

# The Politics of Transforming Education in Ecuador 2006-2017

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Quito, 2007



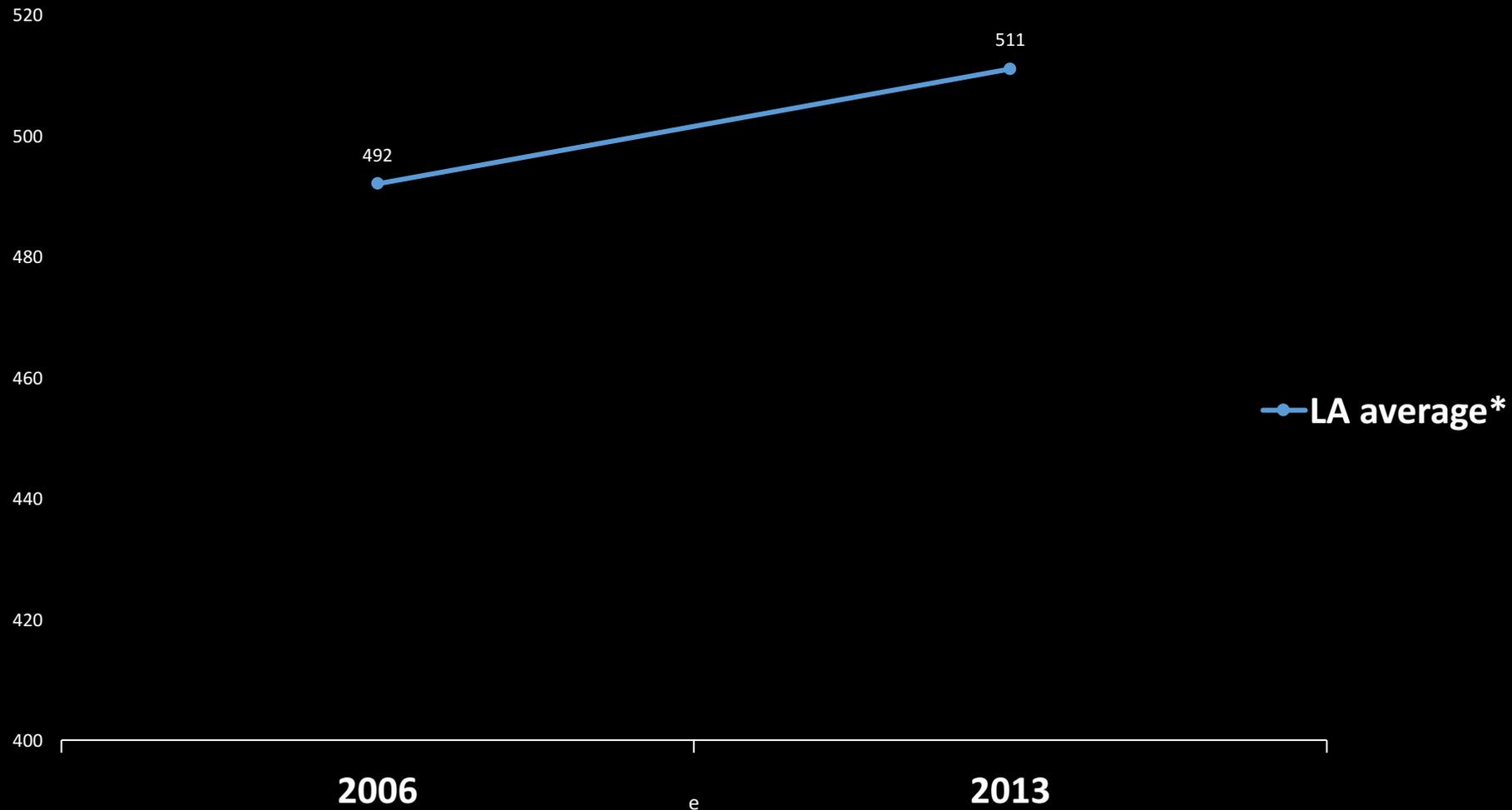
Lima, 2012

## Outline

1. Ecuador's education transformation in an Andean context
2. What drives learning improvement?
  1. What education economics is telling us: cost-effective interventions
  2. What policymakers are doing: system-wide reform with little evidence base
3. Challenges of reforming teacher policy – technical and political
4. How Andean countries are doing it?
5. What we can learn from Ecuador?

