



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ENTITIES AND PUBLIC POLICIES**

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## **A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO TEACHER MANAGEMENT**

### **A reform still to implement**

**Our school system requires an extensive overhaul if all students are to succeed. In its May 2013 report, the Cour des comptes showed that changing how we manage teachers, who are key to a functioning education system, is a major known catalyst for improved performance. However, the central government has not used the substantial and growing fiscal effort directed in recent years at the national education system to make structural reforms. The personnel measures taken in 2012 and the remuneration measures taken in 2016 were not coupled with concessions on the conditions under which teachers practice their profession, on work organisation or on working hours.**

#### **Reforming the practice of the teaching profession**

Improving the performance of the education system requires a change in the practice of the teaching profession. However, the adjustments made in recent years have not been sufficient to reduce inflexibility and meet the educational requirements that the schools have set for themselves. As international comparisons show, the quality of teacher training, the organisation of teachers' work in the schools, the adequacy of teacher evaluations, teachers' ability to ensure continuity between primary school and secondary school, and their collective practices under the direction of principals and head teachers all play a major role.

While the reinstatement of initial teacher training is a welcome development, additional efforts are needed to raise professional standards. Redefining the regulatory service obligations in secondary schools has had few tangible effects as their weekly framework has been maintained, without annualisation, and the definition of their missions remains incomplete (substitution, for example). Teacher evaluations do not consider student outcomes. The rigid segmentation between primary school teachers and secondary school teachers limits the actual scope of the "common core" concept. The uncertain positioning of principals and head teachers vis-à-vis teachers limits their ability to adapt the educational structure to students' needs, even though they are best placed to do so.

#### **Better meeting students' needs through teacher assignments**

To improve the performance and fairness of the school system, local environments and student profiles need to be more fully taken into account. However, teaching assignments are based on a scale that is applied automatically, does not account for the qualitative needs of the national education system, and barely considers each teacher's specific skills. There is therefore no guarantee that their profile will be matched to their position, profile-based positions are underutilised, and head teachers are not sufficiently involved in their implementation. The



assignment of large numbers of new teachers and of contract substitutes to the most challenging positions remains a major obstacle. The limited appeal of certain positions is considered, but not to the extent needed to be effective: new measures with no connection to traditional management frameworks need to be implemented.

The ongoing challenge of covering short-term replacements points to a management framework that is too inflexible to adapt to the daily reality of the needs of the education system, due to the absence of local management, head teachers' lack of autonomy and the impossibility of adjusting teacher service.

## **Building a comprehensive strategy for employment, remuneration and working hours**

The creation of 60,000 positions encountered greater recruitment difficulties in certain school districts and for certain disciplines. In particular, no concessions in terms of increasing the flexibility of the teacher management framework have been sought. Generally speaking, there is no comprehensive strategy guiding the management of personnel, remuneration and teacher service. These different levers are subject to disparate measures. The situation is therefore doubly disadvantageous: first, the cost of the education system is increasing but performance has not improved and, second, there is no support for the necessary reforms due to the limited fiscal leeway.

Three actions are therefore required: adopt a comprehensive, multiyear approach that breaks with the purely quantitative policy; create a stronger differentiation in resource allocation to focus efforts on the main challenges facing the school system; and take a concession-based approach to implement the necessary structural reforms. These actions are particularly important as the national education payroll will continue to increase significantly due to decisions that have already been made. It is therefore both urgent and possible to negotiate concessions.

## **Recommendations**

The Cour des comptes has made 13 recommendations that affect the teaching profession, teaching assignments and teachers' working conditions. They aim in particular to:

- incorporate substitution and continuing education into teachers' service obligations;
- annualise teachers' service obligations;
- develop versatility, notably by including it in the initial training;
- give principals and head teachers more responsibility;
- have head teachers account more fully for students' needs when making teacher assignments;
- make certain positions more attractive through compensation- and career-based measures;
- tie the compensation- and career-based measures to savings by managing personnel more efficiently and streamlining the training programme.

**[Read the report](#)**

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