



The evaluation of the Priority Education Zone program

September 25th



THE PRIORITY EDUCATION ZONE PROGRAM



THE PRIORITY EDUCATION ZONE POLICY : DEFINITION

A program launched in the early 80's ...

- Supposed to be temporary, became permanent
- Several waves that extended the policy to other schools

... that aims to help pupils with lower academic achievement because of their socio-economic background

- Persisting difference in pupils' results according to their social origin
- Goal of the educational system : give the opportunity to succeed to every pupil

... by giving extra resources to disadvantaged schools

- Schools that concentrate low academic achievers
- Positive discrimination / compensatory policy



WHAT ARE THE MEANS MOBILIZED BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES?

More teachers assigned to ZEP schools, fewer pupils per class

- Lower supervision ratios
- 12 pupils per division in first grade in reinforced networks
- Extra-teacher in primary schools : N+1 teachers for N classes

Financial and non financial incentives for teachers

- Financial premium for ZEP teachers : now between 150 and 200€
- Priority on future job transfers, quicker career advancement
- Less teaching obligations but specific time dedicated to team management

More financial resources and more staff

- Supervising staff, social workers, nurses, secondary teaching assistants
- Teaching credits : extra hours
- Extracurricular activities (funded both by the State and local authorities)



WHO BENEFITS FROM THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES?

Targeted at primary and junior high schools

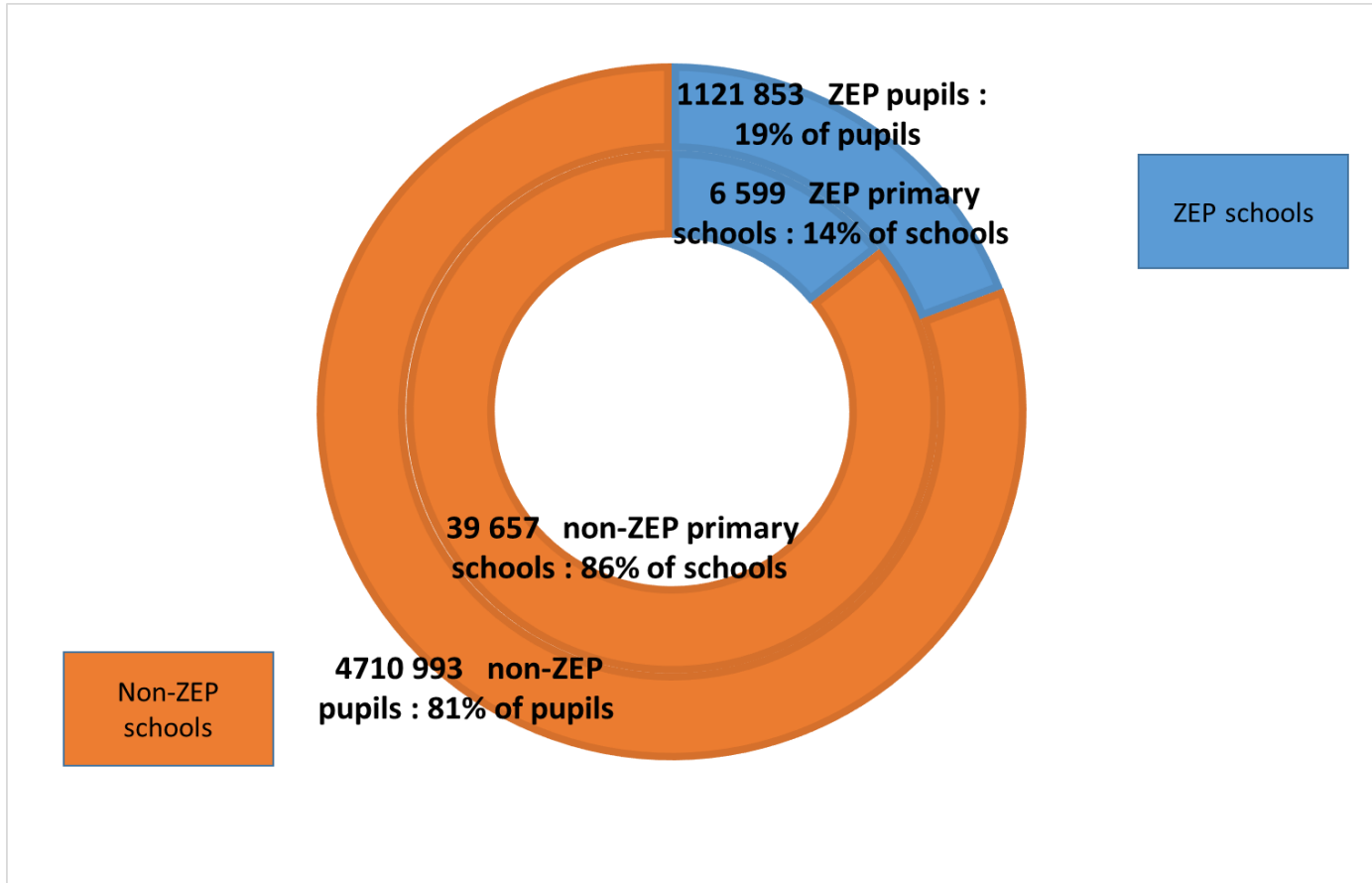
- Schools in which pupils with low achievement are concentrated
 - Among the criteria used to define ZEPs:
 - % of repeaters when entering 6th grade
 - % of scholarship holders and % of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - Proximity with districts targeted by territorial policies that aim to fight poverty

