

INTEGRATING PRIVATE SCHOOLS INTO UZBEKISTAN'S TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Nafisa Tokhirova Dilshod kizi

National Institute of Pedagogical Excellence named after A. Avloni

Toshkent, O'zbekiston

nafisatokhirova0@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20019527>



ARTICLE INFO

Received: 26th April 2026

Accepted: 28th April 2026

Online: 30th April 2026

KEYWORDS

Teacher professional development, private schools, public-private integration, education reform, uzbekistan education system, pedagogical innovation, competency-based education, professional learning communities, educational policy, continuous professional development

ABSTRACT

In the ongoing reform of Uzbekistan's education sector, enhancing teacher qualifications is far more than a policy objective; it is the essential foundation for any meaningful, lasting progress. Education today has evolved beyond the simple delivery of facts. It now focuses on cultivating complex competencies and fostering a learner-centered environment. As global knowledge shifts and information becomes obsolete more rapidly, the traditional model of one-way instruction must give way to dynamic, inquiry-driven teaching that prepares students for a lifelong journey of learning.

In the ongoing reform of Uzbekistan's education sector, enhancing teacher qualifications is far more than a policy objective; it is the essential foundation for any meaningful, lasting progress. Education today has evolved beyond the simple delivery of facts. It now focuses on cultivating complex competencies and fostering a learner-centered environment. As global knowledge shifts and information becomes obsolete more rapidly, the traditional model of one-way instruction must give way to dynamic, inquiry-driven teaching that prepares students for a lifelong journey of learning.

This modern landscape places significant new demands on the teaching profession. Beyond mastering their specific subjects, educators must now possess pedagogical agility, digital fluency, and the ability to tailor their instruction to a diverse range of student needs. Consequently, professional development can no longer be viewed as a series of isolated events or occasional workshops. To be truly effective, it must be reimagined as a continuous, daily practice. By building a system that offers ongoing, practical support, we empower teachers to reflect on their classroom experiences and adapt their methods to meet the ever-changing needs of the next generation.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has made steady progress in modernizing how we support our educators. Significant efforts have been made to restructure training programs, introduce innovative learning formats, and ensure that professional development addresses the actual needs of the classroom. While these institutional updates reflect a growing desire for a more

flexible and contemporary system, the current framework remains largely centered on the public sector. This focus naturally dictates not only who provides the training but also which teaching methods and types of knowledge are prioritized.

As a result, the immense potential within our private schools is often overlooked in the national strategy for teacher growth. Despite their rapid expansion and success, private institutions operate with a unique level of independence—experimenting with international curricula, pioneering new instructional techniques, and adopting agile assessment tools. These schools have become vibrant hubs of innovation and practical expertise.

However, because there is no formal bridge between the two sectors, this wealth of knowledge remains locked within individual schools. Private educators are developing effective, modern classroom strategies, yet there are no clear channels to share these breakthroughs with the wider teaching community. This creates a missed opportunity for the entire system. By leaving this gap unaddressed, we lose the chance for mutual learning and fail to fully utilize the diverse educational talent available in our country.

From a systemic perspective, this represents a significant missed opportunity. In an era where educational progress depends on our ability to draw from diverse sources of knowledge, a one-sided approach to development limits the potential of the entire system. Integrating private schools into the professional development framework should, therefore, be seen as a strategic and deliberate step toward building a more dynamic, diverse, and interconnected educational landscape.

To date, the public and private sectors in Uzbekistan have evolved with only intermittent overlap, despite sharing the same national ecosystem. The public system remains the essential cornerstone of our education, ensuring broad access, maintaining standardized curricula, and training teachers at a massive scale through established centralized channels. Its primary strengths lie in its stability, regulatory coherence, and the capacity to provide continuity across the nation. However, these same historically embedded structures can sometimes prioritize formal compliance over the day-to-day realities of the classroom. This can lead to professional development that emphasizes theoretical knowledge rather than the reflective, adaptive, and context-specific strategies teachers need most. Furthermore, bureaucratic layers and hierarchical decision-making can inadvertently slow the adoption of new ideas, making it harder for educators to respond flexibly to the diverse needs of their students and the fast-paced demands of modern education.

In contrast, private schools generally operate within more decentralized and flexible structures, allowing them to pivot quickly toward emerging trends and educational innovations. They often enjoy the freedom to experiment with curriculum design, integrate international standards, and champion student-centered teaching. Many of these institutions have already embraced competency-based learning, formative assessments, and the cultivation of 21st-century skills. They are also more likely to foster internal cultures of continuous feedback and performance-based evaluations that directly improve classroom instruction. This environment doesn't just encourage innovation—it requires it. Consequently, private schools often serve as practical laboratories for pedagogy, where new teaching methods and organizational practices are tested and refined in real-time.

