



## Country Background Report Spain

### 1. Background – everyday reality versus political framework

The Organic Law of Education (LOE 2/2006, 3rd May, regulated by the Ministry of Education from the Central Government) establishes, together with the principles and objectives that the Spanish educational system must aim at, the process of selection and the competences of school headmasters.

In Spain, the management of educational centres is not, as it happens in most European countries, a professional management, but a temporary post without a different professional status.

Head teachers at educational centres are teachers who must have been teaching any of the subjects offered by the school for a period of at least five years and have at least a five-year experience as civil servants. They usually work in the school they want to manage and they are selected by a committee formed by representatives of the educational community and of the Administration by a contest of merits in which the managing project is an essential part.

The most remarkable duties of a head teacher can be summarised as follows:

They represent both the school and the educational administration in the school and inform the administration of the needs and demands of the educational community. The head teacher directs and coordinates the activities of the school, exercising the pedagogical management, promoting educational innovation and stimulating plans for the attainment of the objectives set in the educational project of the centre.

In addition to this, s/he is responsible for the control of the whole staff assigned to the school and he must promote collaboration with the families, institutions, and organizations that facilitate the relationship of the centre with the environment.

As representative of the centre he will sign the official documents and certificates.

When the headmaster is absent, the head of studies will be the person in charge of his/her functions.

### The main characteristics of the educational system

Any head teacher or school leader must necessarily take into account the characteristics of the Spanish educational system set in the Organic Law that regulates Education (LOE) regarding its structure (ATTACHED DOCUMENT I), the definition and concretion of the curriculum and the educational model and the principles and aims included in the following points:

- A quality education for the students in terms of equity and with a guarantee of effective equality of opportunities.
- The full development of the personality across the development of all the students' capacities and the acquisition of the basic competences that turn out to be necessary in the current society.
- The improvement of the educational levels in order to place them in a position according to European demands.
- A commitment with the educational aims established by the European Union for next years, regarding: the improvement of the educational success - up to reaching 85 % of graduates on having a certificate of Compulsory Education, the reduction of the rates of school drop outs, the improvement of the results of the evaluation diagnosis; the increase of the number of pupils who continue their studies after the completion of compulsory education and of the students in Vocational studies, the improvement of the knowledge of foreign languages, an increase of the mobility and the exchanges and reinforcement of the European cooperation.
- A commitment with the participation and the shared effort of all the groups of the educational community (pupils, parents, teachers, administration and society in general) to obtain quality and equity in education.
- Building on education in the respect of rights and essential freedom and in the exercise of tolerance, within the democratic principles of

coexistence and of the prevention of conflicts and their pacific resolution.

- The conception of education as lifelong learning.

## 2. Context

### National context

Education is an important political and social issue in Spain and, up to the moment, a problem without an answer, at least a clear one which can be widely accepted by the whole political and social class. There doesn't seem to be an agreement in the definition of the educational model among the different political and social forces or in the distribution of competences in educational matters between the nationalistic - regional parties and those of the state, that's why, from the introduction of Democracy in Spain, there has been a series of different educational Laws: (LODE (1985), LOGSE (1990) LOPEGCE (1995), LOCFP (2002), LOCE (2002), LOE (2006). In spite of this fact, the country has 100 % of her school population, from three to sixteen, attending school, in a territory that is organized in 17 Autonomous Regions and two autonomous cities.

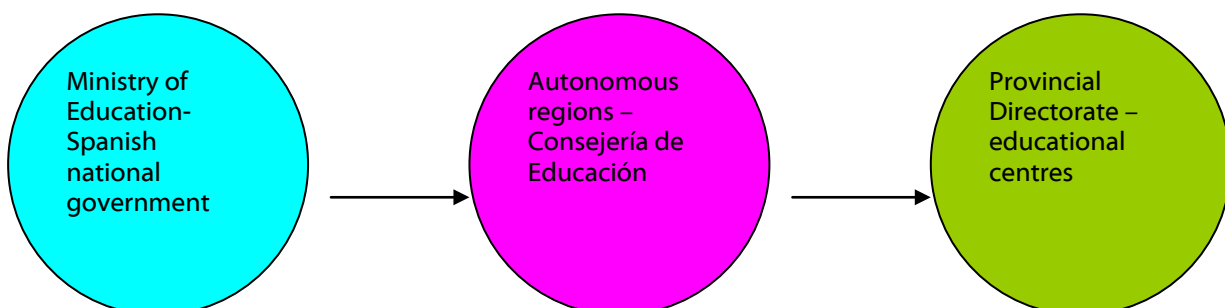
The educational competences in Spain are, basically, in the hands of the Autonomous Regions. It's only in the case of the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla that the Ministry of

Education holds full competences in education. This decentralized model of administration of the Spanish educational system, which distributes the competences between the State, the Autonomous Regions and the teaching institutions, is organized according to a model of a common educational system for the whole State, regarding its structure (levels, stages, degrees, cycles, and years), the basic aspects of the minimal teachings of the curriculum (55 % or 65 % of the school schedules depending on whether the Autonomous Regions have or not co-official language, and to the validity of the corresponding academic certificates.

It's a competence of the seventeen Autonomous Regions and of the different educational centres to establish and to develop the curriculum that the Law defines as

"the set of aims, basic competences, contents, pedagogical methods and criteria of evaluation of each of the teachings regulated in the present Law".

The percentage of dropouts and school failure (pupils who do not obtain the Graduate's certificate in Compulsory Secondary Education) overcomes 30 % in Spain, which seems to be a level which is still too far away from the target of 15 % for the year 2010 fixed by the European Commission on Lisbon 2000. Castile and León had, in 2007-08, an index of school failure of 21.2 %.





### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION REGULATION OF THE CURRICULUM

- 55% AUTONOMOUS REGIONS WITH COOFFICIAL LANGUAGE
- 65% AUTONOMOUS REGIONS WITHOUT COOFFICIAL LANGUAGE

### Regional context

The value given to education by society in the Autonomous Region of Castile and León has always been very high. The results obtained by the pupils of this region in the PISA Evaluation 2003 and 2006 give a clear evidence of it.

Given the unfavourable circumstances of the region, due to the shortage of working places and the difficulties of access to the labour market, both parents and young men are fully conscious of the fact that getting a good job in the future depends greatly on a good education, which means an extra bonus when it comes to making an effort.

Castile and León relies on a consolidated network of educational centres, well distributed and endowed. In Infant Education there are schools in some villages with only four pupils and the ratio teacher / pupil in the stages of Compulsory Secondary Education, Bachillerato and formative cycles of Vocational training are quite below those established by the Law. The reason is the great geographical dispersion and the shortage of young population in the region.

