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Conseil  
d'évaluation  
de l'École

# 2023- 2024

## School Evaluation Campaign Report

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**Impression**

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# FOREWORD

Now is already the time for the fourth School Evaluation Campaign Report presented the French Council for School Evaluation!

## The success of school evaluation is first shown in numbers

Back in 2020 who could have imagined that just over four years nearly 80% of public and private secondary schools would have experienced self-evaluation and external evaluation? As for primary schools, with evaluation launched in 2021, this is only the second full year of evaluation and still, one third of all primary schools have already been evaluated.

This has been achieved thanks to the unfailing commitment of staff in schools and regional education authorities, whom I wish to thank wholeheartedly. Whenever I meet them in schools and regional gatherings I much appreciate their skills and strong willingness to improve school quality.

## The success of school evaluation is further shown in quality

Year after year self-evaluation reports are more comprehensive and include strategic perspectives on how to better guide and support pupils and students, while external evaluation reports provide complementary perspectives and take the schools' analyses further, as recommended by the School Evaluation Framework.

School teams increasingly endorse the evaluation process and external evaluators say how evaluation acts as a professional development tool.

Regional continuous training schools make the most of the training needs mentioned in evaluation reports, update their training offer, and better support the professional development of school staff.

## Yet there is still some way to go

School progress and guidance as well as student performance at national assessments and exams should be more systematically taken into account as they provide a clear view of pupils' and students' success and difficulties and help monitor their progress. This is of paramount importance since the French school system is known to fail to reduce inequalities among pupils and students. Measuring the well-being of students and staff should also be higher on the school evaluation agenda.

Whenever I meet people in evaluated schools I realise it may be difficult for some to transform the strategic perspectives identified through evaluation into a series of coordinated actions as part of an updated school plan. Making such collective transformation happen is something we must support unfailingly.

**An updating of the primary school evaluation framework is currently under way.** Due to the sheer number of schools in France, most are evaluated in groups, using explicit criteria. Still some groupings may appear artificial and the resulting reports, despite their quality, be viewed as not school-specific enough. External evaluation is to be simplified in order to improve school support before and after evaluation takes place, with a clearer role for the local inspector.

**From September 2025 the storage of school evaluation reports should no longer be a problem** as the ministry's digital transformation directorate helps us design and introduce a national storage platform, a first step before introducing an AI-based application enabling evaluation report data mining on specified themes. The planning and monitoring of school evaluation will also be available on the platform, thus enhancing the efficiency of the evaluation process.

**The ambitious ideas that gave rise to school evaluation are still present, more than ever. When all stakeholders share the same analysis and objectives the quality of the service provided to pupils and students can only improve.**

Daniel Auverlot,  
Chair of the French Council  
for School Evaluation

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, abstract shape.

A female teacher with glasses and a pink shirt stands in a classroom, pointing at a whiteboard. The whiteboard contains mathematical diagrams, including a large number 9, a smaller number 6, and a multiplication problem  $\begin{array}{r} \times \\ 2 \end{array}$ . The background shows a classroom setting with a whiteboard, a poster with the French phrase "Je pense au point.", and various educational materials.

## Primary school evaluation

A process now at nominal pace, a constant focus on quality improvement

The information presented here comes from data sent by regional school evaluation referents, the analysis of 80 self-evaluation and 80 evaluation reports, as well as CSE-led visits in several regions, which included interviews with school staff, local inspectors, pupils, parents and local councils when possible, as well as representatives of regional education authorities.

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## THREE YEARS ON

**Stakeholders increasingly adopt school evaluation**, which has expanded the 1990s evaluation of pupils' needs leading to the design of a school plan into a full examination of four areas or domains (teaching and learning, school climate and well-being, school operation, environment and partnerships) with special attention paid to stakeholders' viewpoints and to the links between school activity proper and extracurricular activities.

**External evaluation is a process providing a different perspective and expertise.** The point is for the school team to base their own action on the self-evaluation report and on what the final school evaluation report recommends so as to write or update the school plan. Teams at visited schools consider the benefit of evaluation comes from the critical distance, systematic examination, and collective work the process involves. The perspective provided by external evaluation is seen as useful, especially when it highlights successes, answers evaluative or pedagogical questions that emerged during self-evaluation, or supports training needs.

**Evaluation is now at nominal pace, with 18% of schools evaluated this year** (14% in 2022-2023), thanks to the grouping of schools, with an average of three schools per grouping, slightly less than last year's. The 2024-2025 evaluation schedule shows that regional education authorities are getting closer to the 20% a year objective, whilst taking into account local specificities and needs.