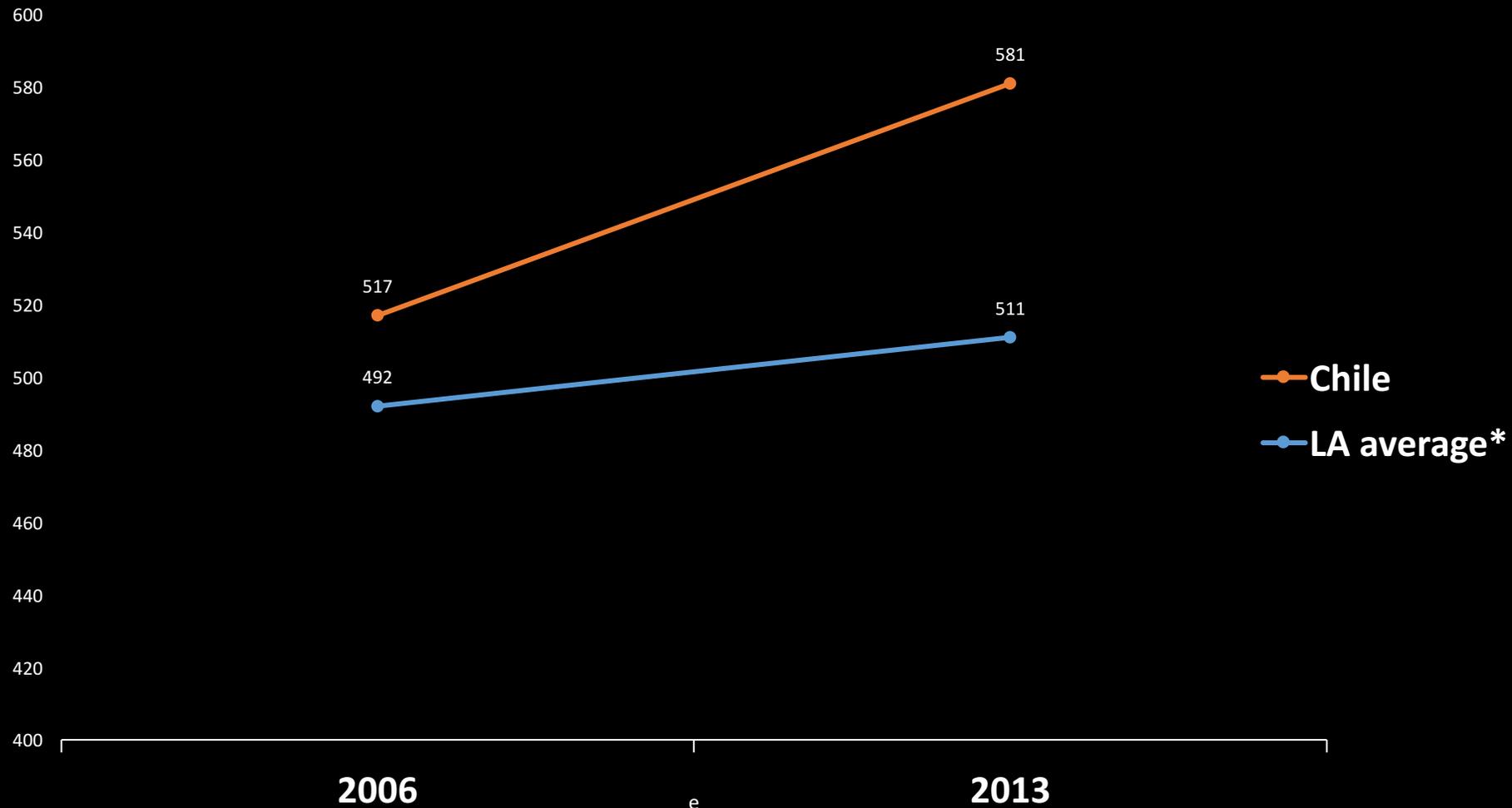
# Andean countries on Latin America regional test 2006-2013

Math Scores on Second (SERCE) and Third Regional Test (TERCE)



