

DEVELOPING SHANGHAI'S TEACHERS

Key Takeaways

Context:

- In the four decades since the end of China's Cultural Revolution in 1976, which closed all schools in the country, Shanghai has built an education system on the scale of many large U.S. states that is leading the world in achievement as measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment.
- The report envisions teacher development in Shanghai as a triangle, with the teacher career ladder, in-service training and development, and performance appraisal as the three sides. Each side of the triangle is connected to and reinforces the other sides.
 - The career ladder provides financial motivation and a progression pathway for teachers.
 - The in-service training enables teachers to move along the ladder.
 - Performance appraisal evaluates and rewards teacher performance at each step of the ladder.
- Shanghai's approach to implementation is almost always to first pilot a policy or practice in a district or set of districts to test which policies work best, and refine and improve them. Only then will it bring a policy to scale across the province. Its education system is the benefactor of this flexibility and experimentation.
- Shanghai's teacher development system is the result of four decades of an adaptive process responding to China's broad and evolving goals for economic development and for an education system to support it.

Career Ladder:

- Shanghai's career ladder, first developed in 1986, is a comprehensive career framework that spans entry-level to senior classroom teachers as well as school principals. It is a driving force behind teachers' continuous professional development.
- As a primary objective of the career ladder is to increase prestige for the profession, a key component is a rigorous set of qualification requirements that ensures the profession and the public know that teachers are among the most highly skilled members of society.
- Teachers are encouraged to seek promotion along the professional ladders through becoming more expert in research on teaching, thereby improving the profession's research competence.

- Teachers' progress up the career ladder has become aligned with evaluations of the professional development they complete. Policymakers in Shanghai have begun to consider whether teachers' professional development, including the number of learning credits they obtain, should be a component of their yearly performance evaluation.
- Shanghai's career ladder system also extends to principals—a five-level progression from beginner principal to master principal. Candidates to become principals must reach certain senior professional levels on the teacher career ladder. Only about 5 percent of principals are master principals.
- The career ladder balances the allocation of teaching staff. Principals are encouraged to transfer among different schools as a precondition of moving up the ladder, thereby ensuring that every school benefits from an infusion of different perspectives and unique talent. Teachers seeking advancement are encouraged to seek placement in rural areas or less-developed regions, and such teachers are given preference over their counterparts when they apply for higher professional titles.

In-service Training:

- A variety of providers conduct teachers' in-service training, including normal universities, teachers' colleges, comprehensive universities, teachers' training institutes and an increasing number of on-line training institutes, private providers and professional organizations.
- Universities and colleges are the major degree-awarding agencies in China. Of the 68 universities and colleges in Shanghai, only two provide pre-service training: East-China Normal University and Shanghai Normal University.
- School-based training is considered most important. Three types of school-based professional development groups are used in Shanghai schools: teaching and research groups (TRGs), lesson preparation groups (LPGs), and grade groups (GGs). TRGs are composed of teachers who teach the same or similar subjects. They discuss problems they encounter in teaching that subject and share their experiences.
- Professional development schools are seen as a priority strategy for developing teachers' professional capacity. Certain schools are training centers for teachers with particular responsibilities, such as special education, moral education and art education.

Performance-based Wage System:

- Teachers' and principals' professional development ladders align with the performance-based wage system. The career ladders make differentiated evaluation possible for each teacher and each function, with the result that teachers' wages are highly individualized.

- The performance-based wage system seeks to illustrate the maxim “good work deserves good pay,” placing great emphasis on rewarding and encouraging first-line teachers, leading suburban area teachers and teachers who contribute to alleviating the effects of poverty. This emphasis helps narrow the achievement gap between urban and rural areas.
- Over the past 20 years, increasing the rigor of initial qualification and training (in university) has been a consistent priority for Shanghai education officials.
- In 2012, Shanghai officials introduced a one-year induction program for all new teachers. Only after completing the induction program are teacher trainees considered certified teachers. The program has four parts:
 - Professional standards and ethics
 - Teaching practice and classroom experience
 - Classroom management and moral education
 - Teaching research and professional development
- Making awards to exemplary teachers is a critical component of this system, since it elevates the profession and helps teachers feel honored and supported.

Read the full report, *Developing Shanghai's Teachers* at www.ncee.org/ShanghaiTeachers