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## SELF-EVALUATION

**Self-evaluation is the key element of school evaluation** as it is the result of collective work and reflection by fully committed actors and leaders. The evidence-based, domain-themed collaborative analysis conducted in schools results in an evaluation report showcasing the interest of and benefit for all, as already shown by international studies. **School evaluation à la française focusses on team support and a model based on quality rather than compliance**, which proves positive though everyone agrees it takes time to adapt to a new mind-set.

**National assessment results are more present and used in reports.** So is the study of data over time (*i.e.* the evolution of indicators, such as same-level assessment results or pupil cohort monitoring) in connection with school organisation, decisions and plans (shared teaching content and progress, pupil support, classroom time vs breaks, parents' involvement, etc.). This results in confirming or adjusting the path of action, and expressing training needs.

*When groupings are well understood, they enable useful collective reflections to emerge, with teams working together, especially when education providers are connected, i.e. nursery schools, kindergartens and primary schools, schools located in the same area, or schools with similar social profiles.*

**The usefulness of evaluation is greater when the school plan is written just afterwards**, as evaluation saves time. Much less so the other way round, except for evaluation-linked adjustments. Most regional education authorities have already ordered school plan rewriting to take place after school evaluation, a decision the CSE fully supports as the two processes are tightly connected.

**The time spent on self-evaluation is now better recognised**, with hours often taken from the annual 108 non-teaching hours due by all teachers in France, especially the 18 hours dedicated to training and collective reflection. Self-evaluation is therefore considered as part of staff's professional development.

As for **self-evaluation training**, many regional education authorities say local inspectors are in charge of training school teams, with school heads in charge of local, pedagogical implementation. A meeting of the heads of schools to be evaluated the year after is convened and includes school groupings criteria presentation and how to have people work together and examine data, which is essential for smooth and efficient evaluation.

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## EXTERNAL EVALUATION

**The organisation of external evaluation has been slightly changed** in order to improve its value and adapt to the five-year cycle already in place for secondary schools. Many education authorities have tried to downsize groupings and evaluation teams, focus on the benefit of external evaluation for school teams and plans, and promote an evaluation that combines the highlighting of successes and the joint analysis of indicators, viewpoints and observations on pupils' performance. Moreover, as spending time in each school of a given grouping is deemed essential by teachers, some evaluation teams split in order to visit every school.

**External evaluation is undoubtedly the most unfamiliar element brought about by evaluation.** Its value is clearly seen when the stress is laid upon new elements following context or pupils' performance analysis or the interviews conducted with members of the community.

**The CSE wishes to simplify external evaluation by implementing an updated framework** in September 2025 based upon three years' experience in France and practice and research abroad. The point is to reassert the importance of external evaluation as part of the process whilst improving school support by local inspectors and advisers following evaluation.

**One possibility is to downsize evaluation teams. Another is to diversify external evaluators' profiles** beyond local inspectors, advisers, and school heads, hence enriching perspectives. For example, secondary school deputy principals have helped some education authorities secure a comfortable pool of evaluators and develop the "evaluation culture" within the school system. Master trainers and training school staff have also been asked to join in, and have become better acquainted with work carried out in specific, context-dependent schools. Would-be or newly-appointed principals, heads and inspectors also join the roster in some places, as evaluation is deemed an eye-opening form of training.

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## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

**The new *Archipel* data platform designed by the Ministry's statistics directorate is now available to primary schools.** It provides reliable indicators and offers the opportunity to compare data in space and time, which is of great help for evaluators. The platform is further developed to meet the needs of schools. The use of *Archipel*, and more generally all indicators, implies that training be offered by regional education authorities with the help of continuous training schools and regional statistics departments. Feedback shows more indicators are needed on *Archipel*, i.e. gender-based national assessment results or cohort follow-up to measure the effect of policies and actions or identify persistent difficulties.

**Training is key to supporting school heads and teams.** Based on three years' feedback the CSE is to design new tools with regional evaluation referents and the institute for higher education studies (IH2EF) aimed at facilitating the understanding and implementation of evaluation by local inspectors, school heads and teams. Thematic studies add to the information of school teams by providing insights into the many dimensions of school evaluation.



**Secondary  
school  
evaluation  
First cycle  
soon to be  
completed**

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## A PROCESS AT CRUISING SPEED, ACCORDING TO REGIONAL REPORTS

**The end of the first evaluation cycle is in sight.** For most regional education authorities the 20%-a-year evaluation rhythm for secondary schools has been the norm over the last three years. Some may have initially postponed the launch of evaluation due to local specificities but all are now at cruising speed after having been impacted by CoVid back in 2020-2021. The 2025-2026 school year will therefore be used to make up for past delay and start a new evaluation cycle for schools that were first evaluated five years ago.