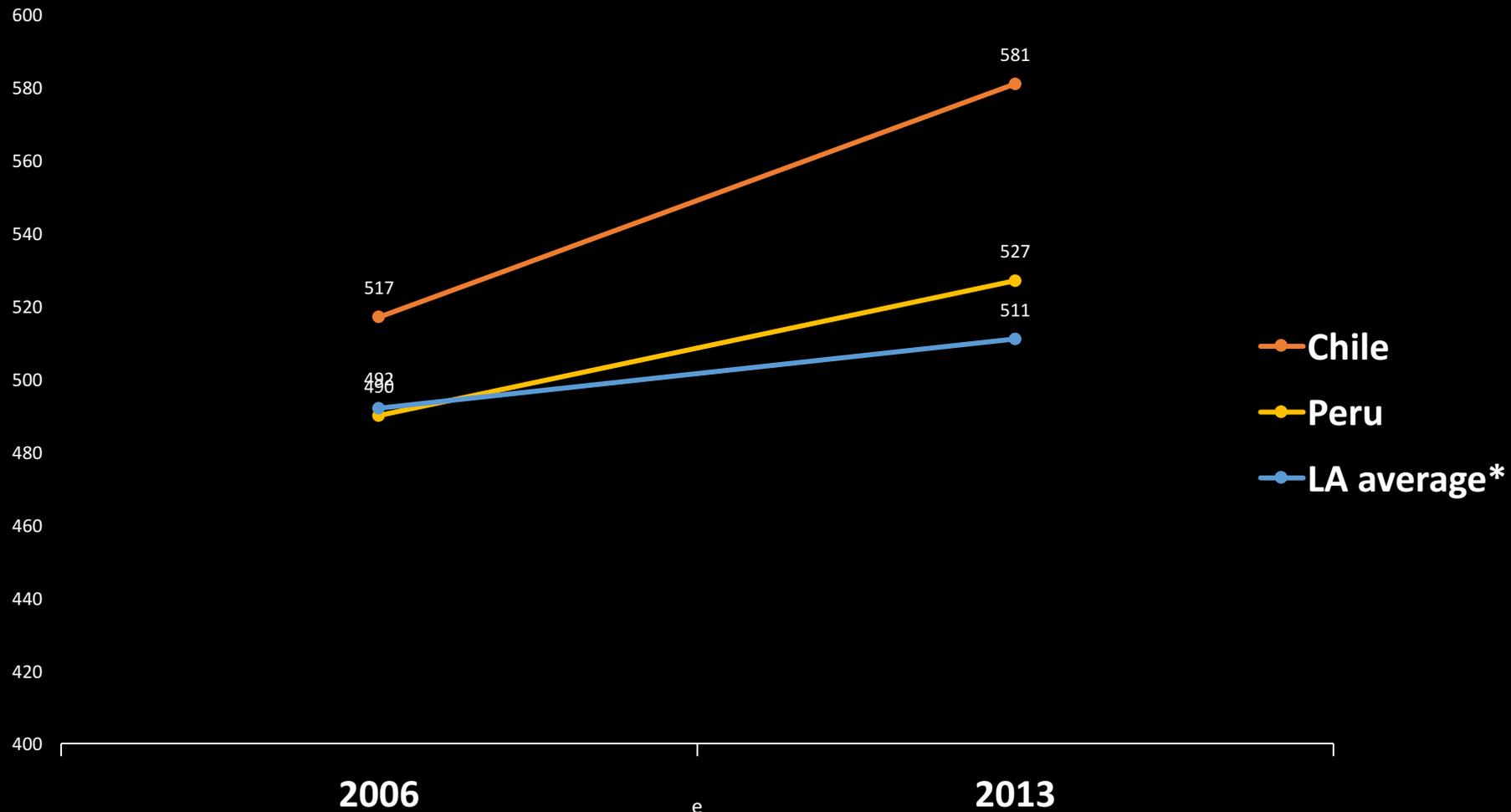
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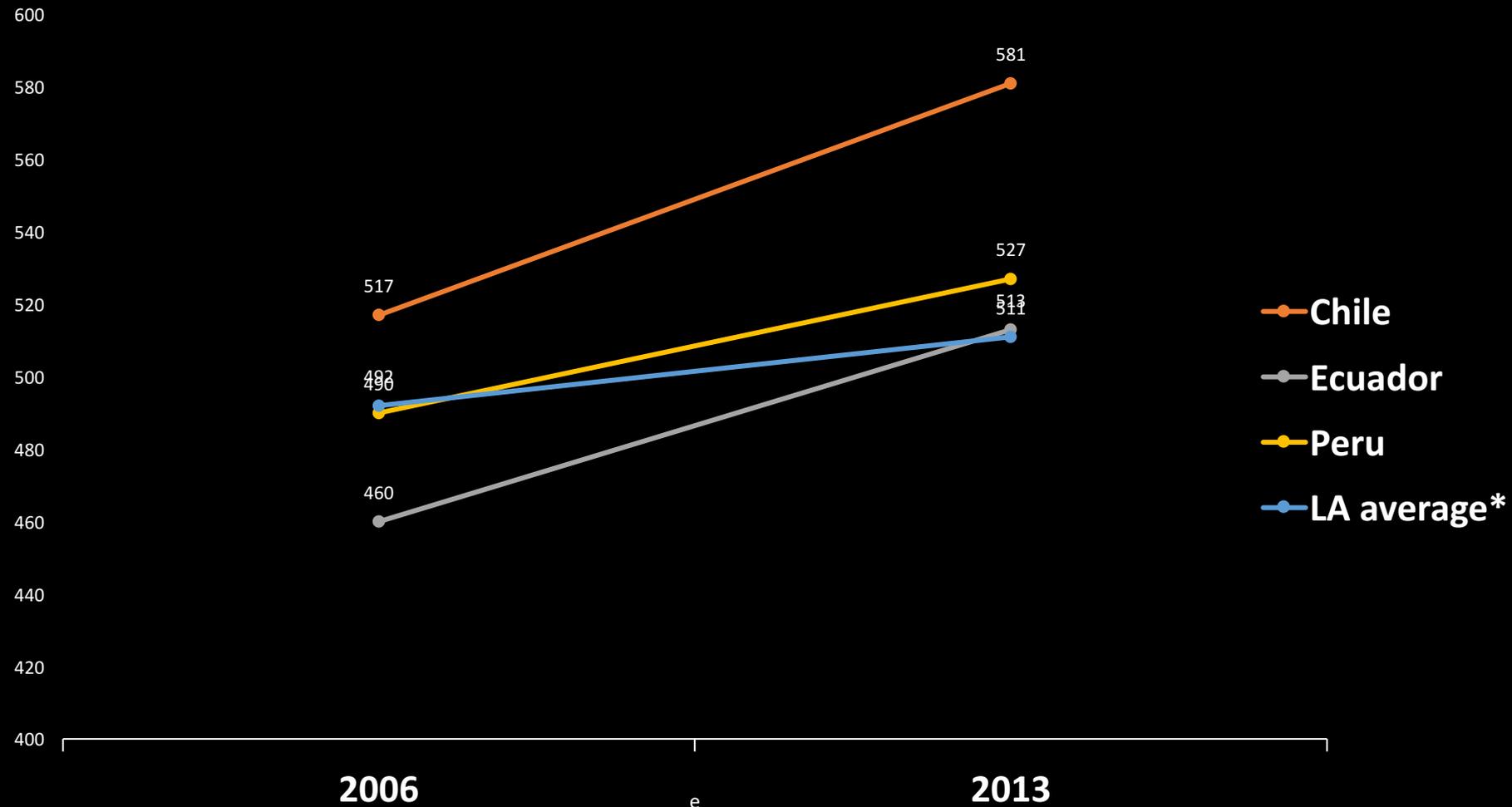
