

Teachers' Salary: Expectations and Results Achieved

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Abstract. The article deals with the main trends occurring in the school education system, which are caused by an increase in the average salaries of teachers. The analysis is conducted both

on the basis of official statistics from the Federal State Statistics Service and on results from monitoring the effectiveness of schools conducted by the Center for Continuous Education Economics of The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration. It is shown that parents don't associate improvement in the quality of teaching with the growth of teachers' salaries. At the same time, they believe that the school performs its functions quite successfully. Teachers themselves are increasingly unhappy with the size of their wages, most of them didn't feel its increase. At the same time, only 6.6% of teachers plan to leave the profession and work in another sphere.

Keywords: education, teachers' salary, school efficiency monitoring, quality of education.

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A teachers' pay increase has a symbolic meaning in regards to Russia's social policy and the implementation of the Presidential decrees of May 7, 2012. The salaries of physicians, university lecturers and particularly researchers fail to attract equally focused attention or arouse such heated discussions. This is not coincidental, since school activity involves, directly or indirectly and on an almost permanent basis, over 50 million Russian citizens—students, their parents, teachers, school administrations and education authorities—and even more considering grandmothers and grandfathers and all those involved in servicing schools. Therefore, any changes in the state of affairs at schools leads to a broad public response and serious social implications because both families and the general public associate the future prospects of both social success and the country's development with quality education for the rising generation.

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T. Gorshunova.

Both Russian and foreign education researchers have repeatedly tried to assess the impact of teachers' pay on the quality of instruction. Many of them believe that the quality of teaching staff and teachers' pay levels do not correlate directly, and mere pay rises and increased total school expenditure can hardly improve students' educational attainment [Hanushek 2008].

Ample evidence shows that schools with a similar student body and teaching staff structure achieve similar educational outcomes despite very different levels of expenditure, including spending on teachers' pay [Gibbons, McNally, Viarengo 2011]. These data are often interpreted as confirming a possibility of optimizing budgetary spending in this area and even the need to do so. However, the existing differences in external contexts and internal environments in schools—otherwise called organizational culture and teacher professionalism—need to be taken into consideration.

On the other hand, the PISA data testify to the fact that teachers' pay and class size (number of students per teacher) have a certain effect on educational outcomes. There is, however, a limit, after which increasing investment does not guarantee higher educational attainment levels [Dolton, Marcenaro-Gutierrez, Still 2014].

Some Russian researchers substantiate the idea that a pay rise in this country will not improve the quality of instruction since the school community views this measure as a just compensation of the debt accumulated over the years. Besides that, a teacher's pay rise is linked to the teaching load as a work intensity indicator [Tipenko 2012; 2014].

The high public value of teachers' pay and the ambiguous findings of scientific research on the issue point to the high relevance of assessing the effectiveness of various remuneration schemes, finding ways of motivating teachers during the introduction of value-for-money contracting and studying teachers' pay expectations and conditions associated with renewing the staffing [Abankina, 2009; Abankina, Filatova 2015].

A number of research papers on teacher remuneration systems discuss the advantages of the weekly workload system of the OECD countries over the teaching load (*stavka*) system typical of Russia and the CIS countries [Steiner-Khamsi 2016]. The contraposition of the above systems seems unjustified since only the piece-rate and time-rate systems are radically different, while all other systems are various combinations of the two. The narrowness of the approach based on such contraposition attempting to interpret the diverse information on the operation of educational institutions through the prism of the teacher pay system and its impact on school activity may lead to a distortion of the actual situation [Klyachko 2016a].

The increase in the average teacher's pay has given rise to expectations that the quality of schooling will improve significantly, and Russia will rise to higher rankings in international comparative studies. It was also believed that bringing the average remuneration of the

teaching staff in schools to the level of average wages in the relevant constituent entities of the Russian Federation would attract young teachers, and better educated entrants would come to teacher training institutions [RIA Novosti 2016]. Actually, in his famous book *The World Crisis in Education* P. Coombs writes that if the average teaching salary is lower than the average wages in the labour market, schools will attract relatively weak staff because the prestige of the teaching profession will remain low.

It was also expected that an increased teaching salary would rid them of the need to earn on the side, including by tutoring, and leave them more time for professional development. It was teaching skills improvement and application of new teaching technologies at schools that the hopes for an improved quality of education were largely based on. The ideology of value-for-money contracting also proceeded from the premise that teachers would have more time for skills improvement and career development, and they would earn enough without the need to hold multiple jobs [Shugal, Ugolnova 2013].

