

## Foreword

**T**his joint OECD-World Bank report for Kazakhstan forms part of the OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (also referred to as the School Resources Review, see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the Review is to explore how resources can be governed, distributed, utilised and managed to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. School resources are understood in a broad way, including financial resources (e.g. expenditures on education, school budget), physical resources (e.g. school buildings, computers), human resources (e.g. teachers, school leaders) and other resources (e.g. learning time).

Kazakhstan 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 review team were Anna Pons (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Jeremie Amoroso (World Bank); Jan Herczyński (Institute for Educational Research, Poland); Igor Kheyfets (World Bank); Marlaine Lockheed (Princeton University, United States); and Paulo Santiago (OECD Secretariat). The biographies of the members of the review team are provided in Annex B. This publication is the report from the review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the use of school resources in Kazakhstan, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: (1) Provide insights and advice to Kazakh education authorities; (2) Help other countries understand the Kazakh approach; and (3) Provide input for the final comparative analysis of the OECD School Resources Review.

The OECD review team is grateful for the support provided by: the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Aslan Sarinzhapov, and the staff of the Ministry; by Serik Irsaliyev, President of the JSC “Information-Analytic Center” (hereafter IAC), Yerlan Shulanov, Vice-President of IAC, and their staff. Kazakhstan’s involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Assem Satmukhambetova, then Director of the Department for Secondary Education Development of the IAC, from September 2013 until May 2014; and, from June 2014 on, by Zhannat Mussina, Leading Analyst, Department for Secondary Education Development of the IAC.

An important part of Kazakhstan’s involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on school resources authored by the IAC. The CBR is an important output from the OECD project in its own right as well as an important source for the review team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the Kazakh 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 education system, the use of school resources and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a more comprehensive view of the effectiveness of school resource use in Kazakhstan, should be read in conjunction.

The Review visit to Kazakhstan took place on 31 March – 8 April 2014. The itinerary is provided in Annex C. The visit was designed by the OECD and the World Bank in collaboration with the Kazakh authorities and involved a preparatory visit on 3-4 March, 2014. During the Review visit, the team conducted 53 meetings (with about 52 hours of discussions), visited 6 schools, and interviewed

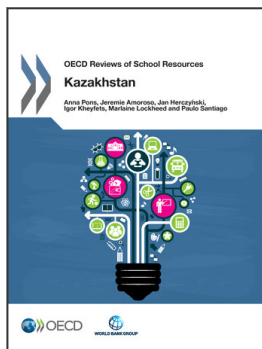
268 people. The review team held discussions with a wide range of groups at all levels of government (central, regional and local). At the national level, the review team met with Aslan Sarinzhypov, Minister of Education and Science; other officials of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (hereafter MESRK) and its main subordinated organisations (i.e. National Center for Educational Statistics and Evaluation, the IAC and the Financial Center); officials of the Executive Office of the President; the then Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning; the Ministry of Finance; and an elected representative to the Senate. At the regional and local levels, meetings were held with educational and finance authorities of the cities of Astana and Almaty, the region of Akmola, and the municipalities of Arshaly and Talgar. In addition, the visit included meetings with researchers in both Almaty and Astana, and the national teacher union. The Team also attended a half-day roundtable on 'Improving Education Quality' organised by the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank. The intention was to provide the review team with a broad cross-section of information and opinions on school resource use and how its effectiveness can be improved.

The review team wishes to record its grateful appreciation to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the 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 National Co-ordinator at the time of the visit, Assem Satmukhambetova, for going to great lengths to respond to the questions and needs of the review team. The review team was impressed by her efficiency and expertise and enjoyed her pleasant company. This gratitude extends to her team for providing excellent support to the review team, in particular to Zhannat Mussina and Timur Buldybayev, Analysts of the IAC. The review team is also grateful to Zhannat Mussina for her support as of June 2014 as National Co-ordinator, which greatly benefited the preparation of this report. In addition, the review team also wishes to express its appreciation to Irina Burlak, Senior Analyst, and Assylkhan Suyundikov, Junior Analyst, of the IAC. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in Kazakhstan made our task as a review team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging.

The School Resources Review of Kazakhstan is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the OECD and the World Bank. The review team is grateful to peer reviewers and colleagues at the OECD and the World Bank for providing insightful comments and engaging in stimulating discussions. From the World Bank, Scherezad Latif, Dorsati Madani and Suhas Parandekar provided insightful and constructive comments while Cristian Aedo, Alberto Rodriguez, Ludmilla Butenko and Sebnem Akkaya provided guidance and support. Special gratitude is also extended to Aliya Bizhanova (World Bank) for her invaluable help with her country knowledge and assistance during the review team's visits to Kazakhstan. From the OECD, Deborah Nusche and Claire Shewbridge provided advice and feedback while Yuri Belfali and Michael Davidson provided guidance and support. Eléonore Morena and Liz Zachary (both from the OECD Secretariat) provided key administrative, editorial and layout support. Francesc Masdeu (OECD Secretariat, on secondment from the Jaume Bofill Foundation) also provided valuable statistical support. Gratitude is also extended to Ian Whitman and Mihaylo Milovanovitch (both formerly with the OECD) who initiated Kazakhstan's involvement in this Review and provided guidance in its initial stages.

It should be noted that the scope for the analysis in this report is limited to school resource use in general school education (primary, lower secondary and upper general secondary education). While references are made to early childhood education and vocational/technical secondary education, these sectors were not the focus of this Review. Also, the analysis presented in this report refers to the situation faced by the education system in April 2014, when the review team visited Kazakhstan. A number of significant education policy changes occurred in late 2014 and early 2015 as a result of macroeconomic developments. While these are signalled in this report, they have not been the subject of further analysis.

This report is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the Kazakh school system, main trends and concerns as well as recent developments. Then Chapters 2 to 5 analyse the effectiveness of school resource use along its main dimensions: governance, distribution, utilisation and management, presenting strengths, challenges and policy recommendations. The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in Kazakhstan, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those the review team met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of Kazakhstan and fully understanding all the issues. Of course, this report is the responsibility of the review team. While the review team benefited greatly from the Kazakh CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of Kazakh personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are its responsibility.



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