The teaching staff in Castile and León is composed of career civil servants in a percentage of 90%-95 %, which gives a major stability and continuity to the educational task in their centres.

The mobility of teachers is carried out through a contest of merits, (state and regional in alternate years).

Teachers have two important Areas which support their educational practice: The **Area of Educational Inspection**, responsible for institutionalized education, with tasks of support, follow-up, control and evaluation, and the **Area of Educational Programmes**, with the mission to complement the processes of integral training of the students and to update and modernize the educational system, in agreement with the scientific and social needs in a world in constant progress, through the introduction, support, follow-up and evaluation of programmes, plans and educational actions.

In the autonomous region of Castile and León, the Area of Educational Programmes develops programmes and activities for the schools, the teachers, the students and the parents of the students in issues like : the promotion of the reading, coexistence, improvement of the educational success, improvement of the quality of the education, permanent training of teachers, European programmes, the use of the new technologies of information and communication, getting to know vocational training studies, educational participation for parents and pupils, etc..

The problems of coexistence in the educational centres of Castile and León are neither great nor especially serious, compared to those happening in other parts of the country. All the centres must have a Plan of coexistence with the figures of the coordinator, who is a teacher of the school with a schedule of 2 to 5 school hours - dedicated to this purpose and that of the mediator, who is usually a pupil in secondary education and a teacher in Primary education

The Spanish educational system in general and, especially, the Autonomous Region of Castile and León have incorporated the internal and external evaluation as valuable instruments of assessment and follow-up of the educational processes and results and of the systems that sustain it. The Department of Education of the regional government, in agreement with the Plan of modernization and improvement of the public services:

- seeks as a target the constant improvement of quality in education, based on the perception of the citizen and defined by the clients, both internal and external: families, students, teachers and the educational administration.
- considers internal and external evaluation as the strategic key for the improvement of the system and turns it into a valuable instrument of follow-up and valuation of the obtained results, and of improvement of the processes leading to obtaining them
- adopts as an internal model of self-evaluation a model based on that of the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management)
- is taking part in the following modalities of external evaluation: PISA 2009, the General Evaluation of Diagnosis, carried out by the Ministry of Education, and in the Evaluation of Diagnosis on the part of the Autonomous Region of Castilla and León. All the pupils in the fourth year of Primary education must undergo this process which evaluates the basic linguistic and mathematical competences.



### 3. School leadership – concepts and practice

As stated above, in Spain, the management of the educational centres is not professional, but a temporary post without a differentiated professional status. He/She is a teacher in the centre and it is the teaching staff of the centre that has the greatest influence in the process of the election of a manager.

The head teacher carries out the institutional and representative functions: s/he is the link between the school and the rest of the educational system and in addition to this he must be the leader. He/She also holds other functions like the management of the curriculum and of the human and material resources. The head teacher can select neither the teaching staff of the centre nor the non- educational personnel. He / She has no power to evaluate their performance. The posts as civil servants in the public educational function in Spain, are occupied by means of an examination. As far as the number of teachers for each school is concerned, it is up to the administration to decide. As manager of resources it is necessary to distinguish between the material resources of the centre, which are administered by the secretary, who is a member of the managing team, and the annual budget already decided by the Administration.

**Conceptual framework**

In agreement with the educational law in force in our country, the organization and functioning of the centres lies in the constitutional principle of participation (it is the right of the teachers, the parents and, the pupils to take part in the control and management of all the centres supported by public funds) and in that of the pedagogic autonomy and management established in the in-force legislation and in the LOE.

**The government of schools and educational coordination**

**The managing team**

The managing team is the executive organ of government in the state centres. It is formed by the head teacher, the head of studies, the secretary and all those determined by the educational Administration. They work together in coordination according to the instructions of the headteacher and the legally established specific functions.

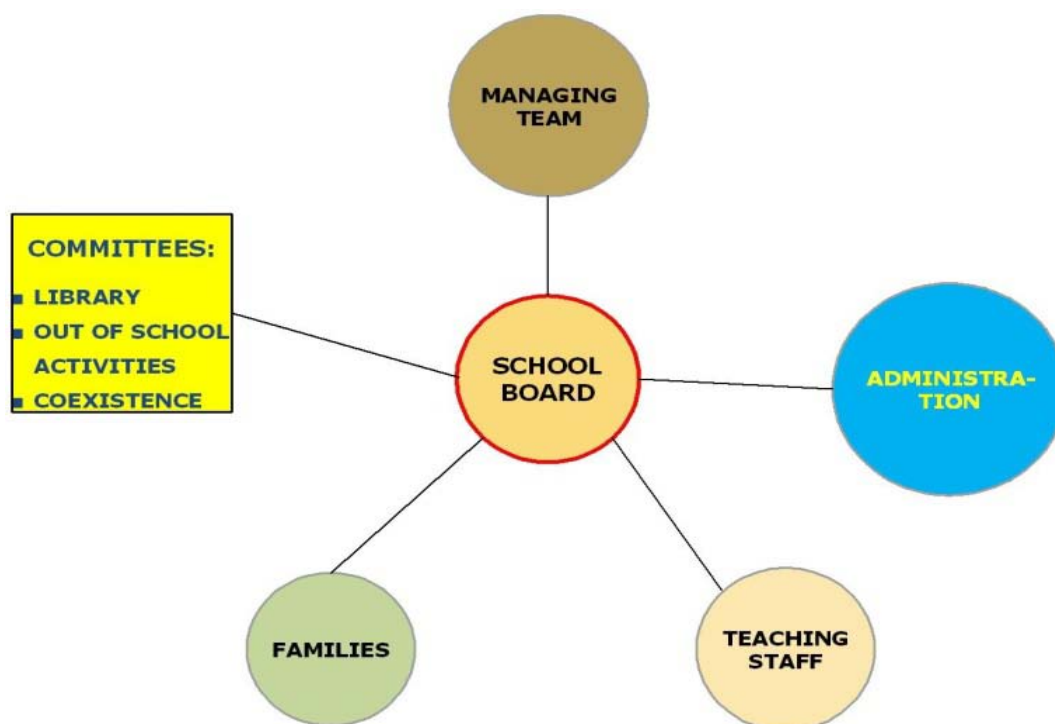
It is the head teacher who names and dismisses his/her team. They are all relieved of their duties at the end of the mandate of the head teacher.

**The school board**

which is composed of school community members, including parents, students, Administration and services staff and a representative of the municipality where the centre lies. The School head teacher will be its President.

