



Centre for Education Systems

# INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE REVIEW

# ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

## Summary of country report (3 pages)

Authors: AI generated with human checking  
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# France

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping, curved segments in shades of dark blue, light blue, and light green, resembling a stylized arc or a partial circle.

**Authorship.** This AI generated summary has been created and checked by the CES team (see [ces.partners/resources/methodologies](https://ces.partners/resources/methodologies)). It is based on the original Country Reports created by EPPI. The author of the full report has not made final checks for accuracy.



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# France – AI generated Accountability Policy summary

## RQ1: Purposes, Values and Aims

The accountability system in French secondary education, guided by the Secondary School Evaluation Framework (2023), aims for improvement and nation-building. Stated objectives include raising student attainment, improving student well-being and combating harassment, fostering equity by tackling inequalities, and encouraging greater social and educational diversity. Core values emphasised are inclusion, equity, transparency, impartiality, objectivity, and ethicality. Since the 2020 Secondary School Evaluation Framework, priorities shifted in the 2023 update to emphasise school autonomy, collective responsibility, and the well-being of students and staff.

## RQ 2 – Levels, measures, and mechanisms of accountability

France's secondary education accountability system operates at five levels: national, regional (académie), community, school, and individual (headteacher and teacher). While the Ministry of Education maintains strong, centralised control over the entire school system, the independent French Council for School Evaluation (CEE) is responsible for developing evaluation frameworks and monitoring system performance. Schools are accountable regionally to the recteur (who oversees the académie) through inspections carried out by Regional Educational Inspectors (IA-IPR). Schools are also accountable to the community, as parents are recognised as active members of the education community with the right to be informed about their child's progress. The system primarily follows a regulatory accountability model based on compliance monitoring in response to established rules and regulations. This model requires compliance with centralised procedures and the submission of various reports, such as the annual progress report required for public schools entering into a contract with the State.

Measures of quality include system-level indicators from the Directorate for Evaluation, Forecasting, and Performance (DEPP), and school self-evaluation tools like the Indicators of Added Value in secondary schools (IVAL). The CEE provides standardised guides and questionnaires for stakeholders like teachers and parents. Labour market data is provided through InserJeunes, combining school records with employment information. Headteachers are evaluated every three years by the Departmental Director of Education (DASEN), and teachers undergo career-stage inspections ("career rendez-vous") approximately once every seven years. These teacher evaluations are linked to the Professional Career Paths, Careers, and Remuneration (PPCR) system, but advancement is largely based on seniority, acting more as human resource management than performance accountability.

The primary mechanism linking accountability to improvement is the systematic, mandated self-evaluation process. Schools must utilise an 'evidence triangle' of data, stakeholder viewpoints, and process observations to establish context, identify student needs, set objectives, and produce a strategic action plan. External inspections support this by submitting results to the French Council for School Evaluation (CEE). However, policy experts noted that the "evaluation loop" often lacks systematic monitoring or enforcement of action plans. Stakeholder involvement, while stated as a value, is sometimes perceived by experts as uneven or "symbolic".

### RQ 3 – Managing change and policy processes

Accountability policy change is managed by the French Council for School Evaluation (CEE), established by the 2019 Law for a School of Trust. The CEE comprises fourteen members, including parliamentary representatives, senior Ministry officials (e.g., DEPP, IGÉSR heads), and education experts. Its responsibilities include designing evaluations and harmonising assessment methodologies. The framework was developed by building on past experiences, incorporating feedback from stakeholders, including inspectors and practitioners, and collaborating with the DEPP on indicators. The latest framework resulted from piloting conducted between 2020 and 2022, which led to revisions emphasising context and participation. Policy experts describe implementation as top-down and standardised, despite the focus on autonomy. The CEE reviews the framework periodically, though frequency details are generic.

### RQ 4 – Assessments of effectiveness and evaluation

Formal evaluation information regarding the Secondary School Evaluation Framework is limited. The French Council for School Evaluation (CEE) has stated its commitment to monitoring the process, analysing results, and producing a yearly report on the evaluation campaign. This suggests the CEE, an independent body, conducts evaluations of the framework's methodology. Regional inspectors submit feedback to the CEE to guide upcoming plans. The Directorate of Evaluation, Forecasting, and Performance (DEPP) supports this by providing statistical data and analyses. The CEE conducts a periodic review, but the frequency and details of this review or access to annual reports are not specified.

### RQ 5 – Historical, cultural, and political influences

France's accountability is shaped by its centralised, bureaucratic history and founding republican values, including secularism (laïcité) and equality. Global influences, such as PISA results and OECD reports, create pressure for reform, leading to the selective adoption of New Public Management (NPM) tools. This results in a "neo-statist" model that strengthens state power while resisting full marketisation. Teacher unions strongly influence implementation by resisting performance-based accountability and defending professional autonomy. This opposition leads to incremental, legally ambiguous, and "soft accountability"

reforms. Centralised control is maintained through legal instruments like Loi Organique relative aux Lois de Finances (LOLF), which link budgets to performance but preserve ministerial authority, often leading to limited transformative power at the local level.

## RQ 6 – Impact on outcomes and workforce

Research indicates that evaluation mechanisms have a limited impact on improving individual or collective teaching practices, often failing to regulate the education system. Teacher evaluations show minimal influence on career progression or salary increases, as seniority remains the primary determinant. Unlike many OECD countries, pupil progress is not used to evaluate teacher effectiveness. School development plans, intended for accountability, led to poor communication and misunderstandings between principals and staff. One study found that these plans were used more to justify principals' actions to the hierarchy than to foster internal dialogue. Furthermore, the accountability system had a limited impact on collaboration between schools, which remained isolated units. Principals criticised the "policy of statistics" and rankings, arguing they did not account for local context. Teachers exhibited resistance, rejecting rankings and sometimes using mandated accountability tools, such as the "booklet of skills," superficially, rather than for reflection or improvement. Data was rarely used by principals or teachers to assess the effectiveness of action plans. Policy accuracy and adherence were questioned, as one study reported principals manipulating data to obtain additional resources.

### Timeline- recent accountability reforms

- **2005 Law (LOLF and Socle Commun):** Reformed state budget architecture, linking funding to performance indicators (LOLF) and establishing a minimum "common base of knowledge and skills".
- **2020 Secondary School Evaluation Framework:** Published by the CEE, combining mandatory self-evaluation and external evaluation for secondary schools.
- **2023 Secondary School Evaluation Framework:** Updated framework incorporating lessons from piloting, stressing school context, stakeholder involvement, and well-being.
- **2017 Evaluation Reforms (PPCR System):** Introduced career reviews, linking evaluation to career advancement and salary progression, though seniority remained dominant.
- **2019 Law for a School of Trust:** Mandated enhanced evaluation and established the independent French Council for School Evaluation (CEE).