

Success *at School*, success *for the School*

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Schools are a reflection of today's society: fractured and unequal. The golden age of egalitarian schools is a myth, as is the idea that Schools alone can correct the most negative aspects of society. The latest PISA survey in 2023 shows that the average level of French students is comparable with that of other OECD countries. But this average masks significant differences between the best and worst performers, and these differences are becoming increasingly pronounced.

French Schools succeed for the most privileged pupils

The proportion of students from each generation obtaining the baccalauréat has risen sharply, reaching 79% in 2023. This increase is mainly due to the development of options such as vocational baccalauréats. There are significant social divisions between these options: 70% of children from working-class backgrounds have a vocational or technological baccalauréat, and 75% of children from middle-class backgrounds have a general baccalauréat. In France, the educational paths and career directions of pupils are determined more by their social background than by their choices and skills. Yet enabling all pupils to succeed means enabling them to express their aspirations, to choose their path and not to be subjected to it.

The principle of equality of opportunity is misleading: it does not guarantee an effective right to education or success for pupils. It challenges the student to ensure his or her own success. The ESEC advocates talking about the success of all pupils, because it is up to the School to help them achieve success.

You cannot transform schools without the stakeholders

Changing Schools is a process of co-construction with all stakeholders. That is why the Commission for Education, Culture and Communication has drawn on a large number of contributions from those working in the field in preparing this opinion. The recommendations were drawn up with input from the ESEC's Overseas France Delegation, contributions from 11 CESERs and discussions with people met in the regions during visits to schools and educational establishments and at the discussion day on 21 November 2023, which brought together around 50 people to exchange views and make proposals to the Commission.

This desire to involve those who make Schools what they are on a daily basis is illustrated in this opinion by the diversity of the people we meet: pupils, parent representatives, educational staff, elected representatives, association representatives, etc.

With this opinion, the ESEC is calling for a paradigm shift for Schools. It is calling for a democratic debate to redefine the aims of schools and to initiate the changes needed to ensure success for all. This choice requires a link between school policies and other public policies (housing, transport, culture, etc.). Schools must be places where young people can build themselves up, overcome their difficulties, learn and imagine the world of tomorrow so that we can be a society together.



Nearly 6 out of 10 French people feel that schools do not give everyone the same opportunities

Ifop poll, May 2023

For successful Schools for all

1 REDEFINE THE AIMS OF SCHOOLS

→ **Why?** There has been a proliferation of reforms in an attempt to address the many problems facing the education system, without any real assessment of the results achieved. Collectively, we need to clarify and determine the aims of Schools today.

→ **How?** By organising a **democratic debate** (citizens' convention, general assembly, etc.) involving all the players in the education community and all sections of the public;

Today, we need to guarantee the resources and better conditions for the education of pupils, from nursery school through to secondary school, to ensure the success of all pupils.

2 PROMOTE EQUALITY AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY IN LOCAL AREAS

→ **How?** Implement a multi-year plan to **reduce social segregation and to reduce by more than 30% the differences in Social Position Indices (SPI)** between public and private schools in the same area;

Revise the school map and that of priority education to take account of changes in local areas, based on the social position index;

Set up observatories on social and educational diversity and educational success, at national and local level, to assess the current situation and make recommendations.

3 STRENGTHEN THE PLAYERS IN THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY

→ **How?** Organise a consultation with the players in the education community **to improve the conditions of schooling for pupils**, for example by reflecting on the following points: **class sizes**, transport times, help with homework, catering, physical and mental health, access to healthcare, **timetabling**, **differentiated teaching**, **taking the classroom outside and thinking in terms of schools without walls**, **how spaces are organised**, etc.

Make it compulsory to set up a "parents' area" in all schools and educational establishments, for the use of parents and their representatives.

Renew the initial training of teachers to ensure a gradual entry into the profession and **put in place in-service training plans** that are genuinely focused on their individual and collective needs.

4 RECOGNISE AND REWARD ALL STAFF WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SERVICE

→ **How?** Roll out an emergency recruitment plan for primary and secondary school teachers; Vote for a programme law to **increase teachers' pay**; Launch a plan to recruit and upgrade **non-teaching staff** in the State and local authorities.

THE RAPPORTEUR

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