the learning. A crucial aspect to the successful implementation of the RIEB is its alignment to the evaluation and assessment framework, which is in its starting phase. While there has been progress in aligning ENLACE to the RIEB, there is a need to re-align EXCALE with the curricular standards proposed in the RIEB, develop teacher capacity to assess against RIEB’s student learning objectives, and ensure the development of teaching and school management standards aligned with the RIEB.

The governance of the evaluation and assessment framework raises some concerns.

The distribution of responsibilities within the evaluation and assessment framework raises some concerns. First, even if the General Education Law clearly states that the evaluation of the education system is an exclusive responsibility of the SEP, in practice the division of labour between the SEP and INEE within the framework remains unclear. There is considerable overlap between the work of the two institutions, for instance on the development of education indicators, the production of annual reports on the state of education in Mexico, or on the development of a vision for school evaluation. While INEE has technical autonomy over its work, at the time of the visit by the OECD Review Team it remained politically and financially dependent on the SEP. However, 2012 revisions to the 2002 Presidential Decree which created the INEE make INEE’s autonomy more explicit and provide more independence from the SEP. Second, while states are required to implement federally-dictated evaluation and assessment policies and are allowed to develop complementary initiatives, they do not have clear domains of responsibility within the evaluation and assessment framework. This goes along with a deficit of structures for evaluation at the local level, in view of supporting schools’ work. Third, teacher appraisal, which benefits from a large share of the resources invested in the evaluation and assessment framework, is highly politicised and does not benefit from a co-ordinated management at the national level.

There is a narrow conception of evaluation and assessment and room to strengthen its improvement function.

There is a narrow understanding of the purposes and the potential of evaluation and assessment. Evaluation and assessment are still perceived mostly as instruments to hold stakeholders accountable, to “control” and assess compliance with regulations. This is visible at all levels with the focus often being whether formal requirements are met with less attention given to the quality of practices or ways for these to improve. For instance, supervision structures within states emphasise administrative rather than pedagogical aspects of schools, student assessment remains focussed on summative results and teacher appraisal mostly aims at salary progression and monetary rewards. The idea that the ultimate objective of evaluation and assessment is to improve students’ learning and teachers’ teaching is not yet fully matured in the Mexican evaluation and assessment framework. Also, evaluation and assessment in Mexico is to a great extent conceived as “measurement”. This reflects the dominance of ENLACE in the evaluation and assessment framework. In addition to the primary role for which it was conceived, the formative assessment of students, ENLACE results constitute the dominant instrument in in-service teacher appraisal, the central factor in school accountability (through the
publication of results at the school level), and the *de facto* key element in the evaluation of the national education system and the state education sub-systems. Overall, it is apparent that the policy initiatives in evaluation and assessment of the last few years have emphasised accountability over improvement.

There is strong capacity at the national level but also a need to strengthen competencies for evaluation and assessment across the system

The capacity for evaluation and assessment at the federal level is impressive. Millions of student assessments and teacher examinations are processed every year requiring a large logistical capacity and high levels of technical expertise. This is the result of considerable technical expertise accumulated in an institution such as the National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (CENEVAL), top methodological guidance from INEE, and strong policy and implementation capacity within the SEP. Areas such as educational measurement, psychometrics, test development, validation of test items or scaling methods are fairly well developed in Mexico. However, while there have been considerable national efforts to stimulate an evaluation culture by strengthening assessment and evaluation activities, there are still limited evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the education system. Competencies for evaluation and assessment at the state and local levels remain limited. Moreover, school supervision structures within states remain mostly focused on administrative tasks rather than engaging in a dialogue with individual schools around pedagogical aspects. There is great variation in the capacity of supervisors, heads of teaching, and heads of sector to effectively engage in quality assurance practices and provide support to schools. There is also a need to improve the competencies of school leaders in evaluation and assessment, in particular with regard to ensuring a meaningful school self-evaluation process, and providing pedagogical guidance and coaching to individual teachers. Other areas in which building capacity is a considerable challenge include: the competencies of teachers for student assessment (both formative and summative); the data handling skills of school agents (e.g. to use ENLACE results); and analytical capacity for educational planning and policy development at the system level.

Assessment is seen as part of the professional role of teachers but approaches to learning and assessment remain markedly traditional

Teachers in Mexico play an important role in student assessment, as both formative continuous assessment and summative assessment are an essential part of their professional responsibilities. Assessment in Mexico is integral to the work of teachers. Evidence on student learning is collected regularly and a variety of aspects are taken into account for student assessment: tasks, effort, presentations, tests, projects. However, teaching, learning and assessment still take place in a somewhat “traditional” setting with the teacher leading his/her classroom, the students typically not involved in the planning and organisation of lessons and assessment concentrating on summative scores.
The curricular reform has much potential to improve student assessment practices

The RIEB is bringing into the education scene a sound approach to classroom-based assessment. By unifying curricular efforts around expected learning outcomes, the RIEB is generating a positive move from a content-based curriculum to a competencies-oriented one. This constitutes an important step forward for Mexico. The RIEB includes a clear and interesting approach to student assessment in the classroom, for both formative and summative purposes. It expands the meaning of assessment, conceiving it as an essential part of teaching and learning; proposes the use of a wide range of assessment instruments; emphasises the formative purpose of classroom-based assessment; and introduces a critical shift in giving a new meaning to marks. The RIEB intends to respond to a range of current challenges in student assessment. Teachers seem to have a narrow understanding of formative assessment. Giving feedback to students is conceived as giving them marks or points for a task, telling students whether their work was acceptable or not, or asking them to revise their work or make extra effort. Also, marking practices lack pedagogical significance. Marking in Mexico consists of assigning points to students across a range of tasks and behaviours and then averaging them to obtain a mark. Points for students’ work are assigned in a normative way, by comparing students within classes and giving the greatest number of points to the “best” student, regardless of whether or not the standards are indeed excellent. At present there is also a need to improve the instruments for reporting marks.

ENLACE has too many objectives and a number of unintended effects on school practices

While ENLACE was originally supposed to be a diagnostic and formative assessment instrument, new objectives and consequences were added subsequently, the most important of which is the use of its results to hold schools accountable and provide monetary incentives to teachers and school directors. ENLACE has brought considerable benefits such as further teacher concentration on student achievement, particularly that of underperforming students, or greater awareness of the importance of reading comprehension. But detrimental effects of ENLACE are also visible in the Mexican school system. Teaching to the test has become a widely spread pedagogical practice. School directors, teachers and students consider that practising standardised assessments is the best strategy for improving student achievement. Important educational objectives, which are not assessed in ENLACE, are neglected. As standardised tests cover a limited range of competencies and cross-curricular skills, teaching to the test narrows students’ learning experiences. Also, a major problem in external student assessment in Mexico is the almost exclusive use of multiple-choice tests, with potential distortionary effects on the education of children.

There is limited consistency of student assessment across schools and classes

Schools have no explicit marking criteria and typically do not have documentation on their approaches to student assessment. This fact, together with the absence of moderation procedures for aligning the meaning of teachers’ marks, leads to a situation in which the meaning of marks differs from one region to another, from one school to the next and
even from one classroom to another classroom within the same school and from one
student to another within the same classroom.

There is a general consensus about the need for teacher appraisal but the overall framework is complex and fragmented

Teacher appraisal is recognised as an important tool to improve student learning and is central in the overall evaluation and assessment framework. This is reflected in the very comprehensive approach to teacher appraisal in Mexico, with a multitude of schemes and programmes. Teacher appraisal is generally perceived positively as a regular component of teachers’ careers. Teachers are not defensive against teacher appraisal and seem generally open to external feedback from a trusted source. However, teacher appraisal appears complex and fragmented. The overall system of teacher appraisal is the result of the accumulation of isolated programmes and initiatives which evolved independently of each other over time and does not come across as a coherent whole. Given the multitude of instruments and appraisal components, teachers do not receive consistent and clear signals about what they should be doing to be a “good teacher”. There also come gaps in the teacher appraisal framework. A major one, once the teacher is in the profession, is that teacher appraisal is not mandatory and therefore a good proportion of teachers do not undergo any performance appraisal. This is now being addressed through the implementation of the Universal Evaluation System. Also, appraisal for in-service teachers who prefer to remain in the classroom is limited to schemes for salary progression (National Teacher Career Programme, PNCM) and financial stimuli (Incentives Programme for Teacher Quality). As a result, there is no formal teacher appraisal which focuses on teacher development and feedback for the improvement of practices. Informal feedback for improvement is also undertaken at the school level (through school management and supervisors) but there is no external formal validation of such practices.

The introduction of the National Teaching Post Competition provides greater transparency to teacher recruitment

A major positive development has been the introduction of the National Teaching Post Competition, in an initial stage through the National Examination of Teaching Knowledge and Skills (ENCHD). This competition accomplishes two major functions: (i) it brings more transparency to the teacher recruitment process, significantly reducing the number of teaching posts allocated on an improper basis; and (ii) it identifies teachers weakly prepared by initial teacher education programmes.

There is currently no shared understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching but there are efforts to develop teaching standards

Even though there have been recent significant efforts to develop teaching standards in Mexico, these have not yet produced visible results and the education system currently still lacks a national framework defining standards for the teaching profession. Hence, at the moment, there is no clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. At the national level, there are no uniform performance criteria or reference frameworks against which teachers are appraised.
**The improvement of teaching quality is not at the centre of teacher appraisal**

A challenge for Mexico is that currently in-service teacher appraisal is predominantly a mechanism to award rewards to teachers mostly based on instruments (ENLACE results and standardised teacher examinations) that only indirectly measure the quality of the teaching. Teacher appraisal, as it is currently conceived, does not emphasise the promotion of teacher improvement. Teachers receive little feedback or advice for the improvement of their practices. There is not enough focus on strategies for promoting improvements in the quality of teaching as a consequence of teacher appraisal. Also, it appears that in general there are few consequences of negative teacher appraisals. This means that even when teachers are identified as lower-performing, there is little pressure or incentive for them to actively work on improvement.

