

TEACHERS' SALARIES: ANY CHANGE?

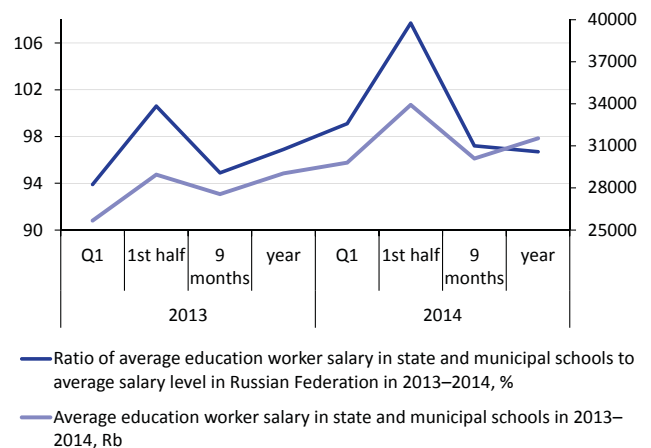
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Presidential executive order No 597 of 12 May 2012 envisaged 'the approximation, in 2012, of the average education worker salary level in general education establishments to the average salary level in a given region'. Since then, this goal has never been taken off the government agenda (Fig. 1).

In Q1 2013, the average teacher salary in Russia amounted to 93.9% of Russia's average salary. So, in 2012, the Presidential executive order was not implemented. However, the period-end results of H1 2013 demonstrated that the goal set in the edict had finally been achieved: the average teacher salary amounted to 100.6% of the national economy's average salary index. Nevertheless, later on the teacher salary index once again dropped below 100% of the national economy's average – according to the period-end results of the first 9 months of 2013, it amounted to 94.9%. This decline (on the amount of Russia's average salary) gave way to a rather long period of growth, although the year-end results of 2013 indicated that the average teacher salary level failed to rise to the level of 100% of Russia's average salary. In 2014, this pattern repeated itself: there was growth up to the end of H1 to a level above 100%, followed by decline to 96.7% at the end of that period. Since 2012, the average teacher salary in Russia increased by Rb 9,400, or 42.5% on its 2012 index. Over the two-year period, a total of nearly Rb 150bn was spent in order to raise the salaries of teachers and keep them at the new, higher level.

This sum is sufficiently large to give rise to questions as to the actual yield on this investment. It would have been naïve to assume that increased salaries of teachers can automatically be translated into better education quality. Moreover, so far Russia has no recognized criteria for measuring the education quality parameters. For some time, these were attempts to ascribe this function to the Single State Examination (SSE), which later proved to be futile due to the numerous violations of the established examination procedure. In 2014, after control over SSE procedures had been toughened, the average scores for the majority of examination subjects dropped by 8–10 points. At the same time, the actual deterioration of the average examination scores cannot be interpreted as an indicator of worsening secondary education quality in Russia in recent years. But is it altogether improving?

At the same time, we can study the reaction of teachers to the ongoing attempts to increase their salary level. We can also assess the objective situation



Source: Rosstat [Federal State Statistics Service], http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/PublishOTKR_8/index.html

Fig. 1. The Average Salary Level of Education Workers in State and Municipal School, and Its Ratio to the Average Salary Level in the Russian Federation in 2013–2014

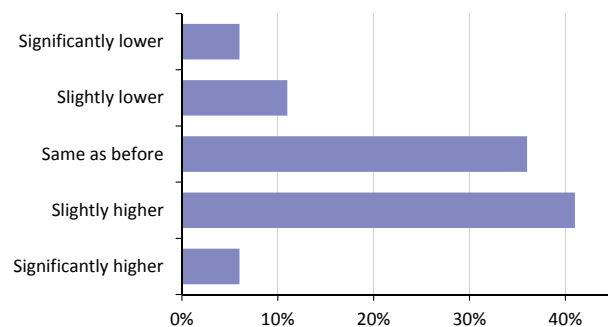


Fig. 2. The Distribution of Teachers' Answers to the Question: 'Did the Salary of Teachers Increase on the Last School Year?', %

as it is currently emerging in the general education system at large, as well as the situation with regard to schools in a given region.

