



PRESS RELEASE

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PUBLIC BODIES AND POLICIES

PUPILS' INDIVIDUAL MONITORING: AN AMBITION TO BE RECONCILED WITH THE ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The target enshrined by the Law of 23 April 2005 and later reaffirmed by that of 8 July 2013, is to bring 100% of students in each age group up to the level of the common core of skills and knowledge by the end of compulsory schooling.

But the results that France obtained in the last PISA survey, and the high proportion of young people leaving school before graduating, testify to the inability of the current education system to meet the objectives set for it.

In its 2010 report on the achievement of all pupils, the Court concluded in particular that school education had "failed to truly integrate the tasks of monitoring and assisting pupils" and that the successive reforms introduced by the Ministry had soon evidenced their shortcomings, since they "fell in line with an organisation of schools that remained unchanged".

In 2013, the Court called for "teachers to be managed differently" to halt deteriorating school performance.

Despite developments since then, this report, which focused on measures put in place to meet the heterogeneous needs of students, came up with similar findings: an education system organised in a way that prevents the set goals from being achieved.

Individualised teaching, still proceeding at a hesitant pace

The process of individualising teaching to adapt it to the needs of each pupil is all the more justified considering the target of all pupils succeeding is declared in law. But France has been hesitant in committing itself to this process, and has done so later than some of its OECD partners. This has led to a motley stacking of measures for individual monitoring of pupils, with a prominent place given to measures outside the classroom and outside school time.

The review of the 12 measures in place up until 2013, focusing either solely on pupils with difficulties, or on all pupils as a whole, reveals that this approach is in the minority, for want of an assertive strategic vision.

In this respect, the Court regrets the absence of personalised support in secondary school beyond the 6^e (first year of secondary school) or for pupils studying for their *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (vocational training certificate).

Faulty steering

The individualisation of education is a priority stated in the wording of the law, but not in the inner workings of the Ministry. In fact, the Ministry only carries out a dispersed and incomplete monitoring at the central administration level. The amount of spending on this policy, which suffers from an additional lack of



consistency that impacts its expansion, remains generally unknown. The policy's budgetary documents submitted to Parliament give a partial, unconsolidated view, and the total spending is estimated at € 2 bn. Furthermore, evaluation of the measures' effect is almost non-existent, but the recent creation of the *Conseil national d'évaluation du système scolaire* (National Council for Evaluation of the School System) suggests a possible improvement.

The Court nevertheless observed in the field how the education community, like the school management teams, know how to and are able to go into action for individual pupil monitoring when a proper school- or institution-based project unites those involved.

Fundamental obstacles to be overcome

The individual-pupil-monitoring process seems at odds with the current organisation of school education. Therefore it cannot really flourish in the French education system without very significant changes, which would:

- limit the weight of traditional academic teaching in secondary education and promote teamwork, with the principal or school head having an essential role to play in this regard
- alleviate the constraints of regulatory obligations on teaching hours, doing away with the strict approach of weekly hours worked by teachers, as well as including individual monitoring in their obligatory teaching hours, which was not covered by the Decree of August 2014 amending the decrees of 1950;
- improve teacher preparation and make individual monitoring a central part of their training;
- improve change management, preparation for reform and the timetable for its implementation, as well as the internal communication that must go hand in hand with it.

Guidelines and recommendations

The Court makes 11 recommendations to give full effect to these measures, with no change in resources and as part of more efficient organisation. They mainly concern:

- widespread individual monitoring of secondary school pupils and those studying CAP;
- the organisation of evaluation tools for individual pupil monitoring measures;
- producing annual figures for Parliament on the cost of individual monitoring measures;
- reviewing the definition of working hours for secondary school teachers;
- computing the working hours of secondary school teachers on an annualised basis, at least in part ;
- making teacher training in the individual monitoring process systematic;
- assessing teachers' practices of individual pupil monitoring.

[Read the report](#)

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