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## **THEMATIC CONTRIBUTION - For an Education at the Center of Public Policies**

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In a world in economic, ecological and societal transition, education and training must return to the center of public policy.

### **Education and Training: a priority in the fight against inequalities**

In 2020, with 80% of an age group having the BAC and 42% reaching the bachelor's level, the indicators could lead one to believe that education efforts have, for the most part, been achieved and that the challenges today are limited to maintaining an education and training system that fully meets the objectives.

But there are other indicators that show a completely different reality: 1.9 million young people aged 15 to 29 are neither in employment, employment or training, nor in further education: the famous NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training: Neither Student, nor Employee, nor Trainee). 1.9 million young people that our school system has not been able to integrate into society. And this number has been increasing over the last 10 years.

Other indicators are also alarming: 30% of CAP graduates and 24% of professional bachelors are still unemployed 3 years after graduation. The future is blocked for a significant proportion of young people today and our education and training system is no longer able to meet the promises of social elevator or simply integration into society.

However, in an increasingly complex society and in an economic context that needs an increasingly qualified workforce, our initial and continuing education system should allow broad access to knowledge and culture and ensure a better level of qualification for all and throughout life.

The stakes in terms of education are major.

- To train young and not-so-young people capable of evolving and integrating new technologies and new professions, to position themselves in a rapidly changing society, where digital technology, relocation and technological leaps are questioning the very organization and nature of work. - To train citizens who respect the fundamental values of the French Republic, capable of

understanding their environment, adapting to digital, climatic and societal upheavals, and having the tools to be players in democratic spaces.

The proposals presented below outline some of the areas of reform that could respond to these two challenges.

#### Training citizens : Democracy and school

At a time when the experts' word is being questioned, when political and citizen commitment is weakened, Education must play an important role in promoting civic and collective values.

More than ever, the School must be the place for building cohesion and living together, the crucible of our society in its diversity, rich and demanding. It must be the place for the formation of responsible citizens, capable of discernment, with a critical spirit and empowered to make choices based on democratic values.

Schools must be places where democratic values are learned, whereas currently it is in France where young people find that they are least listened to in their schools.

Schools must become places where students learn to live together, to be citizens and co-educators, where they are actors in their daily lives. Debates, discussion forums and culture must be introduced in all schools.

- Organize discussion and decision making spaces for students within each high school.
  - o Propose an annual budget managed solely by the students, starting in the 6th grade, for the realization of projects or investments.
  - o Involve students in a very important way in the elaboration of the internal rules of the middle and high schools.
- Organize training and information sessions on the existing bodies within the colleges and high schools and on the role of students in these bodies.
- Evaluate the management team of each secondary school on the quality of student involvement in the democratic life of the school. -
- Develop a pedagogy of solidarity among students
  - o By encouraging mutual aid among students
  - o By implementing, for example, a 'sponsor' principle, as exists in higher education.
- Put in place secular and citizen pathways piloted by the National Education. It is a question of proposing times of exchange and discussion on questions of secularism and citizenship: conferences animated by external speakers, interventions of 'great witnesses', thematic workshops, .....

To form citizens: Promote social diversity in all schools.

The issue of the social mix of schools and classes is central to the success of all students. It is also central to the construction of a plural society.

The most "segregated" schools (middle schools and to a lesser extent high schools) are located in the large metropolitan areas (bypassing the school map) and in rural areas.

Strong measures must be put in place to promote social diversity and find solutions to minimize this territorial, material and social divide.

The policies of the priority education networks that stigmatize schools without giving them more or even less means because experienced teachers do not go there and these schools have pedagogical teams with a high turnover and composed mainly of contract teachers and beginners. On the contrary, additional resources are needed to organize social mixing in the REP / REP+ zones. There is no single solution, but there are experiments that have worked and that can be used as examples to help implement other policies.

To do this, it is necessary to create the position of Secretary of State for Co-education and to draw up a national plan for social diversity that supports local authorities in the variety of solutions to be implemented.

- Implementation of multi-school sectors.
- Avoid the phenomenon of ghettoization. It is necessary to close the most segregated middle schools (100 middle schools have been identified in very underprivileged neighborhoods with a very high rate of underprivileged students) and to distribute the students in middle schools with an advantaged population, as has been done in Haute-Garonne. Facilities (transportation, support for associations) must be put in place.
- It is necessary to limit as much as possible the number of middle schools with less than 200 (or even 300) students.
- Boarding schools must be developed to allow students to go to middle schools or high schools far from home without forcing them to travel too much each day.