**Do the last schools to be evaluated have specific profiles?** There are three end-of-campaign configurations:

- **Business as usual.** The last schools have nothing special about them. Evaluation on a voluntary basis was abandoned early on and the following years have been used to regulate evaluation numbers.
- **Private schools at the forefront.** In some places the evaluation of private schools began later and was slow to develop, partially due to a complex school identification process. Plus school evaluation often takes longer as there are many multisite structures.
- **Some specific situations.** Complex school structures (with lower and upper secondary or primary and secondary spread on many sites) tend to be evaluated later with more evaluators than average. In some cases the delay is due to a change in regional strategies, i.e. the evaluation of all schools within the same area so as to promote links between them.

**A smooth organisation of evaluation.** Schools are told they will be evaluated by May or June the previous year and self-evaluation training takes place just afterwards, so that when school starts again in September schools can launch self-evaluation (without clashing with daily duties) and make the most of an informed collective reflection that implies fluid communication between actors. If self-evaluation reports are out by the end the first term, external evaluation can take place during the second term, thus freeing the third term, when inspectors and principals are quite busy with other tasks, and avoiding postponing evaluation to the year after. The shift of external evaluation from third to second term is the result of early self-evaluation information.

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## EXTERNAL EVALUATORS: INCREASINGLY VARIOUS PROFILES SATISFIED WITH AN EVER FORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

**External evaluator pool profile.** About 5,000 evaluators were needed in 2023-2024, some of whom coming from the private education sector. Inspectors and principals are the most numerous (40% each), and 20% have other profiles, especially teachers and officers working for county-level and regional education authorities. The change of perspective it brings about benefits evaluation teams, evaluated schools, and the schools and administration offices these evaluators come from.

**External evaluator pool renewal.** The turnover of external evaluators is deemed essential for the evaluation process, thanks to the familiarisation of senior officers it entails. Turnover rate is at 50% in regional areas where having organised a self-evaluation leads to becoming an external evaluator. Conversely, in smaller areas the rate is much lower because the pool is smaller. One option is to have staff rotation whereby one is first a self-evaluation leader, then an external evaluator, then an external evaluation report proof reader, so as to maintain the dynamics of evaluation.



- **Principals.** Principals account for many evaluators, with a high turnover rate, due to school transfer or leading team renewal. One way of expanding the pool is to move systematically from self-evaluation to external evaluation the following year.
- **Inspectors.** As school evaluation is one of their missions, inspectors are naturally part of the pool. How many evaluations they take part in every year depends on other missions they may have, though their evaluation expertise needs to be maintained. They often lead evaluation teams and are in charge of the report, though the writing should be shared among evaluators.
- **Others.** Administrative staff bring another perspective on schools, rediscover where the action is and help circulate school evaluation at all non-national levels of the education system. Vocational school deputy principals and heads of SEN students sections easily adapt to the specificities of some schools. Teachers' presence is welcome and beneficial to all, all the more since they then become evaluation promoters in their own schools and are potential future inspectors or principals. Private school staff are also needed as members of private school evaluation teams, along with inspectors and principals.

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## EVALUATORS' TRAINING: BUILDING AND MAINTAINING ONE'S EXPERTISE

**New evaluators** receive distant, present or blended training. Distant training enables multiple training periods and reinforces attendance. Present training enables discussions and workshops, for example as part of a school-year opening seminar. Training is typically divided into two parts, one about general issues, methodology, and organisation, the other about specific issues, such as data use, self-evaluation report analysis, external evaluation report writing, or the specificities of private schools. Resources include CSE-designed documents such as the methodological guides to self-evaluation and external evaluation as well as regional products available on dedicated sites.

**Senior evaluators'** training differs from one place to another. It is necessary for evaluators to update their expertise thanks to feedback or new CSE resources. It is sometimes paired with new evaluators' training, gaining from the diversity of experience. When specific it contains material on evaluation report writing changes (methodology, prerequisites and must-haves) based on evaluation report analysis at regional and national levels. When aimed at junior and senior evaluators it includes key points at stake and methodological advice on self-evaluation report analysis and evaluation report writing. It then plays a role in enhancing the quality of evaluation reports, focussing on action impact and therefore the results, progress and well-being of students and staff.

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## EVALUATION REPORT QUALITY CONSOLIDATION YEAR AFTER YEAR

**Methodology.** The CSE team has read 180 randomly-chosen evaluation reports of public and private schools, lower secondary, upper secondary and vocational schools. The analysis was based upon various criteria: context analysis, collaboration during self-evaluation and external evaluation, students' results, progress and needs, strategic perspectives, school support, and specific issues, such as the relationship with parents.