**The use of student standardised assessments in teacher appraisal raises a range of concerns**

In Mexico, ENLACE results function as the dominant instrument in the formal appraisal of in-service teachers. Stimuli in the Incentives Programme are based on ENLACE and in both the PNCM and the Universal Evaluation System, ENLACE accounts for 50% of the teacher’s “score”. In spite of its attractiveness, using student standardised test scores as an instrument for teacher appraisal is faced with numerous challenges. First, student learning is influenced by many factors. ENLACE scores carry much more than the impact of the appraised teacher and also reflect, for instance, the impact of the student’s family, the student’s previous learning or the resources of the school. Second, standardised assessments used to differentiate students are not specifically designed for the purpose of appraising teachers. In Mexico, student standardised assessment scores have not been validated as a measure of teachers’ performance. Third, teaching impact on students is not restricted to areas assessed through student standardised assessments – generally limited to reading and numeracy – but also include transfer of psychological, civic and lifelong learning skills. In addition, the use of student standardised assessments to appraise individual teachers has potential detrimental effects. For example, teaching to the test is extensive in Mexican schools. The disproportionate focus on ENLACE runs the risk of ENLACE becoming the national curriculum, when ENLACE only measures achievement in a subset of learning objectives in Spanish and mathematics. Finally, current in-service teacher appraisal processes do not grant equal opportunities for teachers to secure the associated rewards. Appraising teachers using raw ENLACE results puts at a considerable disadvantage those teachers working in more difficult circumstances. Teachers not “covered” by ENLACE are also excluded from the individual stimuli component of the Incentives Programme.

**Teacher appraisal is not embedded in a clearly defined teacher career structure**

In Mexico, there is no career path for effective teachers. Promotion through the Vertical Promotion System consists only of advancement into a school management role, requiring the teacher to leave the classroom. In turn, the PNCM consists essentially of a salary progression which does not come with greater responsibilities or new roles within the school. Hence, within a teaching role there are few opportunities for promotion, greater recognition and more responsibility. There are no career steps in teacher
development (e.g. beginning; classroom teacher; experienced teacher), which would permit a better match between teacher competence and skills and the tasks to be performed at schools.

School leaders and state educational authorities play little role in teacher appraisal

Teacher appraisal in Mexico does not provide school directors with leverage to lead the core business of teaching and learning in their school. School leaders currently play no role in formal in-service teacher appraisal. Only in the Vertical Promotion System are they involved in appraising the aptitude, discipline and punctuality of candidates to school management posts. Clearly, the teacher appraisal system is not designed in a way as to encourage pedagogical leadership by school leaders. Moreover, state educational authorities as well as their supervision structures play no significant role in formal in-service teacher appraisal. This is surprising in light of the fact that state educational authorities are the employers of the teachers. This translates into an unsuitable separation between the management of the teaching body (by state educational authorities) and the system for its appraisal and rewards (by the federal educational authorities).

There is no permeating culture of school evaluation and a comprehensive system is lacking

The notion of school evaluation is not well embedded in Mexican education principles and practices. On the contrary, it appears that attempts to introduce evaluation in this context have had first to counter strong feelings of apprehension and wariness among teachers and school directors. Evaluation or inspection has been associated with negativity and censure, not with improvement. This pronounced conceptual belief has detracted from efforts at federal level to introduce a system of school evaluation and may have resulted in an over-reliance in the power of weakly supported self-evaluation to effect change. The key challenge for Mexico is to develop a comprehensive system of school evaluation. Overall, key components of a successful policy development and implementation for school evaluation and improvement are missing from the approaches currently adopted in Mexico. A sustained meaningful system of external school evaluation is lacking. Currently, the external monitoring of schools is undertaken by the supervision system in place in the different states. However, this system does not constitute an authentic approach to external school evaluation. Supervisors may or may not have an educational background and may play one or more of a number of roles. The capacity of supervisors in general to engage in school evaluations in ways which may promote school improvement as well as resulting in accurate evaluation of the quality of a school’s work is limited under present conditions. The present system does not include qualitative aspects which are reliable and validated and which contribute to telling the full story of any school. Without external evaluation, there is a danger that judgements of school quality will be made on the basis of very narrow information.

School self-evaluation is well supported at federal level but practices remain incipient

Over the last 10-15 years there has been considerable focus on school self-evaluation as one way of drawing attention to quality and promoting improvement. Mexico has shown itself open to outside influences and there has been good research on systems and
practices in other countries relating to self-evaluation. The materials produced in support of self-evaluation at school level are detailed, comprehensive and of good quality. They include advice, instruments and options for self-evaluation and for the construction and implementation of an effective school improvement plan as one of the outcomes of the self-evaluation process. However, the challenge for Mexico is to ensure that these useful materials are well understood, are used consistently in all schools, have sustained and significant impact and play a broader role in use by personnel for external school evaluation. The reality is that this work did not result in any sustained and consistent approach to self-evaluation across the country.

**There is a current lack of reporting on qualitative aspects of schools’ work and student outcomes at the school level are not contextualised**

A clear challenge for the Mexican system is to find effective ways of reporting on the quality of education at all levels. There is a current lack of reporting on qualitative aspects of the work of individual schools for parents and other stakeholders. There is as yet no way of reporting on the quality of educational processes and in general interpreting the quantitative data in ways which provide a fuller picture presenting the actual quality of education at school level. The data which became publicly available through the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (RNAME) represent an undoubted advance in reporting on the quality of outcomes in individual schools. However, without more sophisticated quantitative analyses or a qualitative element to place alongside the data, there is the risk of simplistic interpretation of what constitutes quality at school level, arising from an incomplete narrative telling the “story” of the school in its particular context and circumstances. Another concern relates to making fair comparisons of student outcomes across schools. At the moment, raw averages of ENLACE assessment results are published at the school level, inevitably leading the media to publish school rankings which do not take account of schools’ specific circumstances. This can considerably distort considerations about the effectiveness of each school as raw results do not reflect the value added by schools to student results.

**The work of school directors is too focussed on administrative tasks and their appraisal is inadequate**

Administration of school services such as ensuring safe infrastructure and compliance with legislation appears to be the actual focus of school directors’ work. While such aspects are important for the context of learning and for a certain type of accountability, they leave little time for school directors to focus on aspects which have a greater effect on quality. In addition, the quality of their work once appointed is generally evaluated through their voluntary participation in the National Teacher Career Programme (PNCM). Within that context, directors are appraised through a section of test items relating specifically to school management. Such a system may allow authorities to gain a view of some directors’ knowledge of law and theories of management. However, it could not come close to showing levels of those types of leadership qualities required to engage the school in effective school self-evaluation, drive improvement in key processes such as learning and teaching, and galvanise parents and the locality to be part of the learning community.
The monitoring of education system quality is a well-developed component of the Mexican approach to evaluation and assessment. There has been a lot of attention among policy makers and the civil society on developing indicators at the national and state levels in order to measure the quality and progress of the education system as a whole. This key focus on system evaluation is reflected in the establishment of comprehensive information systems and sample-based national assessments that have been continuously refined over the last decade. There is wide acceptance of the principle that education policies and programmes should be continuously monitored and evaluated in order to inform future policy development and educational planning. The key challenge, however, is to ensure that stakeholders across the system make effective use of the available data. System-level data are not well exploited to inform the development of policies. Currently, most focus nationally is on the collection of data and the operation of assessments, with less attention paid to how such results could be used to determine priorities and inform strategies. There seems to be limited capacity and/or interest at the state and national levels to engage in deeper analysis and interpretation of results. Another challenge is to facilitate the use of data by professionals at the school level. Given Mexico’s strong centralised tradition, the flow of data in the system goes mostly into one direction, from the schools towards higher levels of the educational administration, but there is limited interaction and feedback for schools regarding the information they provide.

A comprehensive national statistics and registry system is well established but some data gaps remain in the national monitoring system

A key strength of Mexico’s approach to system evaluation is its focus on building a comprehensive national statistics and indicators system. There are major efforts to collect data on education performance and the various factors influencing it, to monitor trends over time and analyse the state of the education system. In recent years, there has been strong focus on integrating information from a range of different sources and databases so as to improve the accuracy and usefulness of information for analysis and decision-making. The most recent policy initiative to strengthen information systems has been the development of the National Student, Teacher and School Registry (RNAME), which has great potential to contribute to improving transparency and accountability of the education system. However, there are some areas where the collection of data should be further developed. Keeping track of individual student and teacher trajectories remains an important challenge in Mexico, although RNAME will go a long way to addressing this challenge. More attention could also be paid to systematically reporting on inequities in the learning outcomes of different student groups, e.g. students from different socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds. Another data gap concerns the measurement of the school socio-economic context. Finally, not much information is available on broader aspects of education quality, such as student attitudes, motivation and well-being and the overall teaching and learning environment in schools.
EXCALE provides system-wide information on student learning outcomes. The primary purpose is to obtain and analyse information on student learning outcomes so as to monitor the progress of the national education system and state sub-systems and to provide information to improve education policy and practice. Several elements make EXCALE particularly well suited for this purpose. First, EXCALE is referenced to the Mexican curriculum, and as such it allows to measure progress towards national education goals and to broaden the national debate beyond results in international surveys. Second, EXCALE’s matrix design allows for a wider range of knowledge and skills to be tested without overburdening individual students. Third, EXCALE not only measures outcomes but also gathers information on the characteristics of students and on factors that may contribute to explaining their results. However, further improvements are needed to secure the relevance of EXCALE. Key challenges are to ensure that EXCALE: adequately reflects the new expected learning outcomes and curriculum standards proposed by the RIEB; is made more inclusive for cultural and linguistic minorities; and is not threatened as the key instrument for system monitoring by the disproportionate attention paid to ENLACE results at all levels of the system.

