

Note d'information 22-03 — March 2022

## Lessons learned from the 2020-2021 school evaluation campaign

### School evaluation in France: a new opportunity for school development to the benefit of all students

The Council for School Evaluation (CSE) was created in 2020 and given the all-important mission of designing the framework and methodology of a regularly-occurring evaluation of schools, the implementation of which is in the hands of regional education authorities.

One year after school evaluation was introduced in a CoVid 19 world the CSE presents a qualitative and quantitative account of how schools and regional education authorities handled the procedure and what preliminary positive results it yielded.

School evaluation provides a global and contextualised view on the school, which implies the active contribution of all stakeholders. It combines the collection of data, observation and people's viewpoint in order to question school decisions, keeping in mind student needs and effect measurement.

Evaluation is thus a true development opportunity for schools, thanks to the identification of levers and resources, leading up to a 5-year context-relevant, quality-improving school plan.

After an eventful first year the time has come to turn school evaluation into a permanent feature in the education landscape, with school evaluation conducted everywhere and adequate follow-up provided. The CSE, together with regional education authorities, the Institute of Advanced Education and Training Studies (IH2EF), the Directorate of Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance Monitoring (DEPP) and the General Inspectorate (IGESR), will continue to produce tools and resources designed to fit the needs of all.

On January 22, 2022 the CSE presented four sets of recommendations based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 evaluation campaign. They pertain to:

- the organisation of evaluation and school staff training and support,
- the development of the everyday use of evaluation in schools
- school support by regional education authorities before, during and after evaluation
- the main issues to be dealt with during evaluation, in line with the fundamentals of school

Council for School Evaluation (CSE)

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The note is a translation of parts of the 2020-2021 school evaluation campaign report released by the CSE

## CSE Recommendations for the ministry, regional education authorities, schools and evaluators

### General recommendations on the organisation of evaluation and school staff training and support

- Maintain and improve the support of regional education authorities by national bodies (CSE, IH2EF, IGESR), and the support of schools by national and regional authorities
- Design a multi-year school evaluation schedule, inform would-be evaluated schools one year before and organise with them a specific evaluation time frame
- Inform all stakeholders on what school evaluation is all about and how school evaluation campaigns are designed and implemented
- Widen the regional pools of external evaluators, including teachers, whilst keeping team size in line with the sustainability of every-school-must-be-evaluated policy
- Develop initial and ongoing training about evaluation method and issues aimed at management, teachers and professional networks

### Recommendations for schools and evaluators about the development of evaluation in schools

- Identify school context precisely before putting into perspective work environment and student achievement
- Put on an equal footing all four evaluation domains so as to come up with a full, balanced vision of the school, identify and promote structuring areas of development
- Identify student needs in connection with past, present and future actions, base action more on data, observation and viewpoint analysis
- Distinguish internal decision by schools from external decisions, capitalise on school autonomy (devolved competences and responsibilities),

identify levers, perspectives for action and training needs

- Involve all stakeholders, including students and their parents, on all evaluation domains and every evaluation stage, up to the design and implementation of the ensuing school plan

### Recommendations for regional education authorities about school support before, during and after evaluation

- Help schools collectively identify ongoing training needs and make those a key feature of regional training plans
- Promote and support school-based innovation and experimentation
- Identify and formalise inspectors' missions in connection with school evaluation and support
- Turn school evaluation into a tool for local guidance by regional education authorities and dialogue with local government in charge of school building, maintenance and operation
- Design a strategic school evaluation plan based on transparent criteria, in connection with local government

### Recommendations for schools about the main issues to be dealt with during evaluation, in line with the fundamentals of school

- Connect public education service's fundamentals with local student needs in context
- Analyse equity in school based upon student achievement and social, gender and origin profile
- Recognise the added value of collective reflection on human resource management, especially when welcoming and helping newly-appointed staff
- Better take into account during evaluation today's and tomorrow's major issues, viz going digital, achieving sustainable development, and opening up to European and the

## Introduction to the 2020-2021 school evaluation report

The creation of the French Council for School Evaluation in 2020 is a new step for school evaluation. Indeed all schools will now be evaluated regularly. This is a most significant turning point as it involves the evaluation by all stakeholders of the quality of public education service delivered in a school to the benefit of students and the quality of life in the school.

The CSE's mission is to define the methodology of self-evaluation and external evaluation of schools and analyse its results. The CSE also analyses school evaluation schedules for the year to come and evaluation reports produced during the previous year as they are to be sent by regional education authorities.

The secondary school evaluation framework was originally published in July 2020 (CSE Deliberation 2020-02). It was updated with the inclusion of agricultural colleges (CSE Deliberation 2020-03) and private schools (CSE Deliberation 2021-05). The primary school evaluation framework has just been published (CSE Deliberation 2022-01).

