Country: France

Project Name: The lowering of the age of compulsory education

Project Reach: National; Sub-National

Project Time Period: 2019 - Ongoing

Project Impact areas: Early Learning & Stimulation;

Project Funding: National Budget

Project Website: http://eduscol.education.fr/pid33040/programme-ressources-et-evaluation.html

Project Description:

Allowing students to master the basic skills (reading, writing, counting and respecting others) requires doing even more at the small section, medium section and large section, a school of growth and language.

At the beginning of the 2019 school year, the lowering of the age of compulsory education to three years will provide all students with the same opportunities to succeed in school.

Today, if 97% of students are enrolled at three years, they are however in an imperfect manner. There are indeed at different levels of schooling depending on different parts of the territory and social backgrounds, and irregular attendance of students during the day, especially in small sections.

This is even more critical before the age of six when a good command of the language is fundamental for the student success.

The emphasis of the program is placed on the training of actors:

- September 2018: three days of training for 1,400 inspectors of National Education (IEN – inspecteur de l’Education nationale) in order to help them implement the transformation of primary school. One of the three components of this training will be specifically devoted to small section, medium section and large section.

- 2nd semester 2018: a specific seminar for teachers in small section, medium section and large section will offer specialization modules leading to increase their qualifications. It will continue the reflection initiated during the Foundations of the small section, medium section and large section (Assises de la maternelle), by promoting the development of the language
learning of the students (vocabulary) and the concerns to the attachment and the blossoming, in connection with the works of the professor Cyrulnik.

- 1st semester 2019: a common training plan for teachers and specialized territorial agents of small section, medium section and large section (Atsem - agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles) will be deployed in close collaboration with local authorities. Indeed, the Atsem are essential actors of the small section, medium section and large section, whose mission evolves towards a more educational role. The training must allow accompanying these evolutions, in perfect complementarity with the role of the professors (the city halls employ today about 55 000 Atsem which are to 85% of the employees. Two decrees, relating to their status and their recruitment were published on March 1st, 2018. Atsem's belonging to the educational community is particularly affirmed).

During the year 2018-2019, the Conseil supérieur des programmes will be asked to clarify the small section, medium section and large section programs (Cycle 1) in order to highlight the importance of language learning. Likewise, annual benchmarks for progress will provide teachers with clear benchmarks to organize, in the best conditions, their teachings on the entire small section, medium section and large section cycle.

Legal Framework:
Lowering the age of the beginning of compulsory education to three years will be at the core of a law that will be debated in the Parliament during the 2018-2019 school year.