Among its powers the most noteworthy are:

- To evaluate and to approve the School Educational Project and the Annual General Programme.
- To participate in the selection of the head teacher, and , by agreement of a two-thirds majority, it may propose the revocation of the appointment of the head teacher, be a party to the resolution of disciplinary conflicts and ensure that they abide by current regulations and propose, where appropriate, accurate actions.
- To analyze and to evaluate the overall functioning of the centre, the evolution of school performance and the results of internal and external evaluations in which the centre takes part, with authority to prepare proposals and reports on the quality of the centre management.



**The teaching staff**



which comprises all the teachers serving in the centre. Among other responsibilities there are the following:

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- To make proposals to the School managing team and the School Board for the development of the School Project and the Annual General Programme
- To approve and to evaluate the implementation of the curriculum and all educational aspects of the projects and the Annual General Programme
- To establish criteria for the guidance, mentoring, assessment and recovery of the students.
- To analyze and to evaluate the overall functioning of the centre, the evolution of school performance and results of internal and external evaluations in which the school takes part.

### **The teaching and learning**

Schools, according to the Organic Law of Education, have pedagogical, organizational and managing autonomy under the current legislation. They develop, approve and implement a management plan and its own rules of organization and functioning. The authorities encourage the autonomy of educational institutions so that that their economic, material and human resources can adapt to the organization and working plans developed, once they are properly assessed and evaluated. The schools, in the exercise of their autonomy, can take up experimentation, working plans, forms of organization or extension of school hours in the terms established by the educational authorities, without, in any case, imposing contributions to the families or demands to the educational authorities. When this experimentation, working plans or forms of organization may affect the achievement of academic or professional qualifications, this must be expressly authorized by the government.

In Primary Schools the teaching coordination is established through Cycle- coordination meetings (6-8 years, 8-10 years and 10-12 years), chaired by the coordinator who meets the group of teachers who teach in the same cycle.

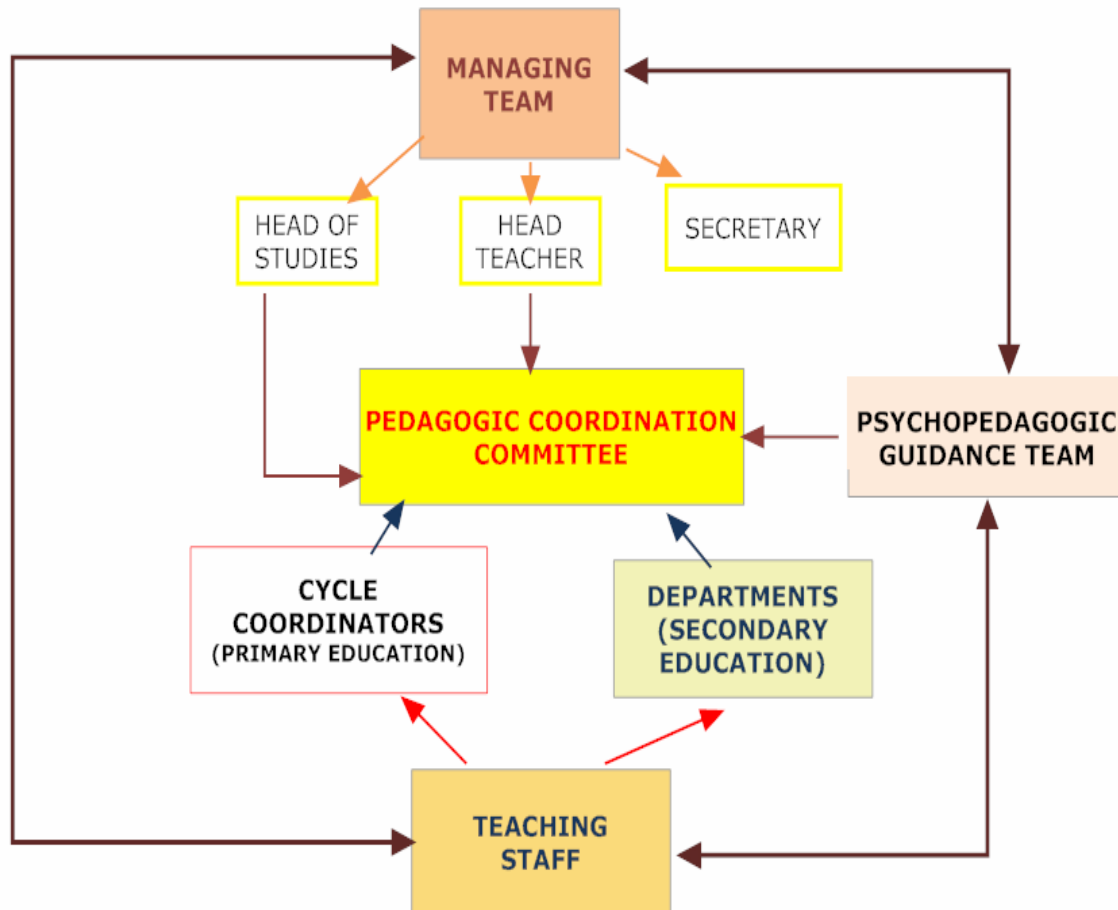
In High Schools (Secondary Education), Schools of Music and Languages Schools there are coordinating teaching departments which are responsible for the organization and development of teaching materials or modules for which they are entrusted. The heads of these departments form the Pedagogical Coordination Committee (PCC), together with the school head and the head of studies in order to coordinate the educational activities of the centre.

The teachers, organized in cycles (Primary Education) and Departments (Secondary Education and equivalents) are responsible for developing the Didactic Programmes that comprise the different areas, subjects and modules and the evaluation of the teaching-learning process, whose important elements are criteria and evaluation procedures and criteria for promotion and certification of students.

The School Educational Project, which is passed by the School Board, is the document that supports the management of the Head Teacher in order to exercise his or her leadership. It gathers, together with the implementation of the agreed curriculum tailored to the needs of the school, the values, objectives and priorities for educational action.

The Annual General Programme is the document that incorporates all aspects of the organization and functioning. Part of it are the didactic programmes, the Internal Rules of Procedure, and all projects and plans agreed upon and approved (Tutorial Action Plan, Coexistence Plan, Reading Support Plan, Improvement Plans, Educational Innovation Projects, Teacher Training Routes and Projects, etc.).

The educational system is evaluated by the Educational Inspection conducted on all elements and aspects of the educational system in order to ensure compliance with laws, the enforcement of rights and duties of those involved in the processes of teaching and learning, improving the educational system and the quality and equity of Education.



### Restructuring of school organizations

The increased responsibilities are creating the need to distribute leadership. A Managing Team is more relevant than a head teacher. Sharing the leadership among individuals and different organizational structures can help to answer the difficulties faced by schools and to improve school efficiency.