Based on official data from the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the outputs of the School Performance Monitoring undertaken by the Centre for Economics of Lifelong Learning under the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, the present paper will look into whether these expectations have been justified after five years of work under new conditions, and what impact the increase in teachers' pay has had on the extent of parents' satisfaction with the quality of schooling as well as on the teachers' attitudes to ongoing changes.

Teaching salary dynamics over the past four years

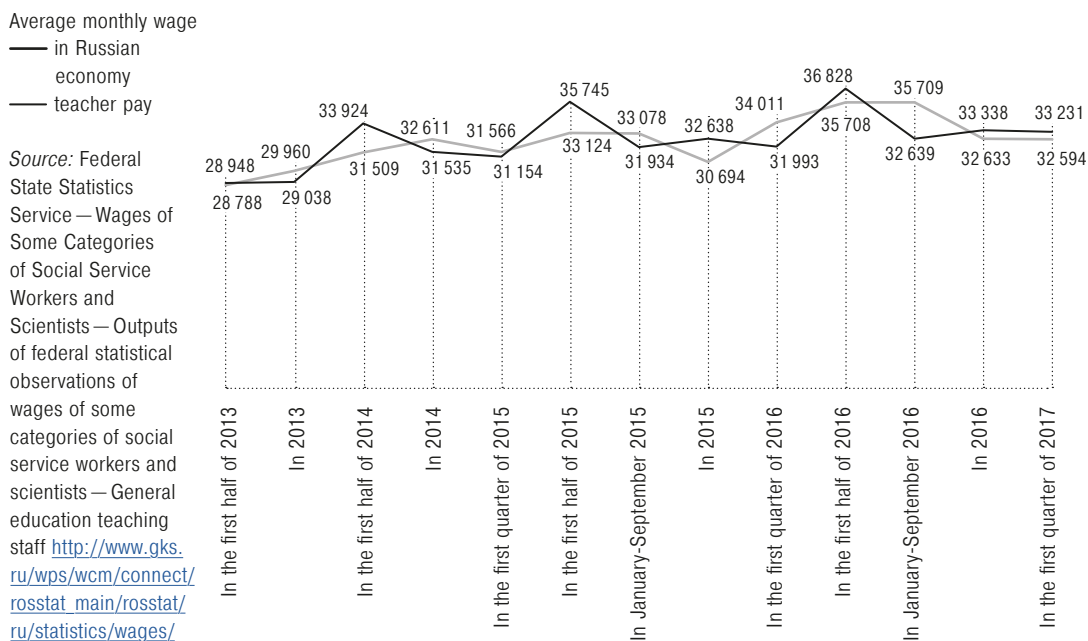
According to Rosstat, teachers' average pay has considerably increased since the beginning of 2013 (Fig. 1).

From the first quarter of 2013 through to the first quarter of 2017, teachers' pay in the Russian Federation increased by an average of 5,891 roubles, or 21.5 per cent. Figure 1 shows that the average teachers' pay changes cyclically. It slightly goes down in the first quarter, rises at the end of the first half-year, declines by the end of the third quarter and increases again by the close of the year.

At the end of 2015, average wage calculation in the economy was changed in order to ease the burden on regional budgets responsible for teachers' pay and, therefore, for the implementation of this item from the May Decrees. Along with teachers' pay, constituent entities were to raise the salaries of physicians, nurses, and cultural and social workers, which resulted in a deficit of most regional budgets and had a negative impact on their economic growth.

The "battle" for teachers' pay pushed the main issue—that of improving the quality of schooling and raising the extent of families' satisfaction with school activity—into the background. Besides that, the issue of the long-term implications of a teachers' pay increase for the general education system—whether higher teachers' pay leads to a

Figure 1. **Average wage dynamics in the economy overall and that of teachers' pay in the Russian Federation from 2013 to the first quarter of 2017 (in roubles)**



sustainable development of general education institutions or, on the contrary, is fraught with their underperformance—has never been raised and, therefore, remained unaddressed [Klyachko 2015; 2016b].

