



Numbers of pupils per hour of instruction in a secondary school in 2020

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NOTE D'INFORMATION

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Numbers of pupils per hour of instruction in a secondary school in 2020

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► As of the start of the 2020 school year, for one hour of lessons, a teacher in a secondary school faces an average of 22 pupils, a value that has remained stable for years. This number depends on the level: around 24 pupils on average for lower secondary school courses and for general and technological courses in upper secondary school, compared with less than 16 pupils for vocational courses in upper secondary school and less than 13 in Segpa (programmes for children with severe and persistent educational difficulties). In lower secondary school, the supervision conditions are more favourable for schools located in priority zones, with an average of 20.7 pupils per hour. In the last grades of the general upper secondary school (11th and 12th grades), about two out of three hours are taught in groups, not as a whole class. Before the upper secondary school reform, one hour out of two was taught in groups.

In 2020, a secondary school teacher will be facing an average of 22 students

The calculation of the average number of pupils per structure, known as the E/S indicator (Effectifs par structure in french : the number of students per structure), takes into account the differences in the size of all the structures, both whole classes (or divisions) and groups or subgroups of pupils. This indicator makes it possible to obtain the average number of pupils for whom a teacher is responsible during one hour of instruction, and thus to account for teaching conditions in a way that is complementary to class size. Taking the public and government-dependant private schools together, a teacher faces an average of 22.2 pupils per hour of instruction in 2020 [↘ figure 1](#). This indicator is higher for CPGE (preparatory studies for highly selective higher education programmes) with an average of 28.1 pupils per hour, and is lower in the Segpa with 12.6 pupils.

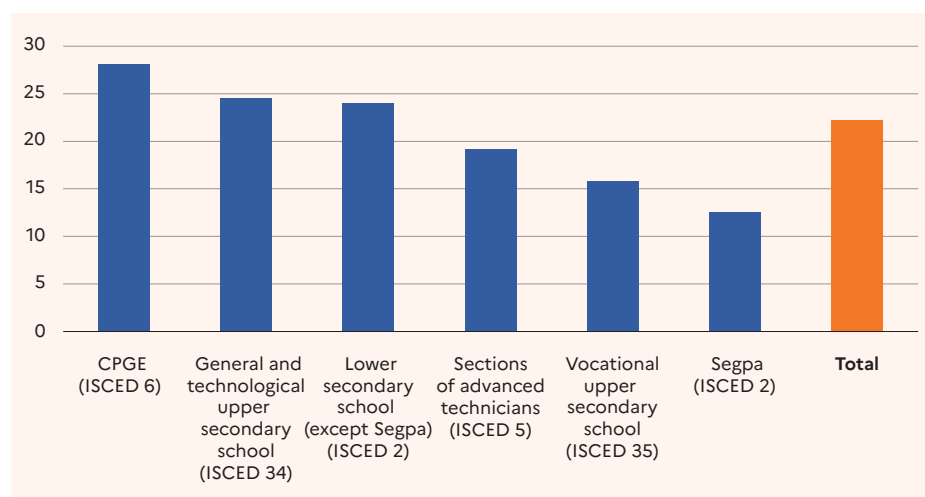
The average size of classes in lower secondary school (excluding Segpa) is 25.6 pupils, whereas the indicator E/S for these courses is 24 students in 2020. In upper secondary school, these averages are 30.2 students (and an E/S that equals 24.5 students) for general and technological courses and 18.4 students (and an E/S that equals 15.8) for vocational courses ([bibliography](#), 'Find out more').

In 2020, two out of three hours were taught in groups in the two last grades of the upper secondary school, compared to one out of two before 2019

The start of the 2019 school year was marked by the implementation of the first phase of the reform of the upper secondary school, which mainly concerns the 11th grade

(penultimate year before the Baccalaureat, the upper secondary school leaving certificate). The reform aims to create a single general education course in place of the S, ES and L options. To personalise their pathway, pupils choose 3 speciality courses at a rate of 4 hours per week per speciality. However, pupils from one class can choose different combinations of specialities and end up in groups mixed with pupils from other classes

1 Number of students per structure (E/S) by level of education in the public and government-dependant private school at the start of the 2020 school year



Reading note: At the start of the 2020 school year, a teacher faces an average of 28.1 students for one hour of lessons in CPGE.

Scope: Metropolitan France + DROM - Public and government-dependant private sector.

Source: DEPP, bases relais, Sysca.

who chose the same speciality course. As a result, the number of hours spent in groups of pupils increases compared to the number of hours given in whole classes. Thus, since 2019 in 11th grade, 67 % of the hours of instruction are given in groups, compared to 50 % at the start of the 2018 school year ↘ **figure 2**.