In order to develop and adopt quality principles and its values the Management Teams are implementing the model of School self-assessment. A few years ago the Junta de Castile and León, concerned about the quality of education, adopted the EFQM self-assessment model as a framework on the establishment of educational quality. Although there is no set model for leadership on issues upon which it is based, the principles of the Model are:

- Result orientation: Identifying interest groups, assessing their needs and matching their expectations.
- Customer orientation: Evaluating their satisfaction with services offered at school.
- Leadership and consistency with the objectives: Defining the mission, vision and principles at all levels of the organization.
- Management by processes and facts: Defining processes, using the obtained data and promoting improvements at school based on the definition of ambitious targets.
- Development and involvement of people: Delegating responsibilities, encouraging innovation and creativity and sharing knowledge and experiences.
- Learning, innovation and continuous improvement: Identifying and acting on

improvement opportunities and extending and integrating successful innovation.

- Development of partnerships: Selecting and managing suppliers, identifying external partnerships and developing with all of them the plans and policies by sharing knowledge.
- The regulatory and legal requirements and, with an active involvement in society and acting on expectations that the school generates within its environment.

From the moment that the autonomous region of Castile and León assumed the responsibilities of Education and approved the Educational Quality Improvement Programme, they have published legislation that regulates the development of quality experiences, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of teaching in schools supported with public funds and educational services of the Community of Castile and León. Managing teams, yearly and by resolution, may apply for participation in the development of one of the different types of established quality experiences. These experiences represent the next step that the head teachers give in response to the implantation of a Self-Assessment Model, a model that reflects those areas of improvement.

From the moment this application is sent, an improvement group is created in the school, consisting of a group of teachers and a Managing Team member at the head, who is responsible for the development and achievement of the improvement targets set.

### **The establishment of bases and negotiation of the direction of external expectations – Legitimation of the school before the local community**

In Spain, the relationship of a school with the Educational Administration, usually through the provincial delegations, is direct and permanent as the dependence is very marked. There are meetings every term or whenever there is something that the administration wants them to know or put into practice.

In addition schools are part of the local community and a member of the school board is a municipal representative. Cooperation and exchange of information with other local bodies largely depends on the will, the human factor and

the size of the school and its location, and are essential for the prevention and resolution of problems. As a general rule forms of coordination and practical cooperation are set by the school and the Administration, especially in topics about coexistence.

In small towns, cooperation between local authorities and the school is always much more personal and constant than in cities, where this exchange is more impersonal. In Primary Schools cooperation with local authorities is also greater, as the councils take over the running costs of these schools. Secondary Schools are generally more autonomous.

The external expectations of society are transferred to the managing team via meetings with the parents, with the administration or with the representatives of the municipality.

### **The leadership system and cooperation in networks**

In Spain, there are no procedures that allow working and sharing experiences at a regional or national level, that is, there is not an association of head teachers to facilitate their work, although the different training modalities set in the Provincial Training Plans provide the teachers with the possibility of seminars and / or working groups to develop common themes of interest to school leaders.

The Department of Education at the regional level and the Provincial Directorates of Education in their area of management develop and carry out various activities (Conferences, Workshops, Congresses ...) in which good practice examples from other schools and/or other public and private organizations are shown to schools wishing to take part.

### **Examples of good practice**

There are many examples of good practice in the exercise of school leadership, and each one of them must be assessed from the particular context of each school and from the achievements obtained by its head teacher or its Managing Team. As good practice examples, we can note several schools that have been involved in quality experiences. Good leadership is entrenched in the belief in quality management, and by exercising a strong leadership, some managers have begun their work with the implan-



tation of a Self-Assessment Model, which is the most appropriate choice for a good diagnosis of the situation of the school and on this basis be able to act through participation in Improvement Plans.

In order to achieve this aim, they have managed to motivate the participation of teachers, who work on these experiences led by a member of the Managing Team. They have achieved, as in the case of two high schools “Fuentesnuevas” in Ponferrada and “Álvaro Yañez” in Bembibre, an increase in the demand from students in these schools, an improvement of the institution image in the area where it lies - in some cases these schools were very discredited because of their results and the type of students they had-, an increase of the community participation in innovative educational programs that responds to society demands and a greater offer of quality education, which is evidenced by the observable results. Other schools have even achieved the European Seal of Excellence, which is for example the case of the Grouped Rural School Burgo Ranero.

## 4. Recruitment and qualification of school heads

### Recruitment

In the Educational System in Spain there is so far, no separate body of school head teachers. The current Educational Law (LOE), regulated by the Ministry of Education from the Central Government, establishes a new boost and recognition of the managing function in state schools, understanding it as the key in the organization and smooth running of schools. The direction that this law seems to point at, is the professionalization of the managing function, and therefore of the school leaders, but there is still a long way to go.

Each year there is a public selection process to elect those teachers who apply for the post. In the process we can observe the participation of both the regional administration and the educational community.

Candidates, who would like to be elected as head teachers in a state school, can apply for a vacancy but must fulfil the following requirements:

- They must have, at least, a five-year experience as a civil servant in the corresponding teaching body.
- They must have been teaching, as a civil servant, any of the subjects offered by the school for a period of at least five years.
- They must be active in the civil service in a state school depending on the Education Department of the regional government. Their working experience in the school must be, at least, one academic year.
- They must hand in a managing project which includes: objectives, the planning of the lines and the evaluation of the project.

In those schools where there are special characteristics like a small number of units (less than eight groups of students), or other schools like Official schools of Language, Arts or schools for Adults with less than eight teachers, a candidate who does not meet the requirements stated in A) and B) can also participate in this process and therefore be appointed as head teachers.

To elect the most suitable candidate, the Delegate of the Regional Education Department in the province names a Committee formed by representatives of both the school and the administration, and there is one Committee for each educational centre that has a vacancy.

This Committee is composed of:

- A president who is usually an Inspector
- A teacher, who must be a civil servant belonging to any teaching body, named by the Provincial Delegate.
- Two representatives of the Teaching Staff of the school who must have been elected by their colleagues.
- A representative of the parents and another of the students who belong to the School Council.

This Committee must assess the candidate’s CV and the managing project.

If they are elected, the Delegate of the Regional Education Department in the province names this person Head Teacher for a period of four years which can be renewed for two more periods of equal length if the evaluation of the work carried out is positive, making, on the whole, a twelve-year career as a Head Teacher. After this period the head Teacher must take part again in the selection process.

When there are no candidates or the Committee does not select one, the Delegate in the province can choose a teacher who must be a civil servant, working in the school.