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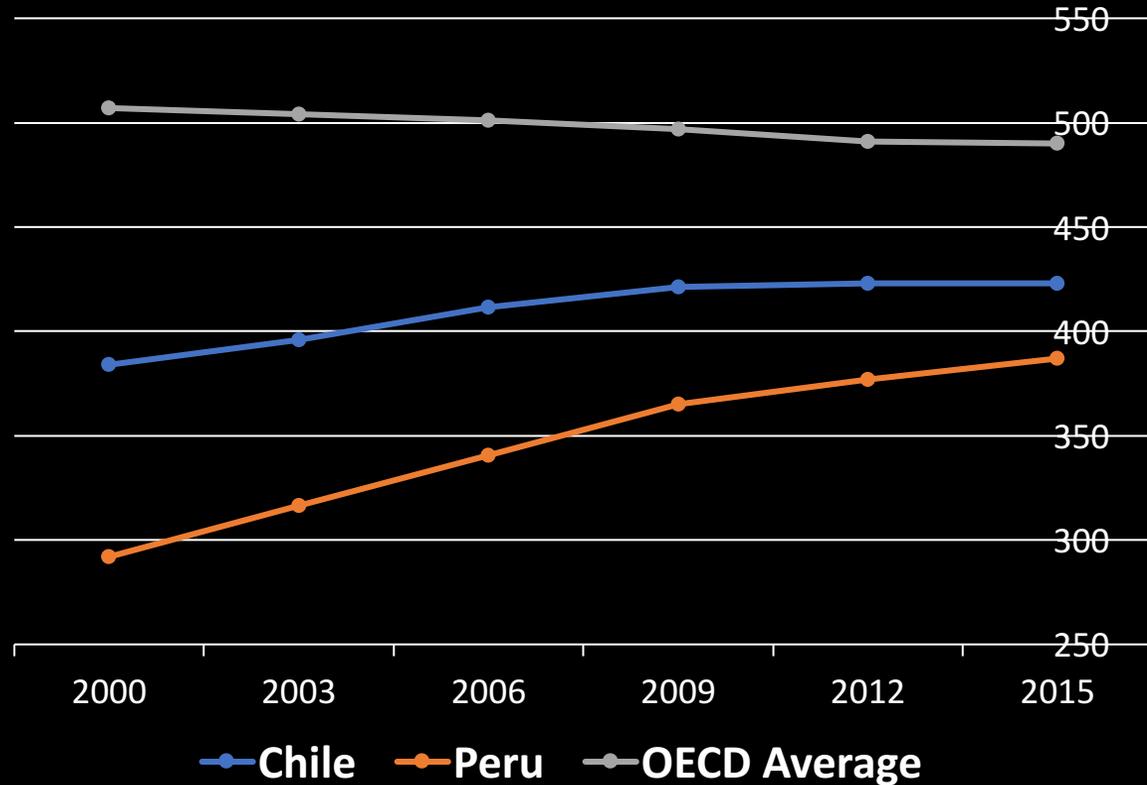
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# Andean countries on PISA: 2000-2015