A national support fund must be created to supplement or co-finance artistic, cultural and sports project....s carried out by local authorities (departmental council, metropolitan France, regional council) in middle and high schools. This co-financing will be conditioned by the social mix of each establishment and by the projects implemented: establishments with a balance in the socio-professional categories (CSP) of families or with disadvantaged CSPs will benefit from greater financial aid.

Training the young and not so young: An ambitious plan for students

After an increase of more than 250,000 students since 2013, 40,000 additional students have been added to the higher education system at the start of the 2020 academic year. The question of opening new short and long courses and new places in existing courses is central. But we must not forget either the questions of financing their studies: housing, food, travel. Currently, 34% of students have to work more than half time, some students cannot follow the desired training because they cannot finance their studies (housing, travel).

It is urgent to be able to give all young people the opportunity to continue their studies if they wish to do so.

**Student Income :** For young people between 18 and 25 years old, it becomes imperative that the state allocates a basic, fixed, unconditional income, equivalent to a Youth RSA (currently: 565 €/month).

For a student in this age group, depending on the tax income of the parental household, this fixed income could be improved by a grant and/or an APL. The partial and precarious jobs occupied by students could then be transformed into stable jobs to reduce unemployment.

**Student housing plan :** As the cost of housing constitutes the most important part of students' expenses, the State must resume the construction of quality university campuses (boarding schools for CFA and high school students). These expenses would be taken into account in the investment budgets of the Regions and financed by the popular savings books. This strong real estate investment would make it possible to offer housing adapted to all students and would allow a process of gradual elimination of the APL to begin.

**Education capital or rights to education.** This proposal will make it possible to provide everyone with a certain number of years of training that can be used at any point in their professional career (whether in initial training or continuing education). This will make it possible no longer to conceive of training over a single interval of time but, on the contrary, to envisage an alternation of training and working time. The idea is to propose equal rights to training (the same capital of years of training for all to be used at one time or in several times at any time during the career path).

This education capital will be allocated to all young people from the age of 16. It will be composed of a number of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) or years of training that can be used at any time. The implementation of this education capital also implies the establishment of an "education" income during these training periods.

A new governance for another school model

Independent public policy steering

It is necessary to rethink public education policies by allowing time for reforms to be put in place over time and by evaluating their impact on student results. To do this, the CNESCO must be put back in place as it was thought by Vincent Peillon at the time of the law to re-found the school in 2014, i.e. with members of the Council who are truly independent, academics, sociologists with a real scientific approach to evaluate the school.

Experiments exist in many schools but are not maintained when the pedagogical team that set them up disappears. It is necessary to be able to reference these experiments, evaluate them, share them: changes and reforms must also come from the field.

It is necessary to recreate a real independent and scientific body for the management of first and

second degree programs and to define a minimum duration before any other reform (7 years for example).

Finally, it will be necessary to ensure that each minister does not have his or her "big reform", prohibiting by law that a minister interferes in the field of pedagogy: this must be the long-term result of collaborative academic work (as in many OECD countries).

A multi-year budget and the means to steer the institutions

As far as the budget is concerned, it must be thought of on a multi-year basis for the most part. It will be necessary to make a programming law for the national education budget. The rectorates will then engage, for a period of three years, a contractualization with schools, establishments and universities on precise objectives. The latter will then know with certainty what means will be granted to achieve them.

This financing modality may be based on an average cost calculation per student and will be considered as a floor budget. The budget will thus be more readable and will guarantee during this period a stability of personnel and financial means to carry out a project of establishment or a contract of objectives. A tripartite contract could be imagined with the home communities, which would be voluntary.

A strong commitment to initial and continuing training of teaching and education staff Since the end of 2010, we have been assisting each new minister in the reform of teacher training institutes and CPEs (IUFM, then ESPE, then INSPE). Beyond the name changes, there is each time a change in training strategy. Recruitment goes from bac + 3 to bac +4 then to bac +5.

We believe that these training institutes must ensure the training of all the personnel in contact with the students: after-school care workers, teachers, CPEs, school life personnel and supervisory personnel. This would allow for a common culture and the same training base. Recruitment should be developed with a 2 or 3 years of higher education in order to pre-professionalize the teaching profession. In-service training must also be developed because students are changing, new tools such as digital technology must be integrated into teaching methods, and teachers must be able to benefit from support throughout their careers to adapt their teaching methods.

In training, one must be able to rely on scientific research in the field of education, on the sharing of experiences, on the observation of one's peers in the field.

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