Since 2013, the Centre for Economics of Lifelong Learning under the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration has been conducting its School Performance Monitoring to find out the views of school directors, teachers and parents on various issues of school activity [Avraamova, Tokareva 2015; Avraamova et al. 2017]. An increasing share of positive opinions in each group of respondents testifies to improving school performance. However, the situation with their development sustainability is ambiguous. Even if the extent of the satisfaction of each of the above groups increases, it is not improbable that school development sustainability is decreasing.

The text below deals with changes in the viewpoints of teachers and students' parents and their attitude to the issue of a teacher pay increase as well as their assessment of the schooling quality.

The attitude of teachers to the issue of their pay increase, working conditions, and career prospects

The School Performance Monitoring shows that the extent of teachers' satisfaction with their pay has sharply decreased over the past few years (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. **Distribution of teachers' replies to the question, 'Are you basically satisfied with your pay?', %**

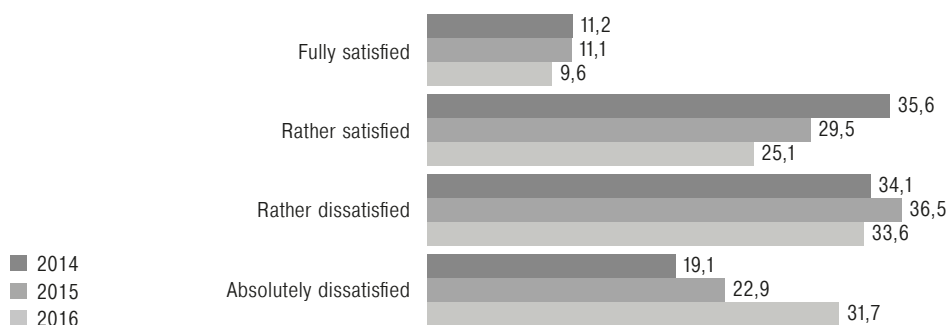
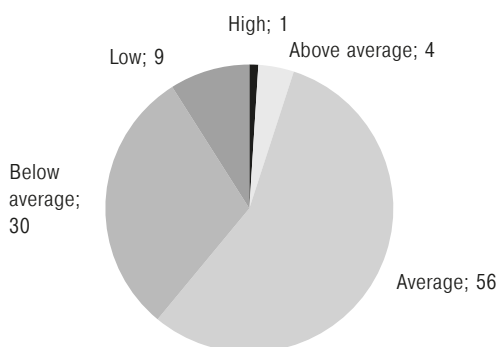


Figure 3. **Teachers' assessment of their financial standing, %**



In 2014, 46.8 per cent—almost half—of respondents were either “fully satisfied” or “rather satisfied” with their pay, while in 2016 this decreased to 34.7 per cent, i. e. slightly over one third of the total number of respondents. The share of negative replies, on the contrary, increased from 53.2 per cent in 2014 to 65.3 per cent in 2016.¹

So, in 2016, almost two thirds of teachers were dissatisfied with their pay. Furthermore, throughout the entire monitoring period, over 53 per cent of teachers noticed no increase in their pay, and only 4–6 per cent replied that it had increased considerably. It is quite another matter that in heavily subsidized regions there were more positive replies, while in the donor regions there were more negative ones.

At the same time, in 2016, 56 per cent of teachers assessed their financial standing as average, 30 per cent believed it to be below av-

¹ In 2013, teachers were not asked about it.

Table 1. Parents' opinions of changes in teachers' financial standing and social status, %

	2013	2014	2015	2016
What class do you think the majority of teachers belong to?				
To the well-off category	6.6	6.4	7.3	5.9
To the middle class	77.9	82.1	77.4	69.1
To the low-income category	15.5	11.5	15.3	25.0
In your opinion, has teacher pay been lately:				
Increasing significantly	10.0	10.1	7.1	5.9
Increasing insignificantly	46.3	38.7	31.9	22.6
Has not changed	18.6	22.3	21.7	16.3
Decreasing	1.5	1.3	6.3	14.6
At a loss	23.6	27.6	33.0	40.6

erage, and 9 per cent thought it low. As little as 1 per cent of teachers considered their financial standing high, and another 4 per cent ranked it above average (Fig. 3).

Self-assessments of teachers' financial standing varied depending on the type of populated area and region where they worked. The most negative assessments (below average and low) came from residents of two diametrically opposite types of populated areas: regional centres (44 per cent) and villages (40 per cent). Between four and six per cent of teachers in each type of populated area assessed their financial standing as above average or high.