In 10th grade, the exploration courses (2 courses of 1h30 each per week chosen by the students) have disappeared at the start of the 2019 school year, while “Economic and Social Sciences” and “Digital Sciences and Technology” have been integrated into the core curriculum. As a result, the number of hours provided in groups decreases from 56 % in 2018 to 51 % in 2020. The proportion of hours taught in groups has also been falling since 2018 in the technological school, but to a lesser extent (from 46 % to 43 % in grade 11 and from 55 % to 50 % in grade 12).

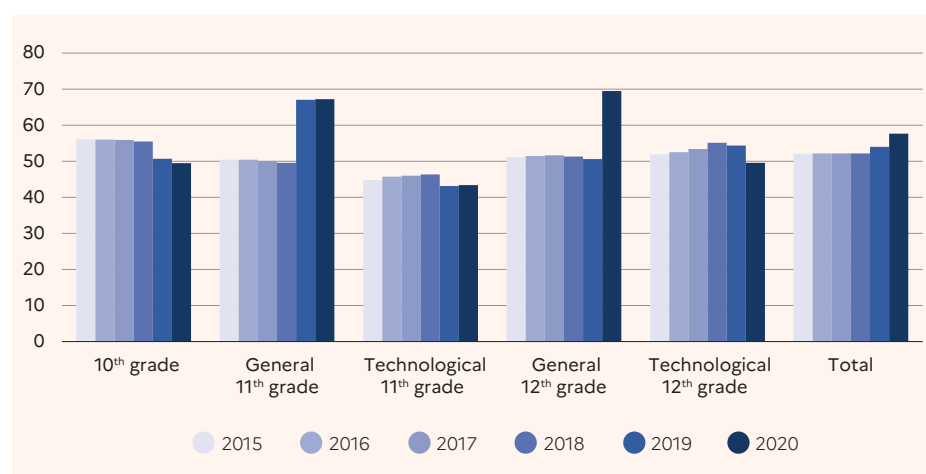
The last step of the reform involved the 12th grade (last level of upper secondary school) and was implemented at the start of the 2020 school year. The students chose 2 speciality courses for 6 hours of weekly lessons per speciality. In 2020, 70 % of the lessons were given in groups, compared to 51 % in the previous two years.

In total, for all general and technological courses in upper secondary school, the share of hours taught in groups, which was stable between 2015 and 2018 at 52 %, will reach 58 % in 2020.

More hours are taught in groups and there are fewer pupils per structure in priority education networks in lower secondary school

In 2020, the E/S indicator in lower secondary schools (including Segpa) in the state schools was 20.3 pupils for schools classified in reinforced priority education networks (REP+), and 21 pupils for schools classified in priority education networks (REP), compared to 23.5 pupils for schools outside priority education in the public sector and 26 pupils in the government-dependant private schools ↘ **figure 3**. Similarly, while 4 % of the hours in public lower secondary schools outside the priority education sector were taught in groups with 10 pupils or fewer, this proportion rose to 6.2 % for lower secondary school classified as REP and 7.6 % for those classified as REP+.

2 Proportion of hours taught in groups from 2015 to 2020



Reading note: The share of hours taught in groups increases from 50 % in 2018 to 67 % in 2020 in general 11th grade.

Scope: Metropolitan France + DROM - Public and Private under contract.

Source: DEPP : Bases Relais, SYSCA.

Réf. : Note d'Information, n° 21.47. DEPP

3 The indicators of supervision conditions in priority education at the 2020 school year in lower secondary school (including Segpa)

Indicator	Public sector					Government-dependant private sector	Total
	REP+	REP	Total priority education	Outside priority education	Total		
Average number of students per structure	20.3	21,0	20.7	23.5	22.8	26.0	23.4
Share of hours in groups	24.4	22.2	23,0	22.6	22.7	14.8	21.2
Share of hours in front of less than 10 students	7.6	6.2	6.7	4,0	4.6	2.7	4.3

Reading note: For schools classified in reinforced priority education networks (REP+), the average number of students per structure is 20.3. Furthermore, 24.4 % of the hours are taught in groups and 7.6 % of the hours are taught in front of 10 students or less.

Scope: Metropolitan France + DROM - Public and private under contract, teachers in charge of students in lower secondary school all year round.

Source: DEPP : Bases Relais, SYSCA.

Réf. : Note d'Information, n° 21.47. DEPP

The proportion of hours taught in groups was slightly higher in lower secondary school located in REP+ (24.4 %) than in those located in REP and in public lower secondary middle school outside priority education (23 %), but much higher than in government-dependant private school, in which only 14.8 % of the hours were taught in front of groups of pupils. These discrepancies between lower secondary school in priority education and lower secondary school outside priority education were already found in previous years (bibliography, 'Find out more'). ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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