### **The attractiveness of being a school head**

The system provides economic incentives to head teachers, reduced amount of teaching hours, scores that are valid for transfers, secondment and other processes of selection and partial consolidation of the head teacher supplementary pay for life. Yet most teachers do not feel too attracted by the leadership as it involves a great responsibility and many hours of work that are not always recognized by the educational community. No head teacher feels rewarded with his or her *extra* salary for the work performed. In January 2009 the salary of a head teacher for this position ranges from 68 € for a head teacher in a Grouped Rural School to 660 € for a head teacher in a High School, depending on its number of units. According to the view of most of the head teachers, the school leader is not well paid and it is not very likely that anyone applies for this post for economic reasons, but rather for personal satisfaction and secondly for the development of his or her career. Only the vocational Head Teacher has a special reward: "The personal satisfaction for doing a job that pleases him or her."

### **National pre-service structures, introductory courses and in-service education for school heads**

#### **Initial and in-service training**

There is an initial training course at the beginning of their career and then, they only have their experience and their personal training to rely on. This course of Initial Training is regulated by the Regional Education Department and it consists of a theoretical and a practical part.

The Directorate General gives instructions to the nine provinces of our region. The Staff working in the Area of Educational Programmes is responsible for carrying out the course together with the Head of the Centre for Teacher Training and Innovative Education, who certifies both parts.

The theoretical part of the course usually begins in October and ends at the end of February or the beginning of March. It consists of a number of sessions, generally twelve, of six hours which the newly-elected Head Teachers must attend. The sessions take place in the same day of the week in the capital city of the province.

The theoretical part lasts for 70 hours and the practical part for 15 which altogether make 85 hours of training which are certified when they have been positively evaluated.

#### **Theoretical stage**

The theoretical stage is structured around five main topics, each comprising 14 hours of training. The topics and contents are the following:

1. Educational organization and regulation
2. Management of human resources in an educational centre
3. Management of material resources
4. Management of pedagogical and social resources
5. Improvement plans; towards the management of quality

#### **Practical stage**

The contents of the period of practical training will consist in the carrying out of one or several practical cases or improvement plans applied to the centre managed by the trainee. These cases are proposed by the people coordinating the training process, who will evaluate the process. The report must be handed in at the end of the period, which is usually before the end of May.

This practical stage also includes:

- Visits to centres of different educational levels, models of organization and management and with specific programmes like resolution of conflicts, attention to diversity, participation in European Programmes..., analysis of the models.
- Participation in virtual communities with debates.
- Collaboration with other head teachers of proved experience.
- Remaking of the managing project, which can be an instrument of evaluation to pass the process.

The people responsible for coordinating this stage are the Inspector of Education assigned to the school and the head of the Centre for Teacher Training and Educative Innovation.

#### **Coaching and other forms of support**

The Area of Educational Inspection, The Area of Educational Programmes and the Centres for Teacher Training and Innovative Education, are the resources the Inspector of Education and the head of Centre have available for permanent training. They organise courses for teachers in general. The only course available so far for head teachers is the initial training course explained above.

## **5. Challenges, areas of innovation and underlying evidence**

The regional government, the Junta de Castilla y León has bet on the constant improvement of our educational centres realising that they must aim at the satisfaction of the customers, including teachers, parents, students, the administration and society in general. They carry out a series of actions in the schools, for instance, most of the schools' managing teams have now passed a self-evaluation process in order to detect the possible areas of improvement and to act consequently, involving the different people of the community. Some schools are even into the EFQM model, where leadership is one of the main criteria. Of course, we realise that a professional body of head teachers and managers of schools, as it

happens in other countries, would be the ideal standard but this, and is not possible so far.

The people responsible for education policies have been working hard over these last years in the implementation of the culture of Quality in our schools, organising training courses and training teachers. As stated above, one of the main five topics when the headmasters are being trained deals with the culture of quality. To support the improvement plans carried out in the centres, the managing team can rely on the assessment team, formed by an inspector (the one assigned to the centre) and a teacher trainer. They are the external team and there is also a unit of people working on quality which provides support (The Area of Educational Programmes). This work is recognised by the administration with certificates, awards and publication of their experience.

In Castile and León, we are sure that there is only one path to follow and we are doing our best to make head teachers into leaders that can guide their schools towards Excellence.

## Appendix

### Structure of the Spanish educational system

The educational system consists of the following stages and teachings:

**1. Infant education** – it attends to children from birth to the age of six. It is of a voluntary nature and free of charge between the age of 3 and 6. The maximum number of children per class is 25

**2. Primary education**– It spans six years and normally takes place between the ages of six and twelve. It is of a compulsory nature and free of charge. Maximum ratio is 25 students. Minimum, 4 students to form a class.

**3. Compulsory secondary education** – It consists of the four years normally between the ages of twelve to sixteen. It is of compulsory nature and free of charge. Maximum ratio is 25 students. Certificate of Graduate in Compulsory Education

**4. Bachillerato** – Post-compulsory education for students who attain the Certificate of Graduate in Compulsory Education. It spans two years and it is free of charge in state schools. Maximum ratio is 35 students.

**5. Vocational training** – *Post-compulsory*. It consists of a range of formative cycles organised into modules of varying duration and with theoretical and practical contents relevant to the different professional fields. The intermediate-level and higher-level formative cycles are free of charge in state schools. Maximum ratio is 30 students. The certificates are: Technical qualification and Higher Technical qualification.

**6. Language studies** in Official Schools of Languages with three different levels: basic, intermediate and advanced, taking the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as the model.

**7. Arts education:** comprising:

- Elementary and professional levels of Music and Dance
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- Intermediate and higher levels of the Plastic Arts and Design
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- Higher arts education: which is similar to a university degree