Nevertheless, 61 per cent of teachers believe they belong to the middle class. However, a person's self-identification as a member of the middle class is only one indication of his/her membership in it [Tikhonova, Mareeva 2009]. Other important criteria are educational attainment, occupational status and the standard of well-being. As for educational attainment and occupational status [Niks 2014], teachers can be regarded as members of the middle class, yet the standard of their well-being most probably does not permit their inclusion into this population category, although their pay increase has changed the situation for the better.

Judging by the findings of the surveys undertaken in recent years, students' parents predominantly regard teachers as representatives of the middle class (with average incomes), which has a positive impact on their attitude to schools (Table 1). However, it is clear from the table that the rising trend in parents' assessments typical of 2013 and 2014, stalled in 2015, and then witnessed a significant increase in the share of opposing opinions in 2016.

Figure 4. **Extent of teachers' satisfaction with their teaching load, %**

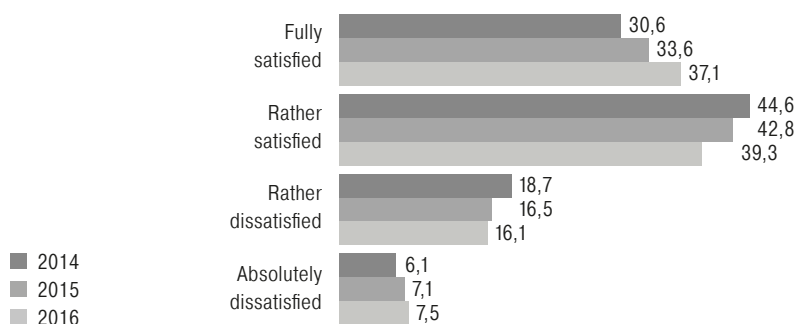


Table 2. **Teachers' opinions concerning factors attracting young professionals to schools** (several options were permissible), %

	2013	2014	2015	2016
What attracts young professionals to schools in your area? (mark all possible options)				
Work schedule	41.2	36.1	41.2	35.9
Relatively high salary	13.8	15.3	13.6	10.2
Relatively high social status	11.2	13.6	11.0	14.1
Interesting work	36.3	27.8	32.2	33.8
Absence of apprehension of losing one's job	28.9	30.0	31.7	36.5
Nothing attracts them	20.0	25.2	20.4	4.6
Other	—	—	—	23.9

Apprehensions as to a possible increase in the teaching load that teachers associated with their pay rise in 2013, no longer bothered them in 2014, although the share of teachers who found their teaching load “rather acceptable” dropped from 44.6 per cent in 2014 to 39.3 per cent in 2016 (Fig. 4).

At the same time, teachers believed that the main factor attracting young professionals to schools was their work schedule (Table 2). In 2016, this collected the highest percentage of replies—3.5 times higher than salary as a factor of their attraction (in 2014 the gap constituted 2.4 times). Therefore, a pay increase can hardly be expected to attract young professionals to schools in the medium term. Nevertheless, the issue requires additional study and evidence.

The majority of teachers interviewed believe that the intensity of their work is increasing (Table 3). Over 80 per cent of respondents

Figure 5. **Teachers' replies to the question 'Do you have to work at another place besides school?', %**

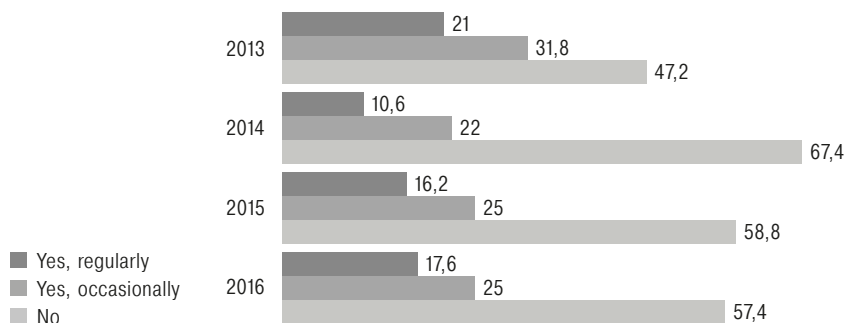


Table 3. **Teachers' opinions about changes in the intensity and content of their professional activity** (several options were permissible), %