Despite these complementary strengths, meaningful collaboration between the two sectors remains the exception rather than the rule. Current interactions are often unplanned and short-term, typically driven by individual initiatives rather than a structured, system-wide strategy. We currently lack the formal platforms, policy frameworks, and incentives necessary to support a lasting exchange of knowledge or collective problem-solving. Without these essential structures, the opportunities for both sectors to learn from one another remain severely restricted.

As a consequence, the sophisticated pedagogical insights developed within private schools—especially in areas like innovative instruction, modern assessment, and school management—stay locked within individual institutions. This knowledge rarely reaches the broader education system where it could do the most good. At the same time, private schools often miss out on the public sector's deep expertise in managing large-scale implementation, maintaining curriculum standards, and designing policies focused on educational equity. This mutual isolation creates a fragmented landscape where resources are not used to their full potential and valuable expertise is left in silos.

Ultimately, this lack of integration hinders the spread of innovation and weakens our collective capacity to learn and grow as a national system. When successful practices are not systematically shared or scaled, their positive impact remains local and limited. This slow pace of diffusion directly affects the speed of educational improvement and can widen the gap in teaching quality and student outcomes. Bridging this divide is, therefore, not just a matter of administrative reform, but an essential step toward a more coherent and effective future for education in Uzbekistan.

This current situation highlights the critical need to systematically weave private schools into the national teacher professional development system. Such an integration would, first and foremost, allow us to better mobilize the pedagogical resources we already have. By drawing on the innovative teaching strategies, modern assessments, and flexible instructional models that private schools have already refined, we can enrich the content of our national programs. This shift would move professional development away from purely theoretical exercises and toward a more practice-oriented approach that is deeply aligned with the realities of a modern classroom.

Secondly, involving private schools would facilitate the broader sharing of successful pedagogical breakthroughs. Right now, many effective innovations are trapped within the walls of a single institution. Integrating these schools into the national system would allow these ideas to reach a much wider audience of educators, ensuring that high-impact practices spread quickly and systematically. It would also foster the growth of professional learning communities—spaces where teachers can engage in honest dialogue and collaborative problem-solving. These environments are especially vital for early-career teachers, who gain immense value from observing and applying proven methods in real-world settings.

Thirdly, this inclusive approach would naturally elevate the overall quality of teacher development. By expanding models that blend theory with hands-on experience—such as classroom observations, "lesson studies," mentoring, and inter-school placements—we give teachers a richer space to reflect on their own craft. This ultimately strengthens their ability

to navigate complex classroom challenges and tailor their teaching to the unique needs of every student.

International examples further prove the power of this collaborative model. In South Korea, specific private schools serve as dedicated centers for pedagogical innovation, where new methods are incubated before being scaled across the public sector. Singapore organizes its schools into "clusters" to ensure structured knowledge sharing, often with private or semi-private institutions leading the way in modernizing practices. Similarly, in the United States, public-private partnerships are frequently built into Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), making professional growth a natural part of daily work. These global successes demonstrate that when the two sectors work together, the entire education system becomes more effective, resilient, and capable of true innovation.

Viewed from this perspective, private schools should no longer be seen as a merely supplementary sector; they are a vital source of pedagogical innovation and methodological expertise. By leveraging their potential at a systemic level, we can design professional development models that are more effective, more practice-oriented, and far more responsive to the needs of modern educators.

In conclusion, integrating private schools into the national teacher development framework is both a practical necessity and a strategic priority. This approach would foster deeper connections across the entire education system, optimize our shared resources, and ultimately elevate the quality of learning for all students. Moving forward, the key principle of a modern education policy must be to recognize private schools as an essential, inseparable component of the broader education ecosystem, rather than a separate entity..

References:

- Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2021). On measures to further improve the system of retraining and professional development of public education employees.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. Learning Policy Institute.
- Fullan, M. (2007). The new meaning of educational change (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & O'Connor, M. T. (2018). Collaborative professionalism: When teaching together means learning for all. Corwin.
- Jensen, B., Sonnemann, J., Roberts-Hull, K., & Hunter, A. (2016). Beyond PD: Teacher professional learning in high-performing systems. National Center on Education and the Economy.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge University Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2019). TALIS 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. OECD Publishing.
- Republic of Uzbekistan. (2019). Concept for the development of the public education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 (Presidential Decree No. UP-5712).
- Republic of Uzbekistan. (2020). Law on Education (New edition)