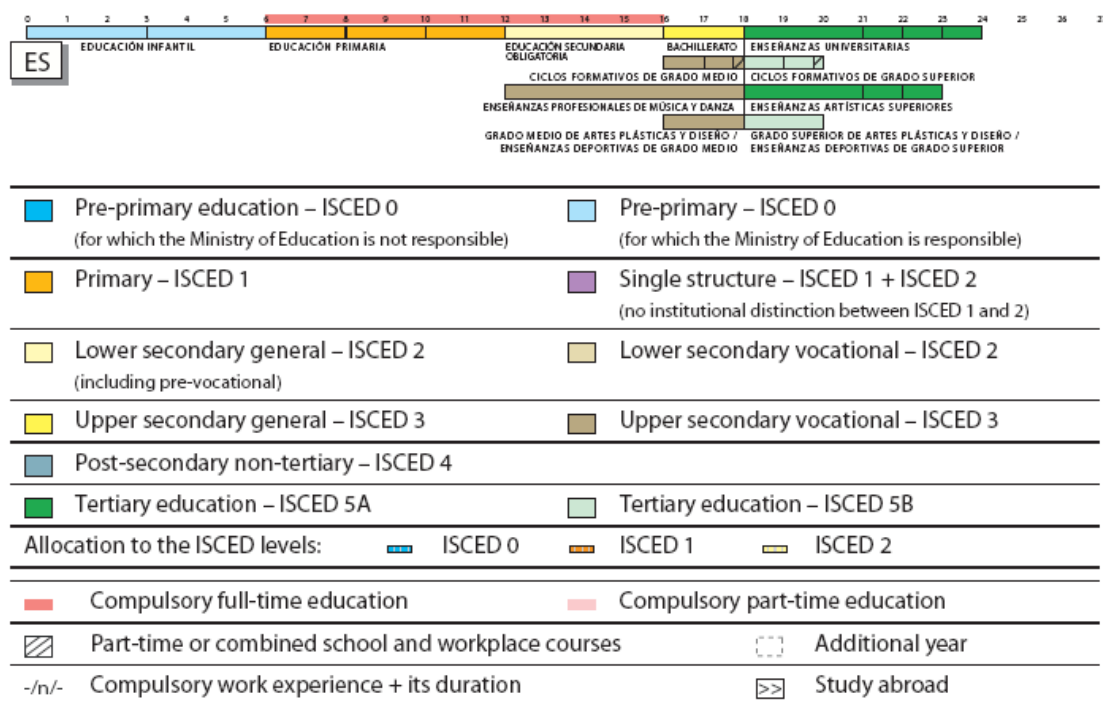
**8. Sports education:**

- Intermediate and higher levels.
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**9. Adult education** – dealing with Basic and post-compulsory teachings.

**10. University education** – DEGREES, MASTERS AND DOCTORATES

### Organisation of the education system in Spain, 2007/08



Source: Eurydice.







## Country Background Report France

### 1. Background

In France the centralised state is traditionally responsible for matters of education as well as for the guarantee of the exemption from fees and the non-denominational orientation of state schools. According to this mission, which is stated in the Constitution, the political authorities have to make sure that education is carried out nationwide according to the Republican values which form the understanding of nation and state in France. This close correlation between school and nation-building forms the French understanding of education to date.

In spite of its centralised structure and its claim to equality of opportunity, the French education system can be characterised by extreme inequalities which mirror the shift in French society, even enforce and partly produce them. In this context the number of repeaters (up to 40% of all 15-year-olds) and the number of dropouts (approx. 120,000 to 150,000 pupils leave school without a leaving certificate) is remarkable. Especially children and young persons with a migrant background are affected. Furthermore, there is considerable tension between mass and elite education. Practically all political powers share the idea of forming an elite for school achievement and see it as an essential responsibility of the educational system. The relationship between public and private schools (mostly Catholic sponsorship – about 20% of sixth formers) is still cause for conflict.

All schools are all-day schools, independent of their sponsorship. All matters concerning education, administration, organisation and educational and non-educational staff in schools are centralised and standardised. Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 at primary school but more than 90 % of the children from the age of 3 onwards attend a public pre-school institution which is free of charge. This school type is subordinate to the Ministry of Education and the teaching staff has an equal status to that of primary schools. After primary school, pupils attend secondary school for four years and finish their compulsory schooling there. The 6th grade is divided into a general education, a vocational and a technological branch. All three grammar school types finish with A-levels after 3, resp. 4 years. It is also possible to finish the vocational branch after

2 years. The accreditation to the 6th grade is carried out in a complex procedure by the school and career services where the wishes of the parents and pupils and the admission criteria of the grammar schools have to be brought in line. The A-levels represent the first university diploma as the public universities are admission-free. Another characteristic of the French education system are the post-A-level classes at some grammar schools which prepare for the first courses at universities. Entry to the so-called “Grande Ecoles” (elite universities) are part of this preparatory classes where especially gifted students are prepared for the entrance examination at a “Grande Ecole” in a highly selective and general-education oriented drill for 2 years. Other post-A-level classes offer a more job-related education like for higher technicians which qualify for entrance into working life but also offer the possibility of further studies at a university.

### 2. Context

#### National Context

The Ministry of Education is the biggest single budget of the state and therefore the most significant employer. With 1.3 million employees, thereof just under 1 million teaching staff, it represents a highly sensitive policy which mirrors the paradigm shift of governmental actions of the last 40 years. In the 1960s and 1970s, the educational reforms were formed by the perception of governmentally decreed unity as a prerequisite for equality of opportunity. In the 1980s, the idea of decentralising the administration and thereof the education system came to the fore. The 1990s focus on the comprehensive effort to modernise governmental administration through project-oriented actions. This is reflected e.g. in binding programmes to establish temporary competitive profiles at secondary schools and universities which are liable to evaluation. This does not only address administrative autonomy but also asks the question of a bigger range in pedagogical matters. Today school leadership no longer implies only taking orders from a higher authority but is defined as a self-contained task which calls for specialisation and professionalisation based on a conceptual and materialistic infrastructure.

The first decade of the new second millennium shows an acceleration of the previously triggered developments as governmental actions are seen under the aspect of measurability of the quantitative and qualitative outcomes.

The school board members have to work on indicators for the measurement of a school's performance. Regional and local experiments should be carried out within a certain framework, the new version of the education structures law of 2005 codifies negotiations on the target agreements between secondary schools and school authority as a structural principle of steering leadership. The dependence of the official discourse on the school board members as well as their desired leadership skills is obvious in the management literature.

However, the educational political interest in governance questions has got its most prominent expression in the University Education Act on the "liberties and responsibilities of the universities" of 2007. This law also mirrors the difficulties that go along with this development at all levels of the educational system. This is not only about more and more powerful corporate resistance of individual personnel categories to certain reforms, but it is about basic criticism of the deregulation of a core part of governmental acting, which subjected education to the laws of the national and international market, thus betraying Republican ideals of the creation of equality and equity, passionately held by a large part of the public. The decreasing controllability of a former powerful state administration in the achievement of the proclaimed educational targets as well as the contradictory expectations of the protagonists, the growing social and cultural differentiation of the French population, the discrepancy between proclaimed school and educational culture and the real experience of a growing number of children, teenagers and parents are shattering the French educational system much more than in countries where educational matters are institutionally less centralised and less exposed to the view of the world.

### Local context

The integration of regional authorities or the local context in general regarding organisation and administration matters in schools is a

consequence of the decentralisation movements which started in the 1980s. The communities continue to be responsible for building and financing primary schools, the 95 Départements will be responsible for the first secondary level schools and the 22 regions will be responsible for the upper secondary schools. Since 1985, all secondary schools – except primary schools – dispose of the status "*établissement public local d'enseignement*", i.e. as legal entities they dispose of a certain autonomy in administrative, financial and partly educational matters. Additionally to the public resources (state and public authorities) the schools can and should raise further resources; they dispose of their own budget proposed by the head of school and approved by the school's administrative board. This budget fluctuates between €300,000 per year for smaller secondary I schools and €1.5 million per year for large-scale secondary schools.