	2013	2014	2015	2016
In recent years, work at school has become:				
Easier	1.7	2.0	1.5	2.3
More difficult	81.4	85.8	81.8	80.9
Has not changed	16.9	12.2	16.7	16.8
If it has become more difficult, why? (mark all possible options)				
More reporting and paperwork	83.0	78.8	84.5	80.7
Because of the introduction of the unified state exam (USE) & the final state attestation (FSA'9)	33.5	36.9	34.2	31.6
Due to the need to use computer technologies	17.9	13.6	12.8	10.1
Because it is more difficult to get along with students	19.8	14.7	14.9	11.8
Because it is more difficult to get along with students' parents	28.9	23.8	23.7	26.1
Other	—	—	—	3.4

consider an increasing bureaucratic load to be the main factor in the higher intensity and complexity of their work. It is increasing bureaucratization and formalization of their work –“an avalanche of paperwork”—that arouses the greatest discontent among teachers.

Simultaneously with the teachers' pay increase, an objective has been set to introduce value-for-money contracting, which implies that

Table 4. Teachers' extra jobs, apart from work at school (schools) by type of populated area (%)

Extra job, apart from work at school (schools)	Type of populated area				
	Administrative / regional centre	Major city	Town	Township	Village
Regular	20	15	14	14	9
Occasional	29	27	23	12	18
None	51	58	63	74	73

a teacher works at his/her school and nowhere else. The Monitoring has shown that the share of teachers who have only one job increased in 2014, but began to decrease in 2015, and the share of teachers who have another regular job (which is not always at school) has begun to increase (Fig. 5).

It is highly probable that in 2014, some teachers still had additional jobs, but began to conceal the fact, including from sociologists. However, another explanation is also possible: it was a period of adaptation to a new teaching load, and many teachers had to leave their jobs elsewhere. In 2015, the adaptation process was completed, and the number of additional jobs started to increase, especially since teachers' financial standing began to deteriorate (or teachers no longer were afraid of mentioning their regular jobs elsewhere). The indicators of teachers' additional employment vary considerably by type of populated area (Table 4).

On the one hand, in townships and villages, and even in towns, it is more difficult to find an additional job, to say nothing of major cities and regional centres. On the other hand, social control is considerably stronger in such populated areas. Nevertheless, in every type of populated area, teachers still have additional jobs, both occasional and regular.

Despite dissatisfaction with their pay levels and higher work intensity, the majority of teachers are not planning to leave the occupation (Table 5).

As is clear from Table 5, in 2016, over 40 per cent of teachers thought it possible to look for an additional job connected with education, and 34 per cent believed that an additional job could be outside the secondary education system. However, only about 6.5 per cent intended to change their field of activity and another 22 per cent did not reject the possibility, while the majority of teachers, almost 72 per cent, did not intend to abandon their work at school. In the period under review, the share of teachers who intended to retire in the near future increased. It is highly probable that this is explained by the ongoing ageing of the corps of teachers. Since, in teachers' opinion, a pay increase is not a significant factor capable of attracting young pro-

Table 5. **Teachers' opinions about their work prospects (%)**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Are you planning to find an additional job in the field of education in the near future?				
Yes	–	8.4	8.5	9.1
Possibly	–	30.3	30.2	33.9
No	–	61.3	61.3	57.0
Are you planning to find an additional job outside the field of education?				
Yes	–	6.3	6.7	7.8
Possibly	–	24.0	20.0	26.2
No	–	69.7	73.3	66.0
Is it easy to find a decently paid job outside the secondary education system in your area?				
Easy	7.8	6.9	6.1	5.5
Not very easy	33.3	38.2	30.5	30.4
Difficult	40.0	36.2	39.5	37.4
Very difficult	18.9	18.7	23.9	26.7
Are you planning to change your field of activity (leave the secondary education system)?				
Yes	5.2	6.9	6.0	6.6
Possibly	24.3	21.4	19.7	21.7
No	70.5	71.7	74.3	71.7
Are you planning to retire in the near future?				
Yes	10.5	10.5	10.3	12.2
Possibly	20.3	16.0	12.3	15.4
No	69.2	73.5	77.4	72.4