In 2013–2014, the Center for Continuing Education at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEP) conducted a 'two-wave' secondary school performance monitoring (in Sverdlovsk Oblast, Voronezh Oblast and Ivanovo Oblast, and in the city of Moscow) to study the effects of the recently raised teachers' salaries,

which included, among other things, the surveys of school teachers. Their answers as to whether they have actually felt the effects of their higher salaries are presented in *Fig. 2*.

Thus, only 6% of schoolteachers could actually feel any increase in the amount of their salary. On the whole, 47% of respondents noted some improvement in the situation with regard to teacher remuneration, while 53% (that is, more than half of all respondents) saw no positive shifts. This circumstance leads to the following conclusions:

1. The substantial funds poured by the government into the general education system regrettably failed to yield the expected effects;
2. The differentiation of salary levels inside each given school in increasing.

Consequently, the main problems – the need to improve the social and professional wellbeing of the educational workers employed in the secondary school system, as well as the need to increase their motivation to improve the tuition quality, – have not been solved by the increase in the average teacher salary amount.

Simultaneously, a significant percentage of teachers noted that their workload had increased – that is, the increase in the average salary amount was accompanied by growth in labor intensity (*Fig. 3*). At present, the majority of teachers are shouldering the workload corresponding to 1.5–2 job positions.

At the same time, in 2014, the raised average teacher salary resulted in some serious misbalances in the 'school economy' – even in a city with a very high economic wellbeing level like Moscow. Thus, according to data posted to the websites of Moscow schools (which signifies a considerable achievement in the fight for increasing the transparency of the city of Moscow's budget allocations), remuneration for work now accounts for 95% of the budgets of many Moscow schools. Therefore any further growth in the average teacher salary in Moscow will be possible only if the schools dismiss some auxiliary personnel, which in its turn will increase the workload shouldered by the teachers and thus can affect the quality of education in these schools.

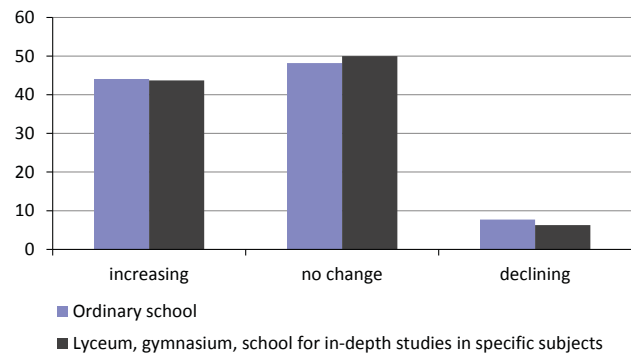


Fig. 3. The Assessment, by Educational Workers, of the Movement of Their Basic Workload (by Hour), as %

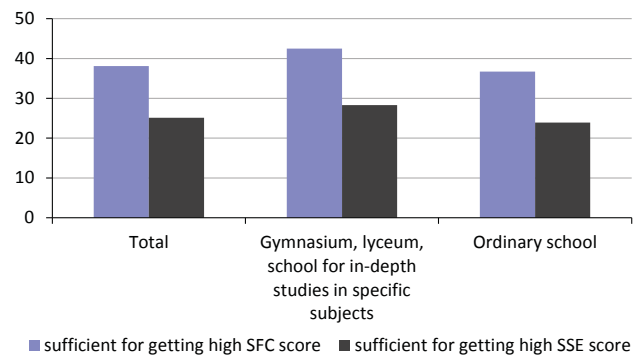


Fig. 4. Parent Opinions Concerning the Sufficiency of School Tuition for Gaining High SFC or SSE Scores, %

It should be noted that, on the whole, the parents of schoolchildren offer positive estimates of the situation with regard to their children's school education. While the performance of the school system as a whole, as a rule, is estimated by parents to be negative, they nevertheless estimate the degree to which a given school meets their requirements as positive. However, in spite of their positive attitude to the schools currently attended by their children, parents still do not trust them very much in terms of their ability to prepare their children for the independent certification tests – SSE and SFC-9 (or MSE¹) (*Fig. 4*).

1 OGE [MSE] is the main state examination (the independent examination to be taken by way of graduation from a general-education secondary school), previously named SFC-9, i.e. 'school final certification of nine-graders'.