Policy recommendations

Sustain efforts to strengthen evaluation and assessment and place greater emphasis on their improvement function

The national policies for evaluation and assessment should hold a steady course, accommodating well-founded concerns, and making the adjustments necessary so evaluation and assessment becomes a meaningful and valuable exercise in schools and classrooms. The current evaluation and assessment framework provides a good basis for further development. It is comprehensive, includes most domains of evaluation and assessment, a wide range of sources of data, and it generates useful results for policy development. However, some adjustments are needed to consolidate the meaningfulness of evaluation and assessment in the Mexican school system. A priority is to reinforce the improvement function of evaluation and assessment and reflect on the best ways for evaluation and assessment to improve student learning. Realising the full potential of the evaluation and assessment framework involves establishing strategies to strengthen the linkages to classroom practice, where the improvement of student learning takes place. This involves the reinforcement of the role of state educational authorities in developing structures to undertake school-level evaluation procedures and provide the necessary follow-up support to drive school improvement. The articulation of evaluation and assessment at the local level is essential to establish links between national level policies and the improvement of classroom practices. A critical element in the effectiveness of the evaluation and assessment framework is its proper alignment with the RIEB. The RIEB calls for a greater emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment, which requires significant re-orientations of most of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework. This includes more attention to student formative assessment, greater emphasis on self-reflection for all the school agents, greater focus on continuous improvement in teacher appraisal, and better use of results for feedback.
Integrate the evaluation and assessment framework

Integrate the evaluation and assessment framework

The full potential of evaluation and assessment will not be realised until the framework is fully integrated and is perceived as a coherent whole. An important initial step is to develop a strategic plan or framework document that conceptualises a complete evaluation and assessment framework and articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components. The different levels of education governance should be engaged, in particular state educational authorities so their responsibilities and roles in the framework are clearly established. The plan should essentially constitute a common framework of reference for educational evaluation across the country with the ultimate objective of embedding evaluation as an on-going and essential part of the professionalism of the actors in the education system. The plan should establish a clear rationale for evaluation and assessment and a compelling narrative about how evaluation and assessment align with the different elements in the education reform programme. It should describe how each component of the evaluation and assessment framework can produce results that are useful for classroom practice and school improvement activities. The plan should include strategies to both strengthen some of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework and to develop articulations across the components.

Adjust the governance of the evaluation and assessment framework

Adjust the governance of the evaluation and assessment framework

The governance of the evaluation and assessment framework could benefit from a few significant adjustments. This would be in a context where the SEP retains the leadership in setting educational strategy and developing educational policy and maintains a role in the implementation of all the components of the evaluation and assessment framework. A first adjustment recommended is the considerable expansion of the autonomy of INEE so it can take the leadership in evaluation and assessment activities in the country. The objective would be to establish INEE as the authoritative voice in evaluation and assessment in Mexico, highly credible for its expertise and technical capacity, and issuing directions for the implementation of evaluation and assessment procedures in the country. Considerable progress was made in this direction on 16 May 2012 through the revision to the 2002 Presidential Decree which created the INEE. The revisions, which will take effect in September 2012, reinforce INEE’s autonomy, strengthen its technical expertise, and provide further independence from the SEP. A second major adjustment involves requiring (or giving strong incentives for) state educational authorities to establish structures to formally organise external school evaluation, supervise school self-evaluation, and validate school-based approaches to teacher appraisal. This could be done through the establishment of agencies (or institutes) with responsibility for school supervision and improvement. A third adjustment is to ensure a better co-ordination of the teaching profession. This could be achieved through the creation of an independent body at the federal level to co-ordinate efforts in the management and improvement of the teaching workforce in the country.

Significantly invest in evaluation and assessment capacity development across the school system

Significantly invest in evaluation and assessment capacity development across the school system

As the evaluation and assessment framework develops and gains coherence, an area for policy priority is consolidating efforts to improve the capacity for evaluation and assessment. A priority is to improve the competencies for evaluation of state educational...
authorities and staff in their supervision structures (supervisors, heads of teaching, heads of sector). There is also a need to reinforce the educational leadership skills of school principals as their role in Mexico still retains a more traditional focus on administrative tasks. The objective is that school leaders operate effective feedback, coaching and appraisal arrangements for their staff and effectively lead whole-school evaluation processes. Teachers could also benefit from a range of development opportunities. These include: improving skills for formative assessment including engaging students in assessment; enhancing the capacity to assess against the student learning objectives defined in the RIEB, including promoting collaborative work among teachers around student summative assessment; and improving the capacity to collect and analyse information for self-improvement.

Ensure a coherent and comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the curricular reform

In the present context the improvement of classroom-based assessment in Mexico needs to be developed alongside the implementation of the RIEB, given the inclusion of relevant initiatives related to both formative and summative assessment. Additionally, the implementation and impact of the RIEB crucially depend on the successful introduction of changes in student assessment practices and on aligning these with the expected learning outcomes and standards defined in the new curriculum. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the breadth of the curriculum and learning goals established in the new Study Plan is maintained in student assessment by making sure that all subject areas and objectives are given certain forms of attention. This involves not only classroom-based assessment, but also external assessments. As for classroom-based assessment, teachers need to integrate in their practices a much broader range of activities and instruments, to promote and capture more complex cognitive processes. Teachers should receive support and training to move from a rather traditional view of teaching, conceived as explaining themes and concepts, towards a broader concept based on the facilitation of learning and the development of competencies. In this context, the repertoire of approaches to learning and assessment needs to be expanded, moving away from assigning lots of exercises and practising tests. Also, if student marking is to be aligned with the RIEB’s expected learning outcomes and standards in a consistent way across the country, then a priority is to establish mechanisms for the moderation of marking, both within and across schools.

Develop strategies to address the detrimental effects of ENLACE

A major priority for policy should be the development of strategies to eliminate or at the very least reduce the current detrimental effects of ENLACE, an effort to be informed by an in-depth study of the impact of ENLACE on practices in schools and classrooms. One strategy could be reducing the high stakes of ENLACE. A range of options are possible. A possibility is to rethink the objectives of ENLACE, including a return to the original motivation of ENLACE as a purely diagnostic and formative tool for student assessment. Another possibility is to add to this original objective some role in system evaluation to assess whether, at the national level, student learning objectives in the subjects covered by ENLACE are achieved or not. If the objective of using ENLACE for school accountability (publication of ENLACE results at the school level) and teacher appraisal is maintained, then it is imperative to develop value-added techniques to capture
the real impact of individual schools and considerably reduce the weight of ENLACE results in teacher appraisal. Another strategy is to transform ENLACE into a tool for the external summative assessment of students, i.e. an external examination system. This would involve extending the range of student learning objectives assessed by including more subjects and broadening the range of tasks assessed. It would also have consequences for students, as with the contribution to final marks or as a certification mechanism at the end of key stages in education (such as end of educational cycles).

**Promote the formative use of standardised student assessments**

A policy priority should be to promote the adequate formative use of standardised student assessments such as ENLACE and PISA, including getting away from the incentives given to schools to practise the tests. Also, there should be a reflection about improving the timeliness of results’ delivery so they can inform learning strategies in the same school year ENLACE is taken. In the case of PISA, authorities should focus teachers’ attention on understanding its framework – what PISA assesses – and on reflecting and discussing how to develop the assessed competencies in the classroom.

**Consolidate teacher appraisal with the development of a medium-term vision**

Mexico has undertaken significant efforts to implement teacher appraisal and develop an evaluation culture among the teaching workforce. Placing teacher appraisal at the core of school reforms achieved a large consensus among the teaching profession that meaningful teacher appraisal is indispensable. Although the development of teacher appraisal is at an early stage and is only partially successful, it is important not to lose the ground that has been gained. Recognising the achievements to date, including the Universal Evaluation System which seeks to cover all teachers in the system and proposes a new formative emphasis to teacher appraisal, Mexico needs to develop a medium-term vision for teacher appraisal. The approach to teacher appraisal which holds greatest promise of sustained high impact on student learning is one where teachers engage in reflective practice, study their own practices, and share their experience with their peers as a routine part of professional life.

**Implement teaching standards to guide teacher appraisal and professional development**

Mexico needs to have a basic reference of what good teaching means. This involves establishing a clear set of coherent teaching standards that signal to teachers and to society as a whole the core knowledge, skills and values associated with effective teaching at different stages of a teaching career. The teaching standards should be developed in a way as to provide a common basis to guide key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher professional development, career advancement and, of course, teacher appraisal (including the alignment of its different components). Clear, well-structured and widely supported professional standards for teachers can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the various elements involved in developing teachers’ competencies.
**Aim for a greater balance in the long term between the summative and formative functions of teacher appraisal**

There needs to be a stronger emphasis on teacher appraisal for improvement purposes (i.e. developmental appraisal). Given that there are risks that the improvement function is hampered by high-stakes teacher appraisal, it is proposed that a component predominantly dedicated to developmental appraisal, fully internal to the school, be created. This development appraisal would have as its main purpose the continuous improvement of teaching practices in the school. It would be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers, and the school management. The main outcome would be feedback on teaching performance which would lead to a plan for professional development. In order to guarantee the systematic and coherent application of developmental evaluation across Mexican schools, it would be important to undertake the external validation of the respective school processes. Alongside developmental appraisal, the summative function of teacher appraisal that is currently being achieved through the PNCM, the Universal Evaluation System and the principles of the Vertical Promotion System (in the sense of career stages within teaching) could be brought together into a single process of teacher appraisal for career progression through a certification process associated with a teacher career structure to be created (with progression within career paths and access to distinct career paths). This would formalise the principle of advancement on merit associated with career opportunities for effective teachers bringing together both vertical and horizontal promotions. Each permanent teacher in the system would be required to periodically (say every four years) be the subject of a formal appraisal for certification (or re-certification). The purpose would be to certify teachers periodically as fit for the profession. Both developmental appraisal and appraisal for certification should reduce the weight of student standardised assessment results and rely on a greater variety of instruments, including classroom observation and the preparation of a portfolio.