Math scores on PISA

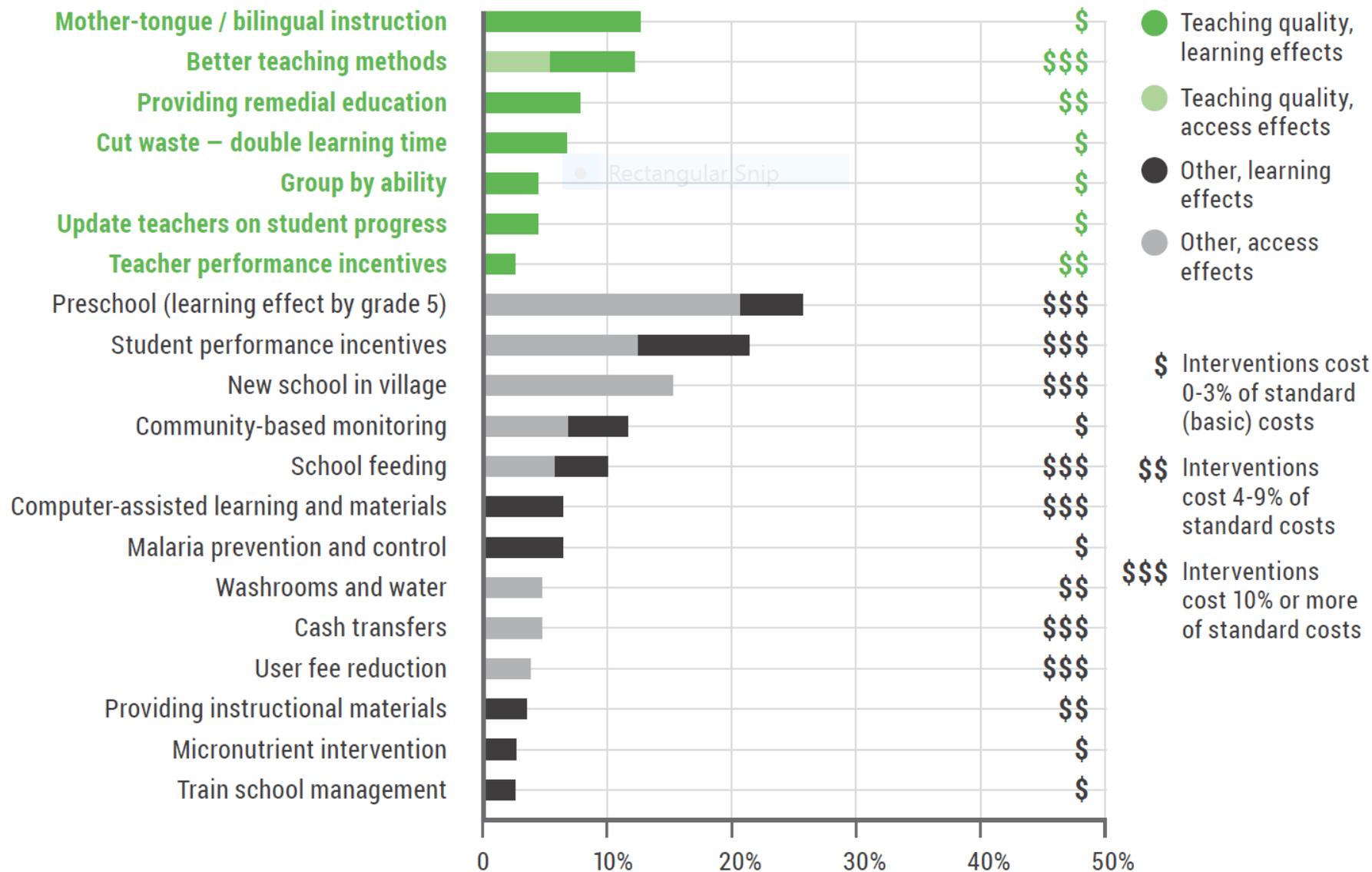


*Note: Values for Peru interpolated from 2000-2009*

What is driving  
Andean education  
progress?

- Cost-effective interventions?

**Figure 13. Highly effective practices to increase access and learning outcomes**



Source: Education Commission analysis (2016).<sup>v8</sup> Note: The improvements are based on a baseline of 50 percent (of enrollment, comple-

**Table 17: Variance within versus across McEwan's (2014) intervention categories**

Category	In category		Not in category		Total		More within category variation?
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Teacher training	0.171	0.225	0.067	0.156	0.097	0.184	Yes
Computers or technology	0.200	0.309	0.082	0.154	0.097	0.184	Yes
Instructional materials	0.107	0.160	0.093	0.192	0.097	0.184	No
Deworming drugs	0.044	0.188	0.102	0.183	0.097	0.184	Yes
Food, beverages, and/or micronutrients	0.066	0.188	0.102	0.183	0.097	0.184	Yes
Contract or volunteer teachers	0.117	0.093	0.093	0.196	0.097	0.184	No
Monetary grants	-0.005	0.098	0.103	0.186	0.097	0.184	No
Class size or composition	0.132	0.083	0.092	0.194	0.097	0.184	No
School management or supervision	0.118	0.188	0.094	0.184	0.097	0.184	Yes
Student/teacher performance incentives	0.102	0.106	0.096	0.191	0.097	0.184	No
Informational treatments	0.058	0.095	0.102	0.192	0.097	0.184	No

Source: Evans and Popova, *What Really Works to Improve Learning in Developing Countries*, 2015

**Table 5 – Summary of Impacts on Test Scores of Demand Side Interventions**

	Negative, Significant	Negative, Insignificant	Positive, Insignificant	Positive, Significant	Total Studies
<b>Information-Based Interventions</b>					
Inform. on returns to schooling (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
Career counseling (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
<b>Cash Transfer Programs</b>					
Conditional cash transfer RCTs	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	3 (3)	5
Other high quality studies	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	2
Unconditional Cash Transfers (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Labeled cash transfer (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Promise of high school fin. aid (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
<b>Scholarship Programs</b>					
Merit-based scholarship (all RCTs)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	5 (3)	4
<b>Other Household Interventions</b>					