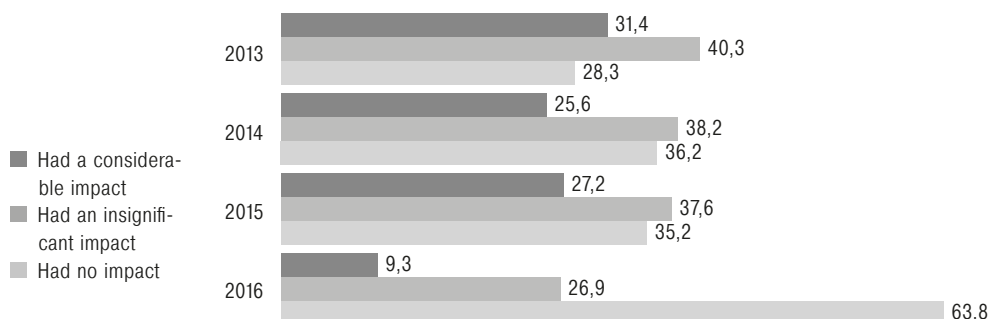
professionals to schools, the retirement of older teachers may destabilize the situation in the medium term. However, the risk is not serious yet.

Extent of parents' satisfaction with school activity

The data obtained in the course of the School Performance Monitoring as to whether students' parents had expected higher education quality thanks to the teachers' pay increase, and whether their opinion had changed over the past years, make it possible to identify regularities in the formation of people's expectations concerning school development and the prospects of support for school reforms by students' parents (Fig. 6).

The replies parents' gave in 2013 to the question 'What was the impact of the teachers' pay increase on the quality of instruction at school?' can be interpreted as evidence of their hopes of better

Figure 6. **Parent's replies to the question 'What was the impact of the teachers' pay increase on the quality of instruction at school?', %**



schooling quality due to that increase. Judging by their replies to the same question in 2016, those hopes were frustrated, and the prevailing opinion was that the schooling quality had not improved. A sharp change of opinion occurred within one year. It may be assumed that its dynamics were influenced not only by the situation in secondary education but by overall changes in the Russian economy as well. Parents became aware that the increase in teachers' pay had ceased and, therefore, could no longer produce a positive effect on the quality of instruction, and decline was more likely to follow.

What is surprising is not so much the changes in parents' opinion about possible higher schooling quality due to a teachers' pay increase, but the fact that in 2013–2015, over a quarter of respondents were expecting such an improvement. The point is that in both 2013 and 2016, parents, as the Monitoring showed, were of the opinion that schools performed well and, therefore, it is not quite clear what kind of changes for the better this considerable proportion of the respondents expected.

The most important issue that schools, in parents' opinion, are supposed to address is to create enabling conditions for their children to acquire knowledge necessary for their future occupational activity. Over 85 per cent of respondents believe that schools are meeting this demand (Fig. 7).

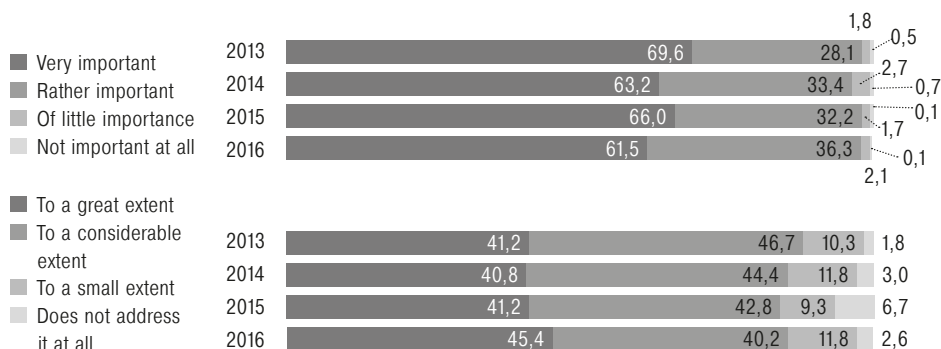
Parents are of the opinion that schools are also good at providing children with diverse knowledge, expanding their conceptions of the world so they can become educated and civilized persons (Fig. 8).