**Ensure states are actively engaged in teacher appraisal and give a more prominent role to school leaders**

A move towards a greater emphasis on the improvement (or developmental) function of teacher appraisal inevitably requires a greater involvement of state educational authorities in teacher appraisal processes. Reflecting their responsibilities for the employment of teachers, state educational authorities should take the lead in organising teacher appraisal processes. This should be done in the context of a national framework with guidance, support and co-ordination from federal-level authorities. Also, effective operation of teacher appraisal and its contribution to school development will depend to a great extent on the pedagogical leadership of school directors. Teacher appraisal will only succeed in raising educational standards if school directors take direct responsibility for exerting pedagogical leadership and for assuming the quality of education in their schools. Hence, it is vital that school directors (and other members of the school management team) play a role in teacher appraisal.

**Develop a long-term plan and take action to introduce a comprehensive and objective system of school evaluation**

Longer-term planning should include the aim of the introduction of a comprehensive system of school evaluation. This involves taking the positive individual elements which already exist and developing them into a fully-rounded model of school evaluation, with
all the necessary components. These would include at least the following elements:

- ensuring that national advice on self-evaluation penetrates the system and promotes the involvement of all schools;
- reinforcing the awareness not only of self-evaluation processes but of the rigour required to make self-evaluation lead to improvement;
- ensuring that all states recommend or require all schools to be involved in self-evaluation;
- promoting and encouraging states to have mechanisms through which they can engage in external evaluation of schools using transparent and known criteria; and strengthening and broadening the role of supervisors as potential external evaluators – to play a key role in school evaluation and thereby support improvement at classroom and school levels. In this context, consideration should be given by all states to the creation of an agency for school evaluation, perhaps attached to state evaluation institutes where such are in existence. These state agencies would be responsible for planning and undertaking external evaluations, validating self-evaluation, spreading good practice and offering suggestions for required areas of staff development of teachers, school directors and the supervisors themselves, resulting from analyses of evaluations conducted.

**Shift the focus of school directors’ work towards learning and improvement and develop a detached system of school leadership appraisal**

An important priority is to ensure that school directors have or develop the capacities to fulfil such a role. Ways will have to be found to release them from excessive burdens of administrative work, allowing them to focus more on students, teachers and learning. This implies the development of leadership training programmes, involving such components as in-school practical projects, self-evaluation support and action research, mentoring or coaching from successful school directors and the reduction of non-productive work or administrative work which could be better undertaken by professional administrators. Also, appraisal of the work of school directors should be separated out from teacher appraisal and should include evaluation of appropriate subsets of the standards, including such aspects as staff teamwork, learning and teaching improvements, improvements in student outcomes at school level, the quality of partnership with parents and the community and overall school ethos, none of which can be evaluated effectively through written test or interview.

**Report on the quality of schools in ways which are supportive but have impact for schools and for policy makers at state and federal levels**

A comprehensive reporting system should be another longer-term goal. A number of components are necessary, including: school-level evaluation processes supported by supervisors with appropriate capacities to support and challenge school self-evaluation; school annual reports and summary improvement plans published and available to all parents; information on self-evaluation validated by supervisors through external evaluation, within an individual school report; school reports aggregated into a local-level report with common strengths and aspects which need to be developed; at state level validation of local reports by a quality agency or appropriate personnel and aggregation to produce a report on the quality of education at state level; and state-level data aggregated at federal level by appropriate personnel or agencies, such as INEE, to produce a national report on the quality of education, with recommendations for action at national and state levels.
Expand the school information system and make more meaningful comparisons across schools

Steps should be taken to develop additional effective ways of using school-level statistical data already available by expanding the schools information system (RNAME). Developments could include, alongside the existing raw test scores in ENLACE, quantitative data such as comparison of an individual school’s outcomes with the averages achieved by schools with similar characteristics. In addition, a measure of value-added for individual students across grades in primary and from the end of primary through to the end of basic education schooling at lower secondary would provide a meaningful narrative to data. There should also be a long-term aim to include some qualitative aspects in the reports on individual schools, or a link to a report from a school’s external evaluation. Also, improving the data on the students’ socio-economic background and developing the associated indicators at the school level would permit a more meaningful comparison of student results for “similar” groups of schools (schools with students from similar backgrounds).

Optimise the reporting and use of system-level data to inform policy and practice

National education authorities together with INEE should devise a strategy to optimise the use of existing system-level data by stakeholders across the system. A priority should be on further improving the use of system-level information for educational planning and policy development. While, indeed, large amounts of system-level information exist in Mexico, the key focus in the coming years should be on drawing from this information to develop strategies for the improvement of education at the state and national level. Further steps could also be taken to communicate results from the national monitoring system more effectively to encourage their use by different stakeholders. It is essential that schools are not merely seen as data providers but that they become part of a collaborative process of data sharing and analysis. The SEP in collaboration with INEE should explore ways of presenting analyses in user-friendly ways, designing interfaces and presentational approaches which give non-technical users help with the interpretation and use of specific analyses.

Respond to information gaps in the national monitoring system

A focus should be on reviewing gaps within the current data collection system and developing a medium- and long-term strategy to improve data collection and measurement tools to respond to remaining information needs. Areas where collecting further information would help improve system monitoring are: individual student and teacher trajectories in the school system; the monitoring of inequities in learning outcomes between specific student groups; the socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of students; and the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the teaching and learning environment.
It would be important to review the EXCALE assessments in relation to their alignment with the new curriculum requirements to ensure that the assessments stay relevant for system evaluation and longitudinal monitoring of results. In addition, it is important to review the responsiveness of EXCALE to different linguistic and cultural groups in Mexico and ensure EXCALE is made more inclusive by developing special adaptations for students with special needs. There is also scope to make greater use of EXCALE to monitor the progress of the Mexican education system towards achieving its equity objectives. To this end, INEE should consider to systematically report disaggregated results for relevant groups of students, such as Indigenous students, students with a migrant background and students from different socio-economic backgrounds.
Annex A. The OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

The OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes is designed to respond to the strong interest in evaluation and assessment issues evident at national and international levels. It provides a description of design, implementation and use of assessment and evaluation procedures in countries; analyses strengths and weaknesses of different approaches; and provides recommendations for improvement. The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation frameworks that countries use with the objective of improving student outcomes. These include student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation. The Review focuses on primary and secondary education.¹

The overall purpose is to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education.² The overarching policy question is “How can assessment and evaluation policies work together more effectively to improve student outcomes in primary and secondary schools?” The Review further concentrates on five key issues for analysis: (i) Designing a systemic framework for evaluation and assessment; (ii) Ensuring the effectiveness of evaluation and assessment procedures; (iii) Developing competencies for evaluation and for using feedback; (iv) Making the best use of evaluation results; and (v) Implementing evaluation and assessment policies.

Twenty-three countries are actively engaged in the Review. These cover a wide range of economic and social contexts, and among them they illustrate quite different approaches to evaluation and assessment in school systems. This will allow a comparative perspective on key policy issues. These countries prepare a detailed background report, following a standard set of guidelines. Countries can also opt for a detailed Review, undertaken by a team consisting of members of the OECD Secretariat and external experts. Twelve OECD countries have opted for a Country Review. The final comparative report from the OECD Review, bringing together lessons from all countries, will be completed in 2012.

The project is overseen by the Group of National Experts on Evaluation and Assessment, which was established as a subsidiary body of the OECD Education Policy Committee in order to guide the methods, timing and principles of the Review. More details are available from the website dedicated to the Review: www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.
Notes

1. The scope of the Review does not include early childhood education and care, apprenticeships within vocational education and training, and adult education.

2. The project’s purposes and scope are detailed in the OECD 2009 document entitled “OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Design and Implementation Plan for the Review”, which is available from the project website www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.
### Annex B. Visit programme

**Tuesday, 7 February 2012, Mexico City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30 – 09:30</td>
<td>Undersecretary of Basic Education (SEB), Lic. Francisco Ciscomani Freaner, and Head of Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE), Lic. Bernardo Rojas Nájera</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:15</td>
<td>Evaluation of the National Education System</td>
<td>Director General of Planning (DGP)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Director of Educational Process Evaluation and Analysis, Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Indicators, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE)</td>
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<td>Director of Assessment and Measurement, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15 – 12:45</td>
<td>Teacher Appraisal</td>
<td>Director of Educational Process Evaluation and Analysis, Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP)</td>
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<td>Director of Regulations, National Co-ordination of the Teaching Career Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Technical Secretariat of the National Council for Social Participation in Education (CONAPASE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:15 – 16:00</td>
<td>Teacher Appraisal</td>
<td>Director General, Directorate General of Higher Education for Education Professionals (DGESPE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00 – 17:30</td>
<td>The National Education System and Outlook of Basic Education Evaluation in Mexico</td>
<td>Head of the Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE)</td>
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<td>Director General, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Project Leader, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE) (author of Mexico’s Country Background Report)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Educational Process Evaluation and Analysis, Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:30 – 19:00</td>
<td>Student Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Director General of Policy Evaluation, Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Director General, Directorate General of Curricular Development (DGDC)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Deputy Director General, Directorate General of Educational Materials (DGME)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Private Secretary, Directorate General of Educational Materials (DGME)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Director General, Directorate General of Continuous Training for In-Service Teachers (DGFCMS)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Director of Assessment and Measurement, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:00 – 19:45</td>
<td>Evaluation of Students with Special Needs</td>
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<td>- Programme for the Strengthening of Special Education and Educational Integration, Directorate General of Curricular Development (DGDC)</td>
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<td>- Director of Special Education, Federal Administration for Educational Services in the Federal District (AFSEDF)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Mexican Confederation of Organisations for Persons with Intellectual Disability (CONFE A.C.)</td>
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**Wednesday, 8 February 2012, Mexico City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 09:15</td>
<td>School Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Director of School Evaluation, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Project Leader, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Director of Educational Policy and System Evaluation, Directorate General of Policy Evaluation (DGEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:15 – 10:15</td>
<td>Evaluation of Federal Education Sector Programmes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Programme Evaluation Co-ordinator, Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Chief of Directorate for Research Development, Directorate General for the Development of Education Management and Innovation (DGDGIE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:15</td>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Director of Education and Professional Development for Indigenous Education Teachers, Directorate General of Indigenous Education (DGEI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- National Co-ordinator of the Pre-primary and Primary Education Programme for the Children of Migrant Farm Workers (PRONIM)</td>
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</table>
| 11:15 – 12:15 | Institutions involved in the implementation of educational assessment activities, National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (CENEVAL)  
- Director General, National Assessment Centre for Higher Education (CENEVAL)  
- Deputy Director General for Special Programmes  
- Director of Formal Education Programmes  
- Director of Public Administration Programmes |
|---|---|
| 13:00 – 14:00 | National Union of Education Workers (SNTE)  
(Meeting did not take place due to the absence of SNTE representatives) |
| 15:30 – 18:30 | Visit to Lower Secondary School Ramón Beteta, Mexico City  
- Meeting with school leadership team  
- Meeting with a group of teachers  
- Meeting with a group of students |