The administrative board is staffed in a tripartite way: one third are representatives from the responsible local authority as well as external personages nominated by the head master, one third are representatives of the teaching and non-teaching staff and one third are elected spokespersons and students' representatives. The school board members (the headmaster and his deputy) are ex officio members of the administrative board.

The headmaster is chairman of the administrative board and representative of the school administration at the same time. Personnel matters (education and further education, recruiting, evaluation, payment and administration of the non-teaching personnel) remain subject to the ministry or the local school authority respectively. The budget of the individual secondary schools does not include personnel funding. Since the end of the 1990s, headmasters have had the opportunity to recruit support (non-teaching) personnel with fixed-term contracts. Recently, the state has tried to assign the payment of the non-teaching personnel (staff for canteen, break time supervision, library, cleaning, secretary, finance, nurse, counseling) to the responsible school boards.

### 3. School Leadership concepts and practices

Since 1988, in secondary schools the headmaster and his deputy have formed a personnel category of their own, i.e. they no longer have any teaching commitment. In fact, they are not even allowed to teach. The access to this function is not only open to secondary school teachers, but also to candidates from primary schools or personnel categories without teaching experience respectively, as well as to other public administrations and to the free economy. This change in status corresponds to the logic of the specialisation of the headmaster's function in secondary schools that has been practiced since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It enhances the separation of competences between pedagogic matters, which are characteristic of French secondary schools, and for which the traditionally still numerous school supervisory boards are responsible, and administrative matters which the school board members are responsible for. This separation goes to the extent that a pedagogic leader role of the school board members may be partially rejected by the teachers. The school board members' main tasks can be subsumed in four points:

Conceptual framework (What does a head teacher have to do?)

#### Education and upbringing serve educational success

- Elaborating, formalising and working with the curriculum within the framework of the guidelines fixed by the ministry and the local school authority
  - Presidency in the teachers' conference on the students' achievements
  - Putting classes together
  - Dividing of the global teaching load assigned to the school; drawing up and implementing schedules
  - Providing teaching activities considering legal instructions according to the targets of the curriculum
  - Developing supportive educational measures and individual support, especially for students with learning difficulties
- Regulating the modalities to check the students' efforts: Elaboration of a school-specific policy regarding the teachers' conference on students' achievements as well as the supervision of the students' efforts; co-operation with the education authorities in the evaluation of the teachers
  - Elaborating a concept for counselling school careers and professional careers: Supporting the conditions for the student's individual development, implementing counselling measures (together with the administrative board) considering the guidelines from the ministry and the school authority, implementing these practices by consulting a school psychologist, controlling methods for measuring the professional integration
  - Educational measures: supervision of attendance and punctuality, supporting the students' voice, creating free-time areas for students, organising and monitoring the school's health and social service, supporting and organising health care policies, supporting the school's own sports club
  - Organising and maintaining the school - parents dialogue

#### Human resource development and management

- Guaranteeing a forward-looking human resource development policy, supporting new personnel and staff in dealing with their problems (contact to the school authorities and higher authorities), participating in the elaboration and evaluation of the further education programme, appreciating initiatives taken by the teaching and non-teaching personnel, identifying potentials, utilising the teachers' annual evaluation to exchange ideas to support and lead the temporary staff with contracts subject to notice
- Defining the basic duties for the entire personnel
- Ideally utilising the support personnel's potential
- Organising internal communication and guaranteeing its quality
- Organising and maintaining the dialogue with the staff representatives

### **Cross-linking with the local and regional environment**

Participating in school networks: Conception for counselling the students' school career and professional career, concepts for the modification of the choice of school depending on the students' place of residence, exchange of educational innovations (such as new educational profiles or training courses), observing the local and regional job market development, designing and participating in the programmes for adult education – as far as they are offered by the secondary school for a territorially restricted area; Co-operating with other schools within the remit of the board for schools, co-operation of first level secondary schools with primary schools in their catchment area, for example, by organising visits of the elementary school final year students in the secondary school;

Expanding relations to the responsible local authority, organising and implementing the dialogue with the local parents' association, the local social partners, partners within the cultural and sports area, and protagonists from local industry (raising the educational tax in local companies) together with other governmental institutions (judiciary, police, gendarmerie...), with the local and regional media.

This co-operation usually happens within the framework of formalised agreements which the school board members contract with their extracurricular partners.

### **The school's administration**

- Defining targets, delegating duties to personnel considering their expertise and duties
- Drawing up the budget, presenting it to the administrative board (in the capacity of an authorising officer)
- Guaranteeing regularity and safety for students, personnel and buildings
- Elaborating, writing and updating the house rules as well as guaranteeing their implementation
- Organising elections for the different committees, arranging and chairing meetings (especially those of the administrative board)
- Utilising appropriate instruments to analyse and document the school's function, preparing and presenting the annual report, estimating

the school enrolment (and thus the need for teachers) for the coming school year

### **Learning and teaching**

Defining the school board members' tasks shows that their competence in influencing classes and the teachers' work plus evaluation is restricted or indirect. Some of the headmasters demand the school board members' direct say in the employment of teachers but this has not yet been achieved. The school supervisory board is even criticized by some of the teachers for accompanying the headmaster to periodically visit the lessons. Since 2005, every secondary school has had to form a board as a place of school-specific educational reflection across disciplines. This new board is meant to be a forum for the headmaster where he can – more than before – get engaged with the basic questions of teaching at his school. An evaluation culture regarding the lessons and the students' competences as is intended in international comparative tests, could only be attempted so far since teachers, students and parents are still very much focused on school marks and how to compensate for them.

External evaluations, which are independent of the school supervisory board and follow defined quality indicators, as practised in other countries, have not prevailed yet. Every year, school rankings, especially for upper secondary schools, are published by the print media, but they are usually one-sidedly based on the success rate of the country-wide centralised A-levels as every secondary school published its own results, and therefore hardly any assumptions can be made regarding equal opportunities and the quality of schools since the selection processes that have taken place in the three last years at the secondary school are insufficiently or not depicted at all. Internal evaluation approaches, as written in the school development programme and its required elaboration by all protagonists involved in school life, are perceived only in an insufficient way as modernising factors by persons affected. The administrative board as an institutionalised dialogue place for all groups participating in school life is too often busy with financial and organisational questions exclusively, whereas educational questions and questions regarding the quality of instruction, school curriculum or school development in the narrower sense are hardly discussed.