Moreover, in 2016, a considerable number of parents came to the conclusion that a teachers' pay increase had no impact on the quality of instruction, and the share of parents absolutely satisfied with the way schools provided knowledge to children making them educated and civilized persons even increased to 48 per cent (in 2013 there were 43 per cent of such parents). However, the share of parents who

Figure 7. **Parents' replies to the questions 'How important is the issue of acquisition of knowledge required for the future occupation of your children to you?' and 'To what extent does the school your child attends address this issue?', %**



Figure 8. **Parents' replies to the questions 'How important is acquisition of diverse knowledge expanding your children's conceptions of the world and permitting them to become educated and civilized persons?' and 'To what extent does the school your child attends address this issue?', %**

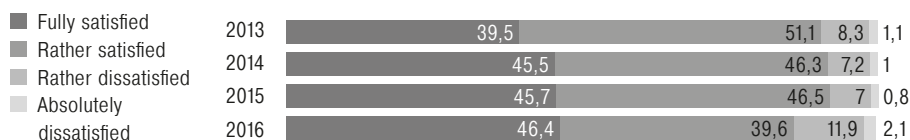


believed that schools addressed this issue “to a considerable extent” decreased from 51.8 per cent in 2013 to 42.3 per cent in 2016.

The Monitoring showed that practically all parents were sure that school teaches children to be disciplined, industrious and well-behaved in public. In 2016, 51.9 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that schools address this issue “to a great extent”, and 37.5 per cent believed that it does so “to a considerable extent”. The importance of these skills, in parents' opinion, was increasing. In 2013, 64.9 per cent of respondents considered them “very important” whereas in 2016 this increased to 70.6 per cent.

Thus, contrary to the prevailing opinion that general education is in a poor condition and the situation is deteriorating, the extent of par-

Figure 9. **Parents' replies to the question 'To what extent are you satisfied with the quality of instruction at schools?', %**



ents' satisfaction with school activity is high, constituting from 85 to 90 per cent. In view of the above, it would be strange if parents expected a higher quality of instruction due to a teachers' pay increase and, consequently, better outcomes of the secondary education of their children.

Why then do the general public believe that there is something wrong with secondary education if practically all parents are satisfied with the schooling quality?

When asked 'To what extent are you satisfied with the quality of instruction at schools?' parents gave lower assessments than to the questions concerning the way schools performed some of their functions (Fig. 9).

In 2016, only 46.4 per cent of parents were "fully satisfied" with the quality of their children's education, and 39.6 per cent were "rather satisfied". Although 86.0 per cent of respondents were generally satisfied with schooling (this indicator coincided with the extent of parents' satisfaction with the way schools performed some of their functions), the share of those dissatisfied increased to 14 per cent in 2016, whereas the earlier indicator stood at about 8 per cent. It is possibly dissatisfied persons, since they are active, who create negative perceptions regarding schooling. Besides that, the data of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that general education in Russia lags behind its competitor countries. These findings arouse concern among the professional community, which believes that secondary education in Russia requires serious reform.

Conclusion Overall, a teachers' pay increase was welcomed by the general public and generated great expectations in Russia. At the same time, paradoxically, the majority of parents did not count on an improvement in the quality of instruction at schools. In other words, parents did not find any direct causal effect between the quality of schooling and a teachers' pay increase or decrease. In their opinion, schools performed their main functions well before the pay increase and continued to do so afterwards. However, in 2016, the share of parents' negative replies in the questionnaires of the School Performance

Monitoring began to increase, although over 85 per cent of parents assessed the school their child was attending highly.

It may be assumed that the most significant positive shift in the social status of teachers attributed to pay increase was a higher share of parents who defined teachers as middle class members. Such perception of the social status of teachers explained parents' greater trust in schools as institutions. Parents en masse are satisfied with school activity despite negative opinion about the quality of secondary education among the general public.

As for teachers, they are considerably more skeptical about their pay increase. In 2016, teachers' negative assessments of their salaries began to prevail substantially over the positive ones. Throughout the four years of Monitoring, the share of teachers dissatisfied with their pay was higher than the share of those satisfied. At the same time, more than half of the teachers consider their financial standing as average, although some of them—one in every eleven teachers—regard it as low. One can hardly expect that this category of teacher will exert any efforts to improve the quality of schooling.

Despite the increase in the number of negative assessments of the pay levels, most teachers do not intend to leave the occupation. Their dedication to school is not always explained solely by their love for the instruction process. The reason is often the limitations of local labour markets, making it rather difficult for teachers to find a decent job. It is this factor that makes the situation with schools in Russia sustainable for now, but the ageing of the corps of teachers is undermining its sustainability, albeit slowly.

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