**Thursday, 9 February 2012, Mexico City**

| 08:00 – 10:30 | Visit to Lower Secondary School Telesecundaria 3, Mexico City  
- Meeting with school leadership team  
- Meeting with a group of teachers  
- Meeting with a group of students |
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<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Presidency of the Senate’s Education Commission</td>
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</table>
| 16:00 – 18:20 | Visit to Primary School Alberto Correa, Mexico City  
- Meeting with a group of students  
- Meeting with a group of teachers  
- Meeting with supervision staff  
- Meeting with school leadership team |
| 18:30 – 19:30 | Civil Society Organisations  
- Mexicanos Primero, A.C.  
- Servicios a la Juventud, A. C.  
- Suma por la Educación  
- Hacia una Cultura Democrática, A. C.  
- Proeducación (IAP) |
### Friday, 10 February 2012, State of Mexico

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 – 13:00</td>
<td>Visit to Primary School Niños Héroes, Ocoyoacac, State of Mexico</td>
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<td>− Meeting with school leadership team</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of teachers</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 – 14:30</td>
<td>Secretary of Public Education of the State of Mexico, Lic. Raymundo E. Martínez Carbajal</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00 – 19:00</td>
<td>Visit to Technical Lower Secondary School №196, Toluca, State of Mexico</td>
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<td>− Meeting with school leadership team</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of teachers</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:30 – 20:30</td>
<td>Director General, Evaluation Institute of the State of Mexico</td>
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### Monday, 13 February 2012, Mexico City

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:30 – 19:00</td>
<td>OECD Review Team meetings</td>
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### Tuesday, 14 February 2012, State of Puebla

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 – 13:00</td>
<td>Visit to Primary School Quetzalcóatl, Puebla</td>
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<td>− Meeting with school leadership team</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of teachers</td>
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<td>− Meeting with supervision staff</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30 – 17:30</td>
<td>Visit to Lower Secondary School Presidente Cárdenas, Heroica Puebla de Zaragoza</td>
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<td>− Meeting with school leadership team</td>
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<td>− Meeting with a group of teachers</td>
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<td>− Meeting with supervision staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>− Meeting with a group of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>18:00 – 19:00</td>
<td>Secretary of Public Education of the State of Puebla, Lic. Luis Maldonado Venegas</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>Meeting with representatives from the State Evaluation Department</td>
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<td></td>
<td>− Director General for Educational Evaluation and Policy</td>
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<td>− Director for Education Policy</td>
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<td>− Director for Educational Evaluation</td>
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### Wednesday, 15 February 2012, Mexico City

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 09:00</td>
<td>National Congress of Indigenous and Intercultural Education</td>
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<td>09:00 – 10:00</td>
<td>Federal-level Parents’ Organisations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– National Parents’ Union (UNPF)</td>
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<td>– National Federation of Parents’ Associations (FENAP)</td>
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<td>– President of the Parents’ Association from the State of Hidalgo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– President of the Parents’ Association from the State of Morelos</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:00</td>
<td>Federal Administration for Educational Services in the Federal District (AFSEDF)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Director General of Educational Planning and Evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Director General of Educational Services Operations in the Federal District</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Seminar with Researchers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Dr. Ángel Díaz Barriga, Research Institute on the University and Education, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Lic. Carlos Mancera Corcuera, Director Valora Consulting Group, former Undersecretary of Planning and Co-ordination of the SEP</td>
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<td>– Dra. Sylvia Ortega Salazar, Rector, National Pedagogical University</td>
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<td>– Dr. Bernardo Naranjo, Director General Proyecto Educativo</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 – 13:30</td>
<td>Initial and Continuous Teacher Education</td>
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<td>– Rector of the National Pedagogical University (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30 – 16:30</td>
<td>Oral report by OECD Review Team with preliminary conclusions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Undersecretary of Basic Education (SEB), Lic. Francisco Ciscomani Freaner;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Head of Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEPE), Lic. Bernardo Rojas Nájera</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>– Director General, National Institute for Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE), Dra. Margarita Zorrilla Fierro</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex C. Composition of the Review Team

Isobel McGregor has 40 years of experience working in education in Scotland and beyond as a teacher, local education adviser and education officer, and as a member of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Isobel inspected in all sectors of education (except university), leading many tasks and specialising in quality improvement, self-evaluation and leadership, as well as in her original field of foreign languages. She had a significant role in the development of quality indicators for inspection and self-evaluation. She undertook international work and led in the production of a key report on Scottish education (Improving Scottish Education, HMIE, 2006). Since 2006, Isobel has acted as an independent educational consultant in many locations including Argentina, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, Macedonia and Japan. She has been involved in reviewing education in several Districts in Connecticut and in schools in New York. Since 2009 she has worked part-time for the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) as the co-ordinator of activities relating to SICI’s Inspection Academy and leading SICI’s involvement in a European Social Fund sponsored project to train education inspectors in Romania.

Deborah Nusche, a German national, is a Policy Analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education. She is currently working on the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. At the OECD, she previously worked on the Thematic Review of Migrant Education and the Improving School Leadership study. She has led country review visits on migrant education and participated in case study visits on school leadership in several countries. She also co-authored the OECD reports Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students (2010) and Improving School Leadership (2008). She has previous experience with UNESCO and the World Bank and holds an M.A. in International Affairs from Sciences Po Paris.

Pedro Ravela, a Uruguayan national, is a Senior Specialist and Professor in Educational Assessment issues at the Uruguayan Catholic University, where he is the Director of the Educational Assessment Institute since 2007. Previously he worked as National Project Manager for PISA in Uruguay (2002-2006), as a member of the Co-ordination Team of the Latin American Laboratory for Quality of Education Assessment (LLECE) at UNESCO/OREALC (2005-2006), and as Director of the National Assessment Unit in Uruguay (1996-2001). He has a large experience as Consultant and Professor in educational assessment issues in many Latin American countries. He has directed several research projects and written extensively on assessment practices in this region. Between 2002 and 2008 he was part of INEE’s Technical Council in Mexico. He holds an M.A. in Social Sciences and Education from the Latin American Social Sciences Faculty (FLACSO) and has a background as secondary education teacher in Philosophy.
Paulo Santiago, a Portuguese national, is a Senior Analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education, where he has been since 2000. He is currently the co-ordinator of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. He has previously assumed responsibility for two major cross-country reviews, each with the participation of over 20 countries: a review of Teacher Policy (between 2002 and 2005, leading to the OECD publication Teachers Matter) and the Thematic Review of Tertiary Education (between 2005 and 2008, leading to the OECD publication Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society). He has also led reviews of teacher policy and tertiary education policy in several countries. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Northwestern University, United States, where he also lectured. With a background in the economics of education, he specialises in education policy analysis. He co-ordinated the review and acted as Rapporteur for the OECD Review Team.

Diana Toledo, a Mexican and French national, is a Policy Analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education. She is currently working on the OECD Review “Improving Schools”, which supports countries about to undertake specific education reforms for both the policy design and implementation. She co-authored recently the OECD reports Improving Lower Secondary Schools in Norway (2011) and Improving Schools: Strategies for Action in Mexico (2010). Since 2007 she has also contributed at several other OECD projects, such as: PISA 2006, TALIS 2008, or Education at a Glance. Previously she worked with different NGOs at UNESCO. Diana holds a Ph.D. in Development Socio-Economics from EHESS (France) and a B.A. in Political Science from ITAM, Mexico.
## Annex D. Comparative indicators on evaluation and assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</th>
<th>Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of population that has attained at least upper secondary education, by age group (excluding ISCED 3C short programmes) (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-64</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-34</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 35-44</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45-54</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 55-64</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population that has attained tertiary education, by age group (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-64</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 35-44</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45-54</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 55-64</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual growth rate in levels of educational attainment from 1999 to 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below upper secondary</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary education</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary graduation rates (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of upper secondary graduates (first-time graduation) to the population at the typical age of graduation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STUDENT PERFORMANCE
Source: PISA 2009 Results (OECD, 2010a)

| Mean performance in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) (15-year-olds) (2009) | |
| Reading literacy | 425 | 493 | 34/34 |
| Mathematics literacy | 419 | 496 | 34/34 |
| Science literacy | 416 | 501 | 34/34 |
| Proportion of students by reading proficiency in % (2009): | |
| Top performers (% of students proficient at Levels 5 or 6) | 0.4 | 7.6 | a |
| Lowest performers (% of students proficient below Level 2) | 40.1 | 18.8 | a |