## 4. Recruiting and educating school leaders

Until the mid 1980s, the candidates for the headmaster's post (upper and lower secondary school) were recruited from the circle of teachers. The candidates were invited for an interview by the school supervision officials and the results from this interview were forwarded to the head of the local school administration district with the aim of registering the candidate in a nationwide list of suitable candidates. For the purpose of an objective and rational approach to this procedure, a competition (*concours*) with three (partially written) exams was introduced.

In the following years the selection procedure was simplified: now there are two decentralised oral exams together with the submission of the extensive application form that is meant to display the candidate's motivation. The result of this first phase determines if the candidacy is supported or not. In the case of a positive reply, the candidate is invited to Paris in order to take part in a central selection interview where the selection committee can get an impression of the candidate's personality and his knowledge of the educational system.

### Status and qualification measures

Until 1988, the headmaster had the status of a teacher (with restricted teaching load). The introduction of a school's own selection competition was accompanied by the creation of a status for school administration personnel which is uniform for all secondary schools. At the end of a reflection process, which started in 1990 and went on for ten years, in which the ministry had acknowledged the headmaster's basic role for the functionality and the modernisation of the educational system, but also after headmasters had been on strike throughout the country at the end of the 1990s, the ministry and the majority union of headmasters signed an agreement in 2000. The text of the agreement includes an extensive activity and functional description, it provides an increase of financial remuneration acknowledging the increase of responsibility and more transparency in the procedure in the transfer as well as a more precise evaluation procedure for headmasters.

In Poitiers a central academy for education and further education of all leaders from the secondary schools subject to the Ministry of Education, as well as for the administrative personnel of universities, was created in 2003. It has developed from the fusion of different previous situations. This institution, amongst other things, is responsible for the support and the education of the instructors from the school administration districts (usually experienced headmasters and school administration inspectors), for the annually 700 to 800 newly recruited headmasters of secondary schools, as well as for selective aspects of initial training and further education. With the help of common education modules for school administration personnel and school inspectors and creating an innovation and evaluation culture that both personnel categories have in common, as well as overcoming the historic separation between the educational and administrative direction, are the targets being aimed at. The qualification measures for headmasters have adapted to this development. According to the current procedure, straight after the appointed headmaster has successfully passed the selection competition, he receives a post as deputy for three years and during the first two years spends 70 days taking part in qualification measures. Participating is one of the official duties and is therefore free of charge.

In every school administration district there is a group of instructors – usually experienced headmasters – who compile and carry out qualification modules. During the education phase, every headmaster-to-be is assigned to an instructor as a direct contact in the concerning school administration district. The tutor is not identical to the headmaster of the educating school. This education is structured so that phases of individual learning and sequences of learning in small groups alternate. These can be case studies, e.g. which need to be worked out in order to use them in short guest visits in other administrations (e.g. other regional administrative bodies) or companies, to compile reports and evaluations. The strong individualisation of some of the qualification modules is aimed to take account of the new headmasters' different educational backgrounds or careers respectively.



This phase of learning by doing is quite labour-intensive since additionally to the deputy headmaster's routine every day work education modules need to be done as well. Towards the conclusion of the two-year education phase, an evaluation is carried out by the education authorities and by the tutor or the group of instructors. With the help of these evaluations, the head of the school administration district can recommend the definite acquisition of the candidate into the personnel category of school board members to the ministry. After his third year as deputy, the successful candidate can apply for his move to a director's post.

### **Career planning, evaluation, further education of headmasters and attractiveness of the profession headmaster**

The measures of further education are determined by the school administration district, but have only very restricted budget funds. Since 2002, the school administration districts or the national management academy respectively have aimed at offering further education measures in a distance studies programme or e-learning in co-operation with their own universities and certifying these with a Master's degree. A possible career opportunity for the headmaster is to be moved to a bigger school. The salaries of the currently 13,000 headmasters depend on different factors, amongst others, on the position within the personnel category of the school administration (depending on the initial qualification, the years of service, the proven mobility and the evaluation) and on the size of the school. As a whole, four salary levels can be distinguished. School administration districts have made mandatory the evaluation of the headmasters if they are moved. In this case the school authority defines the duties for the new headmaster appointed for the free job for the time span of three years on the basis of an analysis of the status quo.

The accessibility to the headmaster's function for candidates without teaching experience, on the one hand, and the agreement between the majority union and the Ministry of Education made in 2000, on the other hand, are consequences of the recruitment shortages that have developed since the 1980s. It has become more difficult to recruit sufficiently qualified and motivated candidates from the teaching staff for this post since for most of the highly-qualified secondary school teachers (*agrégés*) it usually meant a decline in their material wellbeing, let alone the increasing mental demands that are only compensated by certain material benefits.

One of the benefits for example is an official residence that is given to each headmaster and which is usually located on the school grounds. There is a residence obligation for the headmaster to make sure he is able to fulfil his responsibility as supervisor. The development of the profile of the starting qualification shows that in the last 20 years there has, indeed, been a significant diversification. Whereas the proportion of *agrégés* remained constant, the proportion of candidates from the primary school sector, whose education is more general and for whom the capacity of a headmaster means a promotion, has significantly risen. This post is also attractive for the personnel categories of the Ministry of Education without teaching experience (orientation counsellors, supervisory staff). The *agrégé*, however, whose professional identity is strongly oriented towards an academic subject, and who used to have the ideal-typical starting qualification, does not comply with the type that is favoured by the ministry today: a manager of human resources who thinks in a project-related way and acts pragmatically.



## To sum up: Challenges, areas of innovation and underlying evidence

The current problems in the French educational system in general and leadership of schools in particular mirror a deep identity crisis. If it is about school failure, violence in schools, the persisting inequality of opportunities, the change in the teacher's role or the still very sensitive issue of the relationship between public and private schools, the former virtually sacred transfiguration of the Republican school as a school for the Republic is not topical anymore.

In the view of the tendency towards individualisation within French society and students who are socially and culturally becoming more heterogeneous as well as the required strengthening of the administrative and educational autonomy of responsible persons in schools on-the-spot at the expense of the former central state that disposed of uniformity as a guarantor for social equality and internal quality

and the necessary integration of new partners out of school into the educational process – not least because of the growing competition of socialisation authorities out of school (e.g. new information and communication technologies), the idea of an educational system as a uniform integration and socialisation model for all children and young people is less evident.

The change of the French educational institutions towards locally or regionally distinguished and rooted institutions that are horizontally networked and are open to the outside world – also internationally – and within their internal principles of order orienting themselves towards democratic values, is a task that cannot be managed by the former popular top-down logic of a modernisation carried out by the central state.

To the extent that all protagonists are willing to accept change as a permanent challenge, the educational system will again be seen as an institution that can make a real contribution to the realisation of social equity.

## Annex

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