**Table 9 – Summary of Impacts on Test Scores of Pedagogy Interventions**

	Negative, Significant	Negative, Insignificant	Positive, Insignificant	Positive, Significant	Total Studies
Teaching at right level/ Supplemental instruction (all RCTs)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	4 (3)	3
Tracking/Streaming (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	1
Computers/Electronic games RCTs	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (3)	10 (6)	8
Other high quality studies	3 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
Reading-intensive pedagogy and reading materials (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	2 (1)	1

1. Figures are number of estimates; figures in parentheses are number of papers/studies.

**Table 7 – Summary of Impacts on Test Scores of School Inputs**

	Negative, Significant	Negative, Insignificant	Positive, Insignificant	Positive, Significant	Total Studies
<b>Interventions that Increase Access to Schools</b>					
Building new schools RCTs	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	1
Other high quality studies	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1
Hours per school day (high quality)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (2)	2
<b>Pedagogical Materials and Facilities</b>					
Textbooks (all RCTs)	0 (0)	2 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	2
Flipcharts (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Provision of libraries (RCT)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
Multilevel learning materials (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	1
Multi-level teaching materials and parent-teacher partnerships (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (1)	1
<b>Teacher Quantity and Quality</b>					
Pupil-teacher ratio RCTs	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
Other high quality studies	3 (2)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2
<b>Provision of Food</b>					
School meals RCTs	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	2
Other high quality studies	0 (0)	2 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)	2
Take home rations (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1
School Feeding /parent-teacher partnerships (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (1)	1
<b>Medical Services</b>					
Deworming Medicine (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Iron supplements (all RCTs)	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (2)	1 (1)	2
Provision of eyeglasses (RCT)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	1
<b>Large-scale Provision of Resources</b>					
Attending an Elite Public School (both are other high quality studies)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2
Infrastructure/Materials/Training (high quality)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	2 (1)	1
Unexpected school block grant (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(1)	1
Expected school block grant (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Incentivized community block grant (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Non-incentivized community block grant (RCT)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Support circles (RCT)	0(0)	0 (0)	1(1)	0 (0)	1

1. Figures are number of estimates; figures in parentheses are number of papers/studies.

**Table 11 – Summary of Impacts on Test Scores of Governance Interventions**

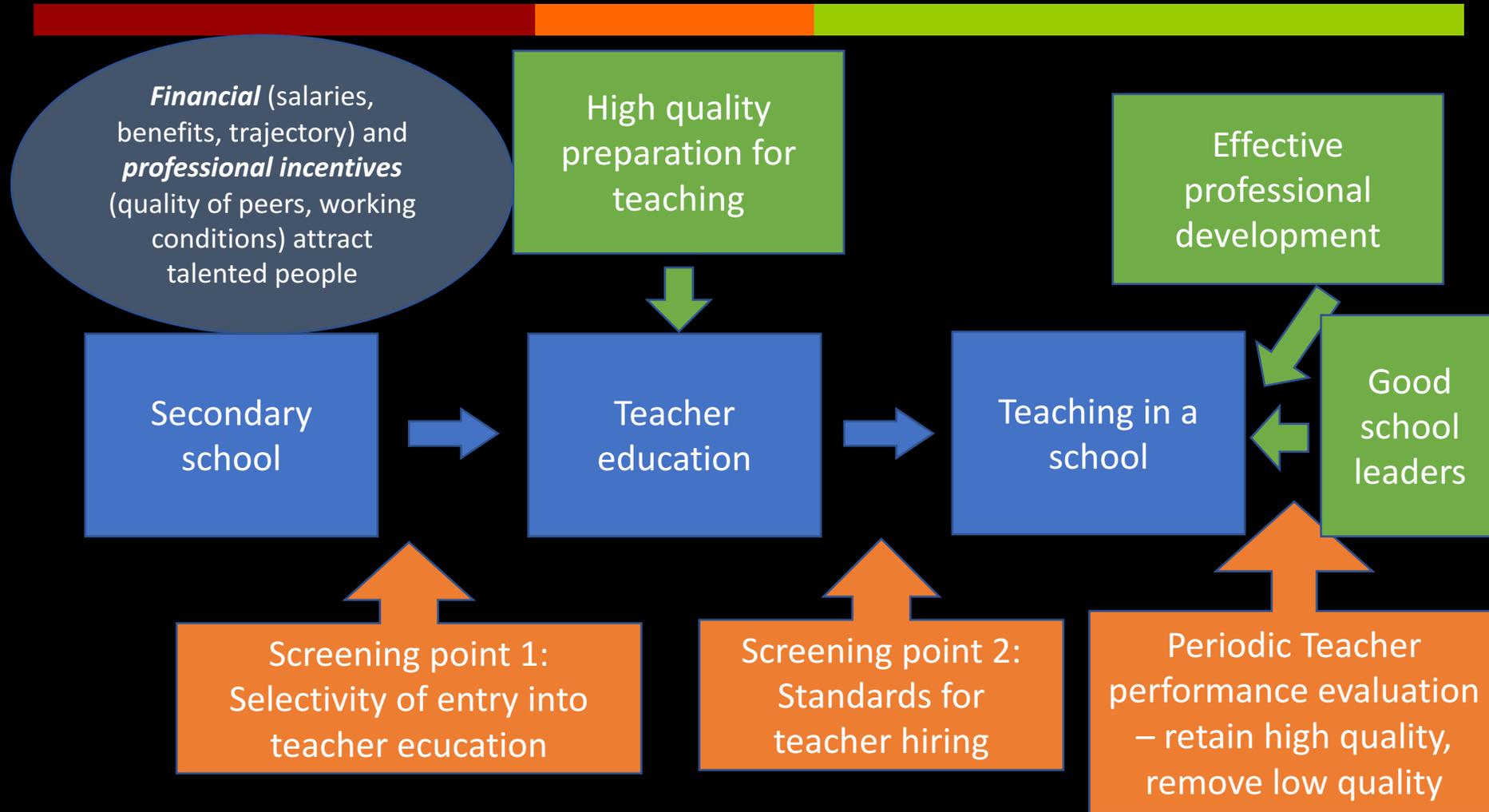
	Negative, Significant	Negative, Insignificant	Positive, Insignificant	Positive, Significant	Total Studies
Monitoring (All RCTs)	0 (0)	1 (1)	4 (3)	1 (1)	4
<b>School-based Management</b>					
RCTs	0 (0)	9 (3)	7 (3)	2 (2)	5
Other high quality studies	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2
<b>Teacher performance pay</b>					
RCTs	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (1)	5 (2)	3
Other high quality studies	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1
Contract teachers (all RCTs)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	2
<b>Private School (vouchers)</b>					
RCTs	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	2 (2)	3
Other high quality studies	0 (0)	2 (1)	2 (1)	0 (0)	2
Diagnostic Feedback to Teachers (RCT)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1