### SCHOOL SYSTEM EXPENDITURE
Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

| Expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary institutions as a % of GDP, from public and private sources | |
| 1995 | 3.7 | ~ | 14/29 |
| 2000 | 3.5 | ~ | 19/32 |
| 2008 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 18/32 |
| Public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education as a % of total public expenditure (2008) | |
| 13.6 | 8.7 | 1/32 |
| Total expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education from public sources (2008) (%) | |
| 82.9 | 91.0 | 16/30 |
| Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions, (2008) (USD) | |
| Primary | 2 246 | 7 153 | 31/31 |
| Lower secondary | 1 853 | 8 498 | 29/29 |
| Upper secondary | 3 277 | 9 396 | 29/30 |
| All secondary | 2 333 | 8 971 | 32/32 |
Change in expenditure per student by educational institutions, primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, index of change between 1995, 2000 and 2008 (2000 = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>20/29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current expenditure – composition, primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (2008)\(^6\)

- Compensation of teachers: 80.7 vs 63.2, 2/20
- Compensation of other staff: 12.3 vs 15.6, 13/20
- Compensation of all staff: 92.9 vs 79.0, 2/30
- Other current expenditure: 7.1 vs 21.0, 29/30

SCHOOL STAFF NUMBERS Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)\(^7\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of students to teaching staff (2009)(^9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>30/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>28/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Secondary</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>28/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Secondary</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>32/32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age distribution of teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers aged under 25 years</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers aged 25-29 years</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers aged 30-39 years</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers aged 40-49 years</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers aged 50-59 years</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>16/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers aged 60 years and more</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>10/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender distribution of teachers (% of females)</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ educational attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of teachers who completed an ISCED 5A qualification or higher(^3)</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status of teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of teachers permanently employed</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>10/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEACHER SALARIES in public institutions, Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual teacher salaries (2009)(^5)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary – starting salary (USD)</td>
<td>15 658</td>
<td>29 767</td>
<td>29/34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary – 15 years experience (USD)</td>
<td>20 415</td>
<td>38 914</td>
<td>29/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary – top of scale (USD)</td>
<td>33 582</td>
<td>48 154</td>
<td>17/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary – ratio of salary at top of the scale to starting salary</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>5/34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary – starting salary (USD)</td>
<td>19 957</td>
<td>31 687</td>
<td>26/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary – 15 years experience (USD)</td>
<td>25 905</td>
<td>41 701</td>
<td>26/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary – top of scale (USD)</td>
<td>42 621</td>
<td>51 317</td>
<td>22/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary – ratio of salary at top of the scale to starting salary</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>4/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary – starting salary (USD)</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>33 044</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary – 15 years experience (USD)</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>43 711</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary – top of scale (USD)</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>53 651</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary – ratio of salary at top of the scale to starting salary</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years from starting to top salary (lower secondary education) (2009)(^4)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Country average: 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decisions on payments for teachers in public schools (2009)\(^8\)

- Base salary
- Additional yearly payment / Additional incidental payment
- Years of experience as a teacher: ▲ 33 ▲ 10 ▲ 9
- Management responsibilities in addition to teaching duties: ▲ 14 ▲ 20 ▲ 8
- Teaching more classes or hours than required by full-time contract: ▲ 3 ▲ 15 ▲ 19
- Special tasks (career guidance or counselling): ▲ 6 ▲ 17 ▲ 14
- Teaching in a disadvantaged, remote or high cost area (location allowance): ▲ 13 ▲ 19 ▲ 5
- Special activities (e.g. sports and drama clubs, homework clubs, summer schools, etc.): ▲ 2 ▲ 12 ▲ 14
- Teaching students with special educational needs (in regular schools): ▲ 11 ▲ 13 ▲ 8
- Teaching courses in a particular field: ▲ 5 ▲ 6 ▲ 4

NB: Shortest = 6 years (Scotland); Longest = 40 years (Hungary)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holding an initial educational qualification higher than the minimum qualification required to enter the teaching profession</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding a higher than minimum level of teacher certification or training obtained during professional life</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding performance in teaching</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful completion of professional development activities</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching high scores in the qualification examination</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding an educational qualification in multiple subjects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family status (married, number of children)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (independent of years of teaching experience)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Professional Development** (lower secondary education) Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of teachers who undertook some prof. development in the previous 18 months</th>
<th>91.5</th>
<th>88.5</th>
<th>10/23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average days of professional development across all teachers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average days of professional development among those who received some</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average % of professional development days taken that were compulsory</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Types of professional development undertaken by teachers** (2007/08)

| Courses and workshops | 94.3 | 81.2 | 2/23 |
| Education conferences and seminars | 33.1 | 48.9 | 21/23 |
| Qualification programmes | 33.5 | 24.5 | 6/23 |
| Observation visits to other schools | 30.5 | 27.6 | 8/23 |
| Professional development network | 27.5 | 40.0 | 17/23 |
| Individual and collaborative research | 62.9 | 35.4 | 1/23 |
| Mentoring and peer observation | 38.1 | 34.9 | 9/23 |
| Reading professional literature | 67.4 | 77.7 | 17/23 |
| Informal dialogue to improve teaching | 88.9 | 92.6 | 21/23 |

**Impact of different types of professional development undertaken by teachers** (2007/08)

| % of teachers reporting that the professional development undertaken had a moderate or high impact upon their development as a teacher | 85.4 | 80.6 | 7/23 |
| Courses and workshops | 82.2 | 73.9 | 4/23 |
| Education conferences and seminars | 91.3 | 87.2 | 9/23 |
| Qualification programmes | 77.7 | 74.9 | 11/23 |
| Observation visits to other schools | 81.3 | 80.2 | 12/23 |
| Professional development network | 91.0 | 89.3 | 10/23 |
| Individual and collaborative research | 78.3 | 77.6 | 11/23 |
| Mentoring and peer observation | 84.0 | 82.8 | 12/23 |
| Reading professional literature | 81.6 | 86.7 | 20/23 |

**Teachers’ high professional development needs** (2007/08)

| % of teachers indicating they have a ‘high level of need’ for professional development in the following areas | 13.7 | 16.0 | 10/23 |
| Content and performance standards | 15.0 | 15.7 | 10/23 |
| Student assessment practices | 8.8 | 13.3 | 14/23 |
| Classroom management | 11.0 | 17.0 | 13/23 |
| Subject field | 12.3 | 17.1 | 14/23 |
| ICT teaching skills | 24.9 | 24.7 | 11/23 |
| Teaching special learning needs students | 38.8 | 31.3 | 5/23 |
| Student discipline and behaviour problems | 21.4 | 21.4 | 11/23 |
| School management and administration | 11.9 | 9.7 | 6/23 |
| Teaching in a multicultural setting | 18.2 | 13.9 | 5/23 |
| Student counselling | 25.9 | 16.7 | 3/23 |

**Teacher Perception of Self-efficacy** (lower secondary education) Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of teachers who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with the statement “Teachers feel that they are making a significant educational difference” (2007/08)</th>
<th>97.2</th>
<th>92.3</th>
<th>3/23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of teachers who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with the statement “Teachers feel that when they try really hard, they can make progress with even the most difficult and unmotivated students” (2007/08)</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SYSTEM EVALUATION

#### Curriculum and examination regulations, public schools only

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010c; OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark¹</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Primary education**

- A standard curriculum or partially standardised curriculum is required (2008)
  - Yes
  - National examination offered¹¹ (2009)
    - No
  - Of which compulsory in public schools
    - a
  - National assessment offered¹¹ (2009)
    - Yes
  - Of which compulsory in public schools
    - Yes

**Lower secondary education**

- A standard curriculum or partially standardised curriculum is required (2008)
  - Yes
  - National examination offered¹¹ (2009)
    - No
  - Of which compulsory in public schools
    - a
  - National assessment offered¹¹ (2009)
    - Yes
  - Of which compulsory in public schools
    - Yes

#### Subjects covered in national examinations¹¹ (lower secondary education) (2009)

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark¹</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 11 No: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National language or language of instruction</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 8 No: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Foreign Languages</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 10 No: 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 4 No: 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 5 No: 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 4 No: 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical and Vocational Skills</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 4 No: 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes: 2 No: 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Subjects covered in national assessments¹¹ (lower secondary education) (2009)

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark¹</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes: 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes: 9 No: 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National language or language of instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes: 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes: 5 No: 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Foreign Languages</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes: 8 No: 122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes: 2 No: 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes: 3 No: 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No: 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical and Vocational Skills</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No: 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes: 1 No: 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Possible influence of national examinations¹¹ (2009)

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark¹</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of school performance</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:2 Low:1 Moderate:6 High:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of school administration</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:9 Low:3 Moderate:3 High:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of individual teachers</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:4 Low:4 Moderate:7 High:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The size of the school budget</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:13 Low:3 Moderate:1 High:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The provision of another financial reward or sanction</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:13 Low:3 Moderate:0 High:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:7 Low:5 Moderate:3 High:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:13 Low:2 Moderate:1 High:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of school closure</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:12 Low:2 Moderate:2 High:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark¹</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of school performance</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>None:3 Low:1 Moderate:8 High:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of school administration</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None:8 Low:6 Moderate:3 High:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of individual teachers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None:8 Low:4 Moderate:6 High:4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The size of the school budget</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None:19 Low:1 Moderate:1 High:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The provision of another financial reward or sanction</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None:18 Low:2 Moderate:0 High:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>None:8 Low:3 Moderate:7 High:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None:15 Low:0 Moderate:3 High:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of school closure</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None:16 Low:1 Moderate:2 High:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reporting of results from national examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)</th>
<th>Based on norm or criterion reference</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a Norm:2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results are shared with:
- External audience in addition to education authorities: Yes: 12
- School administrators directly: Yes: 11 No: 1
- Classroom teachers directly: Yes: 10 No: 2
- Parents directly: Yes: 10 No: 2
- Students directly: Yes: 12
- The media directly: Yes: 7 No: 5

Features of results reporting:
- Performance level for most recent year: Yes: 10 No: 3
- “Value added” or growth in student achievement based on student progress over 2(+ ) years: Yes: 2 No:10
- Context sensitive: Yes: 2 No: 10
- Compared with other groups or populations of students: Yes: 6 No: 6
- Reported together with other indicators of school quality: Yes: 4 No: 7
- Used by authorities external to the school for sanctions or rewards: Yes: 4 No: 7