Today :

- 20% of schools and 20% of pupils
- Around 1000 middle schools, 7000 schools and 2 million pupils

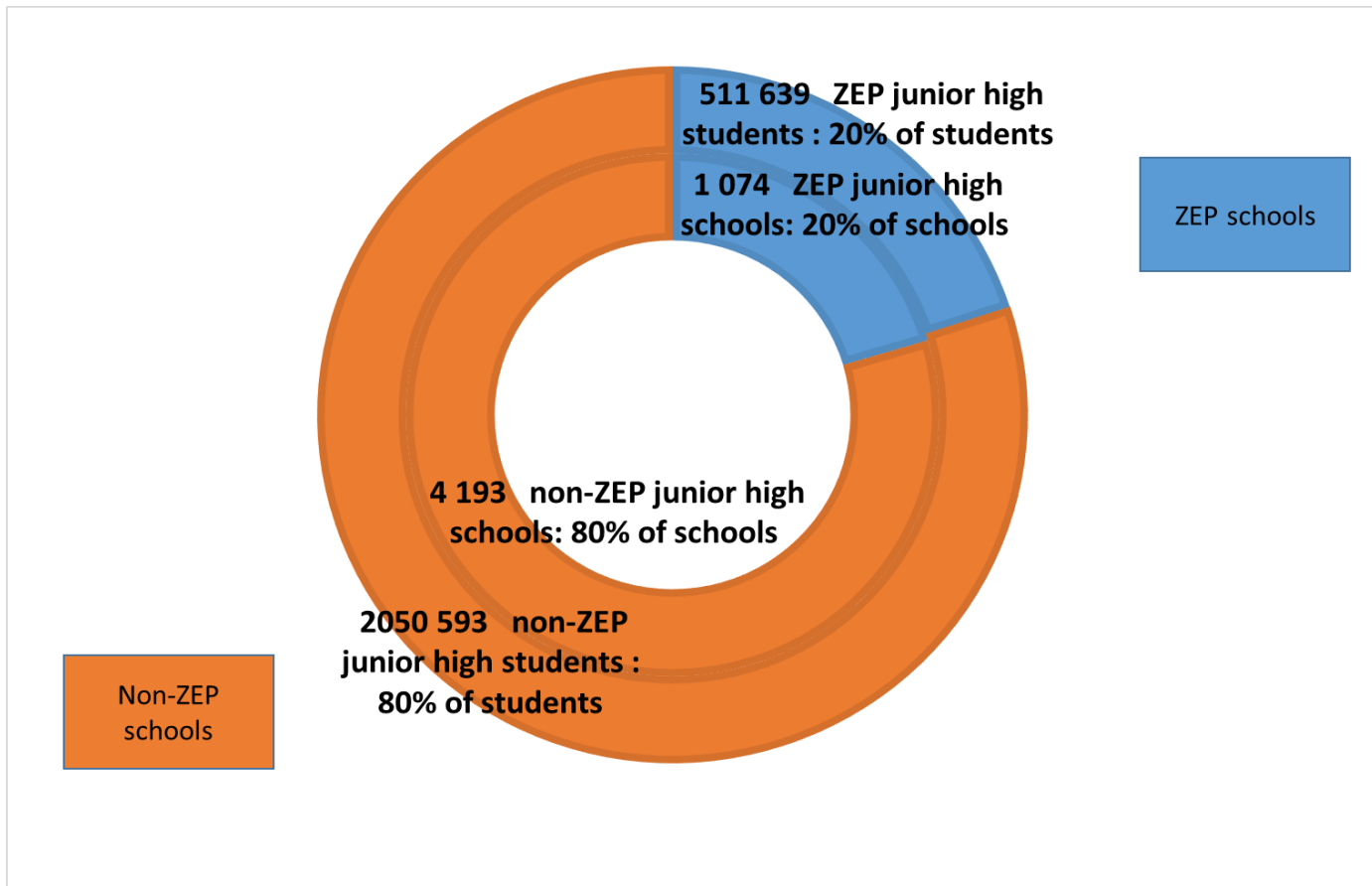


DISTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND PUPILS IN 2015