1. Figures are number of estimates; figures in parentheses are number of papers/studies.

What is driving  
Andean education  
progress?

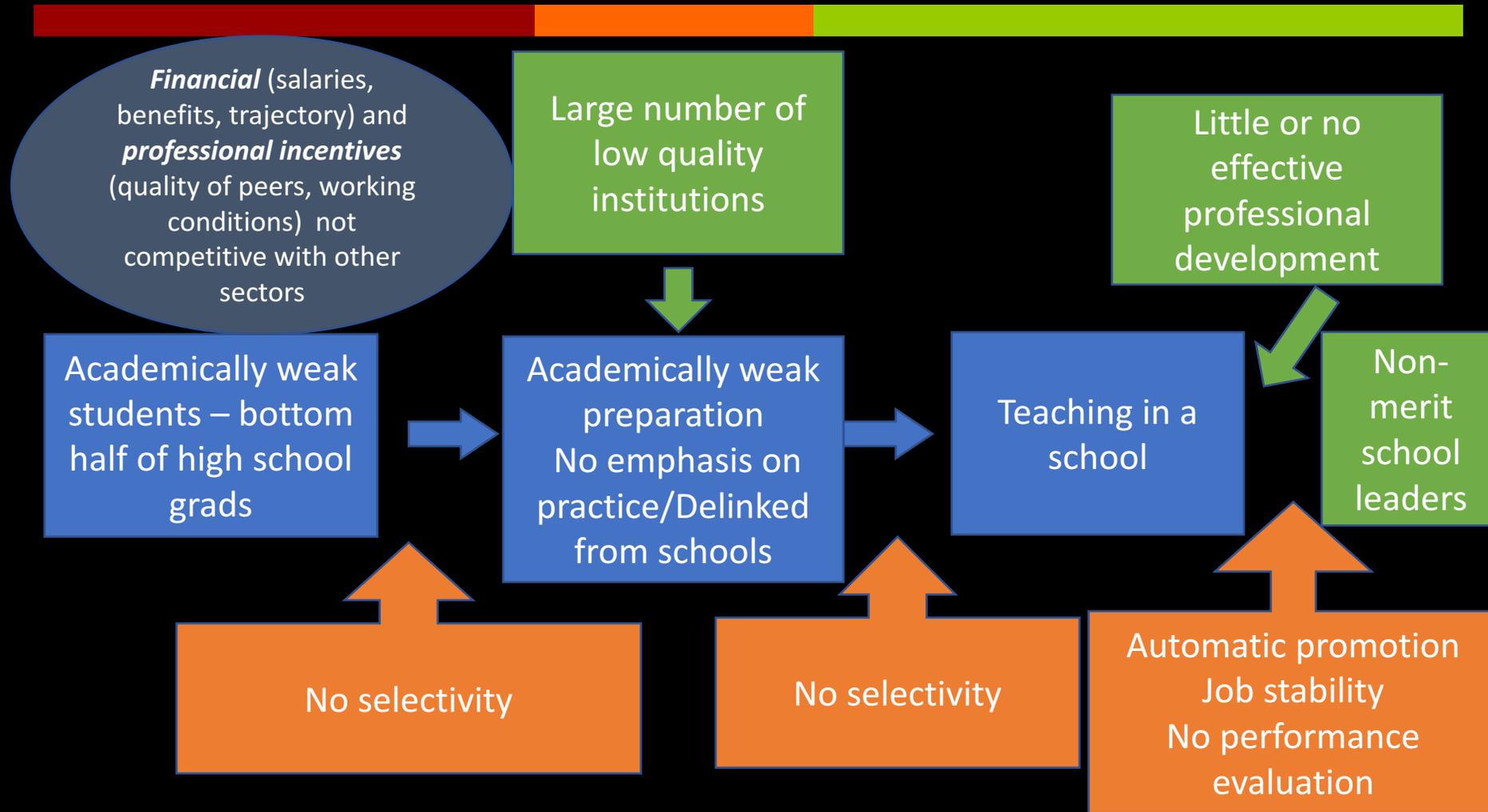
- Cost-effective interventions?
- Or comprehensive reform tackling the core issue of teacher quality?