### Reporting of results from national assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)</th>
<th>Based on norm or criterion reference</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a Norm:7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results are shared with:
- External audience in addition to education authorities: Yes Yes: 18 No: 1
- School administrators directly: Yes Yes: 18 No: 0
- Classroom teachers directly: Yes Yes: 13 No: 5
- Parents directly: Yes Yes: 13 No: 5
- Students directly: Yes Yes: 13 No: 4
- The media directly: Yes Yes: 10 No: 8

Features of results reporting:
- Performance level for most recent year: Yes: 10 No: 3
- “Value added” or growth in student achievement based on student progress over 2(+ ) years: Yes: 5 No:13
- Context sensitive: Yes: 7 No: 7
- Compared with other groups or populations of students: Yes Yes: 10 No: 4
- Reported together with other indicators of school quality: No Yes: 3 No: 12
- Used by authorities external to the school for sanctions or rewards: Yes Yes: 3 No: 13

### Use of achievement data for accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of students in schools where the principal reported that achievement data is used in the following procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted publicly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used in evaluation of the principal’s performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used in evaluation of teachers’ performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used in decisions about instructional resource allocation to the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracked over time by an administrative authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCHOOL EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School inspections are a component of the school accreditation process (lower secondary education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School inspections target low performance schools (lower secondary education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which school inspections are structured (lower secondary education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of school inspections (lower secondary education, public schools only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Aspects addressed during school inspections (lower secondary education):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with rules and regulations</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:20 No:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:13 No:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of instruction</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:19 No:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:17 No:4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and perceptions of students</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:14 No:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and perceptions of parents</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:13 No:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and perceptions of staff</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:13 No:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School inspection results are shared with (lower secondary education):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External audience in addition to education authorities</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:19 No:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher level education authorities directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:16 No:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:19 No:0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:16 No:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:11 No:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:8 No:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The media directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:9 No:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Possible influence of evaluation by school inspectorate (or equivalent) (2009)

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

#### Performance evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School performance</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:2 Low:4 Moderate:4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administration</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:3 Low:3 Moderate:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual teachers</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:3 Low:3 Moderate:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Rewards and sanctions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The size of the school budget</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:11 Low:8 Moderate:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The provision of another financial reward or sanction</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:9 Low:4 Moderate:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:2 Low:5 Moderate:9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:13 Low:0 Moderate:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of school closure</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:7 Low:1 Moderate:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Requirements for school self-evaluations (2009)

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes:21 No:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component of school inspections</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:13 No:6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes:23 No:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component of school inspections</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:15 No:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes:20 No:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component of school inspections</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:13 No:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Aspects addressed during school self-evaluations (lower secondary education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with rules and regulations</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:14 No:4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:12 No:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of instruction</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:17 No:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:16 No:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and perceptions of students</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:16 No:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and perceptions of parents</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:15 No:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and perceptions of staff</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:13 No:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School self-evaluation results are shared with (lower secondary education):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External audience in addition to education authorities</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:16 No:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher level education authorities directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:9 No:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School inspectorates directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:11 No:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:14 No:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:15 No:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:10 No:6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:8 No:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The media directly</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Yes:5 No:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extent to which school self-evaluations are structured (lower secondary education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly:3 Partially:11 Unstructured:4</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

OECD REVIEWS OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT IN EDUCATION: MEXICO © OECD 2012
### Possible influence of school self-evaluations (2009)

Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance evaluation</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:0 Low:4 Moderate:6</td>
<td>High:5 Not applicable:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School performance</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:1 Low:6 Moderate:3</td>
<td>High:6 Not applicable:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administration</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:2 Low:6 Moderate:2</td>
<td>High:5 Not applicable:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual teachers</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:9 Low:3 Moderate:1</td>
<td>High:2 Not applicable:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards and sanctions</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:7 Low:5 Moderate:0</td>
<td>High:1 Not applicable:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school budget</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:3 Low:3 Moderate:7</td>
<td>High:3 Not applicable:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The provision of another financial reward or sanction</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:6 Low:4 Moderate:1</td>
<td>High:0 Not applicable:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:7 Low:4 Moderate:1</td>
<td>High:1 Not applicable:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:6 Low:4 Moderate:1</td>
<td>High:0 Not applicable:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of school closure</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>None:7 Low:4 Moderate:1</td>
<td>High:1 Not applicable:11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Frequency and type of school evaluations (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

% of teachers working in schools where school evaluations were conducted with the following frequency over the last five years

#### Frequency of school self-evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>12/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>20/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 times</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once per year</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Frequency of external evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>15/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 times</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>12/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once per year</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No school evaluation from any source</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>10/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Criteria of school evaluations (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

% of teachers whose school principal reported that the following criteria were considered with high or moderate importance in school self-evaluations or external evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student test scores</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention and pass rates of students</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other student learning outcomes</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student feedback on the teaching they receive</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from parents</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>15/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well teachers work with the principal and their colleagues</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct appraisal of classroom teaching</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative teaching practices</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations between teachers and students</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>8/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development undertaken by teachers</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ classroom management</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of their main subject field(s)</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of instructional practices in their main subject field(s)</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of students with special learning needs</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline and behaviour</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching in a multicultural setting</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular activities with students (e.g. school plays and performances, sporting activities)</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Impacts of school evaluations upon schools (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of school budget or its distribution within schools</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance feedback to the school</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>13/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal of the school management</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal of teachers</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ remuneration and bonuses</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Publication of school evaluations (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published, or used in school performance tables</td>
<td>74.9</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Accountability to parents (2009) (15-year-olds)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This child’s academic performance relative to other students in the school</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>3/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This child’s academic performance relative to national or regional benchmarks</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>12/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This child’s academic performance of students as a group relative to students in the same grade in other schools</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEACHER APPRAISAL

#### Frequency and source of teacher appraisal and feedback (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback received from the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>13/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once every two years</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>23/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every two years</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>19/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice per year</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more times per year</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once per month</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback received from other teachers or members of the school management team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once every two years</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>23/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every two years</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>18/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>15/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice per year</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more times per year</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>15/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once per month</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback received from an external individual or body (e.g. external inspector)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>21/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once every two years</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every two years</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>17/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice per year</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more times per year</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once per month</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Criteria for teacher appraisal and feedback (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student test scores</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention and pass rates of students</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other student learning outcomes</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student feedback on the teaching they receive</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Outcomes of teacher appraisal and feedback (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

% of teachers who reported that the appraisal and/or feedback they received led to a modest or large change in the following aspects of their work and careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from parents</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>15/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well they work with the principal and their colleagues</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct appraisal of classroom teaching</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative teaching practices</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with students</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>12/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development undertaken</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>12/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of their main subject field(s)</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices in their main subject field(s)</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of students with special learning needs</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline and behaviour</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching in a multicultural setting</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular activities with students (e.g. school performances, sporting activities)</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Actions undertaken following the identification of a weakness in a teacher appraisal (lower secondary education) (2007/08)

Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

% of teachers whose school principal reported that the following occurs if an appraisal of teachers’ work identifies a specific weakness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal ensures that the outcome is reported to the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>17/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>17/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal ensures that measures to remedy the weakness in their teaching are discussed with the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>17/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal, or others in the school, establishes a development or training plan for the teacher to address the weakness in their teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>19/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>20/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal, or others in the school, imposes material sanctions on the teacher (e.g. reduced annual increases in pay)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>18/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal, or others in the school, report the underperformance to another body to take action (e.g. governing board, local authority, school inspector)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>21/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>17/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal ensures that the teacher has more frequent appraisals of their work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>18/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>21/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teacher perceptions of the appraisal and/or feedback they received** (lower secondary education) (2007/08) Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of teachers who reported the following about the appraisal and/or feedback they had received in their school</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal and/or feedback contained a judgement about the quality of the teacher’s work</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal and/or feedback contained suggestions for improving certain aspects of teacher’s work</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal and/or feedback was a fair assessment of their work as a teacher in this school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>19/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher perceptions of the personal impact of teacher appraisal and feedback** (lower secondary education) (2007/08) Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of teachers who reported the following changes following the appraisal and/or feedback they received in their school</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in their job satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large decrease</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small decrease</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small increase</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large increase</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in their job security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large decrease</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small decrease</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>23/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small increase</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large increase</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of teachers who reported that the appraisal and/or feedback they received directly led to or involved moderate or large changes in the following</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management practices</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge or understanding of the teacher’s main subject field(s)</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge or understanding of instructional practices</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A development or training plan for teachers to improve their teaching</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of students with special learning needs</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline and behaviour problems</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of students in a multicultural setting</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis placed by teachers on improving student test scores in their teaching</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher appraisal and feedback and school development** (lower secondary education) (2007/08) Source: TALIS (OECD, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of teachers who agree or strongly agree with the following statements about aspects of appraisal and/or feedback in their school</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this school, the school principal takes steps to alter the monetary reward of the persistently underperforming teacher</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, the sustained poor performance of a teacher would be tolerated by the rest of the staff</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, teachers will be dismissed because of sustained poor performance</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>12/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, the principal uses effective methods to determine whether teachers are performing well or badly</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, a development or training plan is established for teachers to improve their work as teachers</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>9/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, the most effective teachers receive the greatest monetary or non-monetary rewards</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>11/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this school, if I improve the quality of my teaching I will receive increased monetary or non-monetary rewards</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX D – OECD REVIEWS OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT IN EDUCATION: MEXICO © OECD 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods used to monitor the practice of teachers (2009) (15-year-olds)
% of students in schools where the principal reported that the following methods have been used the previous year to monitor the practice of teachers for language of instruction at their school

| Tests of assessments of student achievement | 82.6 | 58.9 | 5/32 |
| Teacher peer review (of lesson plans, assessment instruments, lessons) | 79.2 | 56.8 | 10/32 |
| Principal or senior staff observations of lessons | 79.1 | 68.8 | 17/33 |
| Observation of classes by inspectors or other persons external to the school | 48.4 | 28.3 | 6/33 |