The secondary school evaluation framework together with its appendices (self-evaluation guide, external evaluation specifications, external evaluators' code of ethics) provide information about the finalities and methods of the five-year evaluation process.

In order to help regional education authorities, in charge of the effective implementation of school evaluation, the CSE produced tools and resources

for school to adopt and adapt according to their specificities and needs. The CSE, together with the Institute of Advanced Education and Training Studies (IH2EF), also developed a national training scheme in connection with regional education authorities and the General Inspectorate (IGESR).

Regional education authorities led the first-ever school evaluation campaign in 2020-2021, a year greatly troubled with CoVid-connected issues. Still, about 950 schools were evaluated, that's 9% of all public and private secondary schools, which include lower secondary, upper secondary and vocational schools.

The national report is based upon the analysis by the CSE of hundreds of school evaluation reports, 30 regional education authorities' reports and 39 school visit reports by IGESR inspectors. The report also benefited from feedback by organisations representing the various stakeholders and staff representatives (trade unions, PTAs, local government organisations).

The first part of the report sums up the CSE's school evaluation framework, provides a quantitative account of the 2020-2021 school evaluation campaign and points at perspectives for the 2021-2022 campaign.

The second part analyses how school evaluation can be a key strategic lever for the improvement of public education service thanks to its effect on schools themselves, their action and dynamism, and on the design and implementation of regional education authorities' policies.

The third part provides an account of subjects emerging from evaluation, both generally and through the lens of specific viewpoints.

## Conclusion of the report

School evaluation was successfully introduced in 2020-2021 despite troubled CoVid-19 times and the novelty of evaluation in the French education system. Indeed evaluation must be distinguished from control and inspection, both of which are solidly rooted in the education landscape. Evaluation is based on the public policy framework; it proposes a fine-tuned contextualisation of the school being evaluated, and aims at analysing and understanding the school's decisions and actions, i.e. identifying their relevance and coherence as well as their effectiveness and efficiency, through the observation of their effect and impact.

Evaluation implies adopting a new stance for all school stakeholders, be they staff, evaluators or senior institutional representatives, as the point is no longer to view schools through individual staff performance or the different subjects taught, but to favour a global approach. Such an approach involves everyone, students and parents included, as its finality is the improvement of public education service and life in the school.

One year after the introduction of school evaluation and several epidemic waves later the results are quite positive. 950 schools were evaluated, more than 2,000 external evaluators were trained, and hundreds of evaluation reports were read and analysed by the CSE, regional education authorities and the general inspectorate, which leads us to say that school evaluation is now part of the education world. What perspectives it brings to schools is fully understood by all those who took part in the evaluation process, beyond the initial concern caused by something new that needed clarification about its finality.

The fact of bringing together around self-evaluation and external evaluation teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and students alike, even though they sometimes share little, so as to think collectively about how their school can benefit to all has made it possible to mobilise energy. Everyone was given the opportunity to reflect upon daily decisions made

and their effect and to design together, with the decisive help provided by external evaluators, a new school plan for the next five years.

No doubt there is still a long way to go, which is only natural considering the novelty of evaluation, especially when it comes to turning what is sometimes just an activity report into a full-fledged reflection integrating action within a causal chain that goes from needs to effects, whilst tackling all four evaluation domains, among which 'school strategy and operation' and 'school's partners and institutional environment'. Having said that, the fundamentals of the evaluation process have been set and the initial and ongoing training of teachers and management will play a pivotal role in the success of evaluation in the years to come.

The Council for School Evaluation is well aware of the demanding nature of combining a five-year evaluation of all public and private schools, the familiarisation of all stakeholders with a new process benefiting every student, and the provision of useful, fully-accessible tools, resources and training. This is why the CSE will continue to provide tailor-made support to regional education authorities at all evaluation stages and account for its action to national institutions. Beyond the implementation of school evaluation the aim is to make evaluation a component of everyday life in schools across France, so as to continuously adapt to student needs and measure precisely the effect of individual and collective decisions.

School evaluation is primarily designed with students in mind, as they are the main beneficiaries of public education service. Yet it also benefits all those involved in education, be they in schools, thanks to the collective reflection of all stakeholders during self-evaluation and then external evaluation, in regional education authorities and local government bodies, as evaluation provides an inspiring portrait of schools, and at national level, where policies need be adapted to local reality. School evaluation is therefore a true embodiment of shared responsibility when it comes to public education service.



The French Council for School Evaluation is in charge of evaluating independently the school system, its organisation and results. The CSE produces reports, advices and recommendations aimed at improving the performance of public education service.

The CSE's deliberations and works are public, and are designed to help inform public authorities and enrich the debate on education issues..

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