# High quality teachers are produced by a *System* that rewards talent and is selective



*How it works in Finland, Singapore, Canada, Japan, Korea, Shanghai*

# Raising teacher quality requires reforming the *System* that produces teachers



*How it works in low-performing countries...*

Teacher reform is  
technically challenging

- *Big agenda* – multiple reforms, covering incentives, institutions and processes need to be pursued at same time and aligned
- *Capacity-intensive* - teacher performance evaluation; institutional accreditation; effective professional development all require expert skill and implementation capacity
- *Hard to monitor* - To affect student learning, reforms must affect teacher practice in the classroom, but this is hard to change
- *Slow and diffused results* – benefits, in terms of education system performance, take years to accrue

# ... and politically conflictual

- Costs of reform are concentrated on teachers and teacher unions
  - Increased accountability, decreased job stability, more variable pay
  - Threats to union structure (decentralization) or unity (variable compensation)
- Unions have immense political power
  - Largest, most homogeneous, and most powerful union in many countries
  - High disruptive power through strikes and demonstrations
  - Direct political power in funding candidates and voting bloc
- Not just a labor association
  - Leadership often politicized and allied with powerful parties
  - May control significant rents (e.g., appointments)
  - May be part of clientelist, machine politics
  - Multiple layers of interests superimposed on unions
- Quality reforms affect all of these interests



So why – and when –  
does it happen?

- No satisfying answers from political scientists
- May be lessons from the Andean wave – three politically distinct countries implementing very similar reforms
- Parallel in Washington DC, which has been researched
  - Dee and Wyckoff, 2013 – within 3 years, teacher evaluation program “shifted the entire distribution of teachers in the direction of higher quality”
  - Jacob et al, 2015 – test-based recruitment has produced more effective new teachers

“Andean wave” of Teacher Policy Reforms

Policy goals and instruments	Ecuador 2007-15	Chile 2004-16	Peru 2009-14	Wash DC 2010
More selective and higher quality pre-service education ( <i>selection pt. 1</i> )	✓	✓	✓	
- Close low quality schools	✓	✓	✓	
- Create exit exam		✓		
Higher standards for new teachers ( <i>selection point 2</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Higher salaries for new recruits	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual teacher performance evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Eliminate job stability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promotion based on skills and performance	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Professional incentives (time for collaboration, more in-service training, higher quality training)	✓	✓	✓	✓

# The case of Ecuador's education reform

## Unique features

- Sense of crisis: spending fell to 1 % of GDP; lowest scores in LAC region on SERCE; teachers working only 62 % of contractual hours.
- Political leader with a mandate and personal conviction: Rafael Correa.
- Resources: oil prices and economic expansion permit 4-fold increase in spending, to 5% in 2013.

## Ecuador: Political strategies

- Key reform opponent (teachers' union) was defeated by Correa's communications strategies.
- No other major stakeholders were influential, but parent and student involvement in school-level decisions built support.
- Strong technical team in Ministry and stable leadership only 2 ministers from 2006-2013.

# 1. More selective, and higher quality, pre-service teacher education

## *What was done?*

- Minimum standards set for teacher education curriculum
- Most teacher training institutes were closed down
- National Education University (UNAE) was created

## 2. Higher standards for new teachers

### *What was done?*

- Entrance tests to apply for public teacher positions
- Minimum score in ENES test to enter teacher education programs
- Recruitment campaign “I want to be a teacher”

### 3. Individual teacher performance evaluation

*What was done?*

- First-time assessment of all in-service teachers & principals
- Economic incentives to those who received better marks
- Creation of Institute of Educational Assessment (INEVAL)

## 4. High quality in-service professional development

*What was done?*

- National training program for in-service teachers
- Orientation program for new teachers
- Mentorship program

## 5. Restructure teacher career with promotion based on tested competencies

*What was done?*

- Entry salary increase
- “Meritocratic” career ladder
- More professional opportunities

# Conclusions

## What worked?

- Strong political leadership produced overwhelming public support.
- Long tenure of reformers generated continuity of reforms.
- Teachers' union opposition to reforms was skillfully deactivated.
- Education reform was comprehensive.

## What looks problematic?

- Top-down reform failed to build a broader coalition of civil society support and cultivate teacher buy-in.
- Teacher selection mechanisms showed a disconnect between requisites and retribution.
- Limited attention was given to the quality of key actors of the education system other than teachers – e.g., school leaders and supervisors.
- Some substantively important reforms may produce little impact, as they do not address the flaws they were meant to solve.

¡Gracias!  
Thank you!

- Ongoing research
- Comments and suggestions welcome:
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