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Completion requirements for upper secondary programmes
Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 3A</th>
<th>ISCED 3B</th>
<th>ISCED 3C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Final examination ■ Series of examinations during programme</td>
<td>● Specified number of course hours and examination</td>
<td>● Specified number of course hours only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student grouping by ability (2009) (15-year-olds)
% of students in schools where principals reported the following practice within the school

| No ability grouping | 30.9 | 31.9 | 18/33 |
| Ability grouping for some subjects | 52.8 | 55.2 | 18/33 |
| Ability grouping for all subjects | 16.3 | 12.9 | 8/33 |

% of students in schools where the principal reported the following groups exert a direct influence on decision making about assessment practices

| Regional or national education authorities (e.g. inspectorates) | 39.2 | 56.6 | 24/33 |
| The school’s governing board | 42.5 | 29.5 | 8/33 |
| Parent groups | 10.4 | 0.8 | 17/33 |
| Teacher groups (e.g. staff association, curriculum committees, trade union) | 42.4 | 58.1 | 24/33 |
| Student groups (e.g. student association, youth organisation) | 25.2 | 22.7 | 10/33 |
| External examination boards | 54.5 | 42.4 | 8/33 |

% of students in schools where the principal reported the student assessment methods below are used with the indicated frequency

| Standardised tests | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Never | 20.8 | 24.4 | 15/33 |
| 1-5 times a year | 64.5 | 68.7 | 20/33 |
| At least once a month | 14.7 | 6.9 | 7/33 |

Teacher-developed tests

| Never | 0.9 | 1.6 | a |
| 1-5 times a year | 62.1 | 36.8 | 5/33 |
| At least once a month | 37.0 | 61.7 | 28/33 |

Teachers’ judgmental ratings

| Never | 20.9 | 5.7 | 2/33 |
| 1-5 times a year | 45.6 | 35.4 | 12/33 |
| At least once a month | 33.6 | 58.8 | 29/33 |

Student portfolios

| Never | 4.4 | 23.4 | 28/33 |
| 1-5 times a year | 45.4 | 56.4 | 26/33 |
| At least once a month | 50.2 | 20.1 | 5/33 |

Student assignments/projects/homework

| Never | 1.3 | 1.0 | a |
| 1-5 times a year | 31.7 | 28.2 | 13/33 |
| At least once a month | 67.1 | 70.8 | 22/33 |
Use of student assessments (2009) (15-year-olds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>International benchmark¹</th>
<th>Mexico’s rank²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To inform the parents about their child’s progress</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make decisions about students’ retention or promotion</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>14/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To group students for instructional purposes</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>10/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compare the school to district or national performance</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>8/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To monitor the school’s progress from year to year</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>9/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make judgements about teachers’ effectiveness</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>3/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>6/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compare the school with other schools</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>6/33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of students repeating one or more grades according to their own report (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>International benchmark¹</td>
<td>Mexico’s rank²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9/34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General notes:

1. The international benchmark column provides comparative information in one of two forms: country average (calculated as the simple average of all countries/systems for which data are available, as indicated in the Source Guide below); distribution of countries/systems by result category (typically by the categories “Yes” and “No”, but may also indicate the number of countries/systems in which a given criterion is used, e.g. for the indicator “Decision payments for teachers in public schools”, 29 countries use “Base salary”, 9 use “Additional yearly payment”, etc.). With the exception of data taken from the Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) the benchmark is for OECD countries only.

2. “Mexico’s rank” indicates the position of Mexico when countries are ranked in descending order from the highest to lowest value on the indicator concerned. For example, on the indicator “upper secondary graduation rates”, the rank =26/27 indicates that Mexico jointly recorded the 26th highest value of the 27 OECD countries that reported relevant data.

3. ISCED is the “International Standard Classification of Education” used to describe levels of education (and subcategories).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 1 - Primary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designed to provide a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics and a basic understanding of some other subjects. Entry age: between 5 and 7. Duration: 6 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 2 - Lower secondary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completes provision of basic education, usually in a more subject-oriented way with more specialist teachers. Entry follows 6 years of primary education; duration is 3 years. In some countries, the end of this level marks the end of compulsory education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 3 - Upper secondary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Even stronger subject specialisation than at lower-secondary level, with teachers usually more qualified. Students typically expected to have completed 9 years of education or lower secondary schooling before entry and are generally around the age of 15 or 16.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 3A - Upper secondary education type A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepares students for university-level education at level 5A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 3B - Upper secondary education type B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For entry to vocationally oriented tertiary education at level 5B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 3C - Upper secondary education type C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepares students for workforce or for post-secondary non tertiary education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED 4 - Post-secondary non-tertiary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programmes at this level may be regarded nationally as part of upper secondary or post-secondary education, but in terms of international comparison their status is less clear cut. Programme content may not be much more advanced than in upper secondary, and is certainly lower than at tertiary level. Entry typically requires completion of an upper secondary programme. Duration usually equivalent to between 6 months and 2 years of full-time study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ISCED 5 - Tertiary education

ISCED 5 is the first stage of tertiary education (the second – ISCED 6 – involves advanced research). At level 5, it is often more useful to distinguish between two subcategories: 5A, which represent longer and more theoretical programmes; and 5B, where programmes are shorter and more practically oriented. Note, though, that as tertiary education differs greatly between countries, the demarcation between these two subcategories is not always clear cut.

**ISCED 5A - Tertiary-type A**

“Long-stream” programmes that are theory based and aimed at preparing students for further research or to give access to highly skilled professions, such as medicine or architecture. Entry preceded by 13 years of education, students typically required to have completed upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. Duration equivalent to at least 3 years of full-time study, but 4 is more usual.

**ISCED 5B - Tertiary-type B**

“Short-stream” programmes that are more practically oriented or focus on the skills needed for students to directly enter specific occupations. Entry preceded by 13 years of education; students may require mastery of specific subjects studied at levels 3B or 4A. Duration equivalent to at least 2 years of full-time study, but 3 is more usual.

4. Public expenditure includes public subsidies to households for living costs (scholarships and grants to students/households and students loans), which are not spent on educational institutions.
5. Expressed in equivalent USD converted using purchasing power parities.
6. Expenditure on goods and services consumed within the current year which needs to be made recurrently to sustain the production of educational services – refers to current expenditure on schools and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions. The individual percentage may not sum to the total due to rounding.
7. Public and private institutions are included. Calculations are based on full-time equivalents. “Teaching staff” refers to professional personnel directly involved in teaching students.
8. Here “Mexico’s rank” indicates the position of Mexico when countries are ranked in ascending order from the lowest to the highest ratio of students to teaching staff.
9. Here “Mexico’s rank” indicates the position of Mexico when countries are ranked in ascending order from the shortest to the highest number of years that it takes to reach the top salary from the starting salary.
10. “National examinations” are tests which have formal consequences for students.
11. “National assessments” are tests which do not have formal consequences for students.
12. “Highly structured” means that similar activities are completed at each school based on a specific set of data collection tools. “Unstructured” means that activities at each site vary and depend on the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
13. In the case of empty symbols (○□∆◊) the completion requirement within a country varies (e.g. in federal systems between states).

Sources:
OECD (2009), *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*, OECD Publishing.

Data explanation:
m Data are not available
a Data are not applicable because the category does not apply
~ Average is not comparable with other levels of education
= At least one other country has the same rank
## Source Guide

Participation of countries by source

<table>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Romania</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Annex E. Instruments for teacher appraisal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>INITIAL EDUCATION</th>
<th>ENTRY</th>
<th>IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING</th>
<th>PROMOTION AND INCENTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrument</strong></td>
<td><strong>IDCIEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXANI II</strong></td>
<td><strong>EGEC</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVEL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection to enter Normales</strong></td>
<td>Examen Nacional de Ingreso a la Educación Superior</td>
<td>Exámenes Generales e Internos de Conocimientos</td>
<td>Exámenes Generales de Egreso de Licenciatura</td>
<td>Concurso Nacional para el Desempeño de Vínculos Docentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing</strong></td>
<td>Selection to enter universities</td>
<td>To 4th &amp; 8th semester students from Normales</td>
<td>Exit from Education bachelor’s degrees (Pedagogical, Comités de la Educación, ), but Normales can also apply to it</td>
<td>After initial education, to obtain a teaching post or after teaching hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main components</strong></td>
<td>This is a standardised test.</td>
<td>These are standardised tests for pre-primary, primary, sports and lower secondary education teacher students.</td>
<td>These are standardised tests for pre-primary, primary, sports and lower secondary education teacher students.</td>
<td>This appraisal consisted mainly of a standardised test (the Examen Nacional de Conocimientos y Habilidades Docentes). In 2010, the government started plotting portfolios as part of this process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bodies involved</strong></td>
<td>Designed by CENEVAL and applied by universities</td>
<td>Designed and applied by CENEVAL</td>
<td>Designed and applied by CENEVAL</td>
<td>Designed in collaboration with OSIF, applied by SEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>Diagnosis and selection</td>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>Diagnosis, determine whether the candidate can graduate</td>
<td>Allocation of teaching posts and teaching hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some notes</strong></td>
<td>The content drawn from the upper secondary curriculum.</td>
<td>Relatively specialised, low stakes, on a voluntary basis for states, school or candidates.</td>
<td>Each institution defines what the exam will be used for and thresholds.</td>
<td>The thresholds vary across states depending on the number of posts available, and only the newly created posts for teachers are open for competition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

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OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education

MEXICO

How can student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation bring about real gains in performance across a country’s school system? The country reports in this series provide, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the evaluation and assessment framework, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. This series forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes.

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Chapter 1. School education in Mexico
Chapter 2. The evaluation and assessment framework
Chapter 3. Student assessment
Chapter 4. Teacher appraisal
Chapter 5. School evaluation
Chapter 6. Education system evaluation

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