**Self-evaluation and external evaluation.** Context is mentioned in evaluation reports, with a focus on internal context (decisions by education authorities and local authorities), due to the availability of and familiarity with data (students' social profile, for instance) as well as the fact that external data tend to be less easily analysed. Collaboration is represented by the number of different stakeholders involved, though such data is not always available. As for self-evaluation, the stress is laid on viewpoint collection thanks to questionnaires, with teachers analysing the results, though this is not systematic. When it comes to external evaluation evaluators very often meet all stakeholders, including students themselves.

**General and specific issues.** Students' results, progress and needs are at the heart of school action and are often present in reports, though there is room for improvement when analysing outgoing data since it helps identify needs and relevant action. Still, reports now put things in perspective, moving on from what was originally an activity report to an analysis questioning how actions are connected and what effect they have. Teams tend to focus on more accessible areas, such as Teaching and learning as well as School climate and well-being. Conversely, school partnerships are the result of strong individual commitment, which is less easy to turn into a school-level perspective. Schools' degree of latitude and decisions could also be more thoroughly analysed as it is one of evaluation's aims to explore their scope. Evaluation is all about raising awareness on decision latitude and responsibility, fuelling to-do-lists that are widely present in reports.

**Strategic perspectives and school support.** Strategic perspectives are often mentioned in connection with analysis. Their efficiency is enhanced if accompanied by an explanatory paragraph anchoring them in the school's context. The actual implementation and follow-up procedures are more or less formalised, which is to be expected as evaluation is a primarily analytical rather than operational process. Implementation is a school-based process following evaluation, which involves school plan writing. It is good practice to identify relevant indicators during self-evaluation, keeping in mind the evaluative chain linking needs, objectives, actions, and effects. *School support* also follows evaluation on strategic perspectives and training needs. However, looking five years ahead doesn't happen everywhere, though making good use of the school's potential and offering concrete perspectives are essential to foster progress.



**Perspectives  
on evaluation**

Evaluation is based upon two focal points, self-evaluation and external evaluation, helping schools experience continuous quality improvement. The 2023-2024 school evaluation campaign has shown several challenges lie ahead.

### *Challenge #1. Data use*

Primary and lower secondary national assessment results are more often mentioned, though not sufficiently analysed, nor do they result in new, corrective actions about subject teaching, collective approach or the use of resources.

- The Ministry's statistical directorate provides teachers with comprehensive results, the point being how they are used for self-evaluation, collectively and practically.
- Conversely there is not much school-level reliable data on well-being. This is work in progress for the CSE with the General Inspectorate and the Ministry's School Directorate.
- Finally there should be training on leadership connected with the collective use of data designed by all regional education authorities.

### *Challenge #2. Pupil and student progress*

Student progress is seldom the focal point of self-evaluation and external evaluation. For example,

- repetition rates at primary school level
- transition from lower to upper secondary (including the choice between general education and vocational schools)
- transfer from general to technical education after Year 10
- success rate of SEN students in vocational schools

which should be evaluated by lower secondary, upper secondary, and vocational schools alike. Questioning progress according to student profiles amounts to questioning equal opportunity in schools. Data provision and analytical tools are prerequisites for examining progress according to gender, social profile, and proficiency. In lower secondary schools some indicators are gender-based but comparative progress is seldom analysed.

In vocational schools three reference indicators (drop-out rate, higher education rate in technical colleges, professional integration rate) are rarely mentioned, nor analysed.

### *Challenge #3. School plan writing and yearly monitoring*

School evaluation leads to the identification of strategic perspectives and training needs, thanks to the analysis of the previous school plan's results and the detection of new issues. Evaluation report recommendations should then be fully operational so as to simplify school plan writing thanks to action effect analysis and improved evaluative skills. Administrative regulation helps, with the Ministry's School Directorate having issued an official text on the articulation of school plan with school evaluation (five-year duration, yearly pedagogical report enabling target updating).

### *Challenge #4. Leadership skills development*

Leadership includes skills used to develop continuous collaborative analysis so as to improve individual and collective efficiency, and data use and analysis so as to measure performance and monitor action effects. Leadership skills determine evaluation efficiency and, conversely, evaluation is a leadership skill as it implies managing self- and external evaluation. Regional-level training complements national-level training on evaluation, collective work and data use.

### *Challenge #5. The evaluation of complex schools*

Three school specificities should receive in-depth treatment:

- Lifelong learning sections aimed at adults, focussing on the articulation of initial training, continuous training, and apprenticeship,
- Selective prep classes for engineering and business schools, focussing on student integration, well-being, support, and success,
- Technical college sections within upper secondary schools, focussing on support and success for former vocational school students.

In order to address those specificities, involving external evaluators with relevant expertise on the subject is key to the quality and usefulness of evaluation.



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