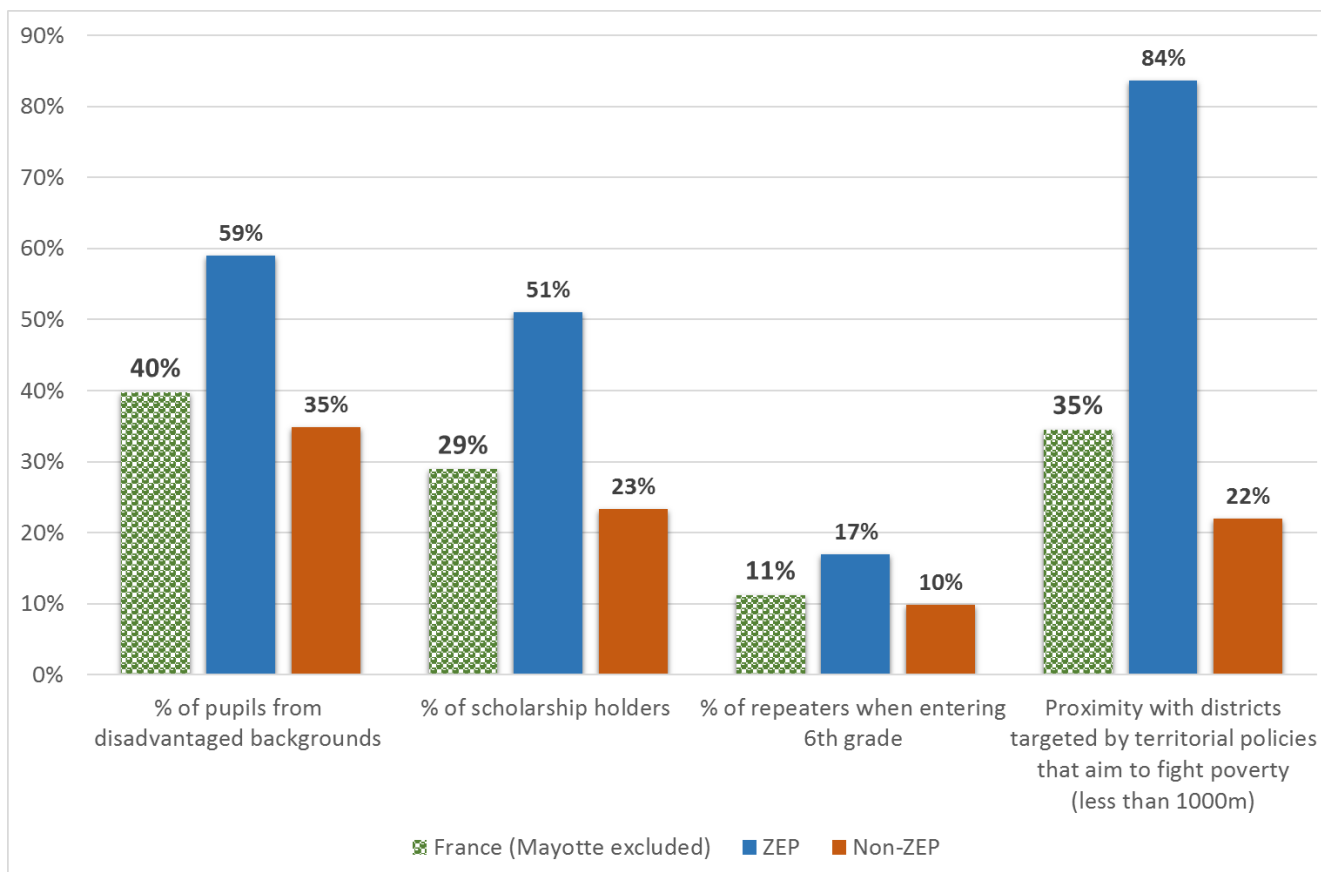


DISTRIBUTION OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN 2015





COMPOSITION OF SCHOOLS IN 2015 DEPENDING ON WHETHER OR NOT THEY BELONG TO A ZEP





WHAT IS THE COST OF THIS POLICY?

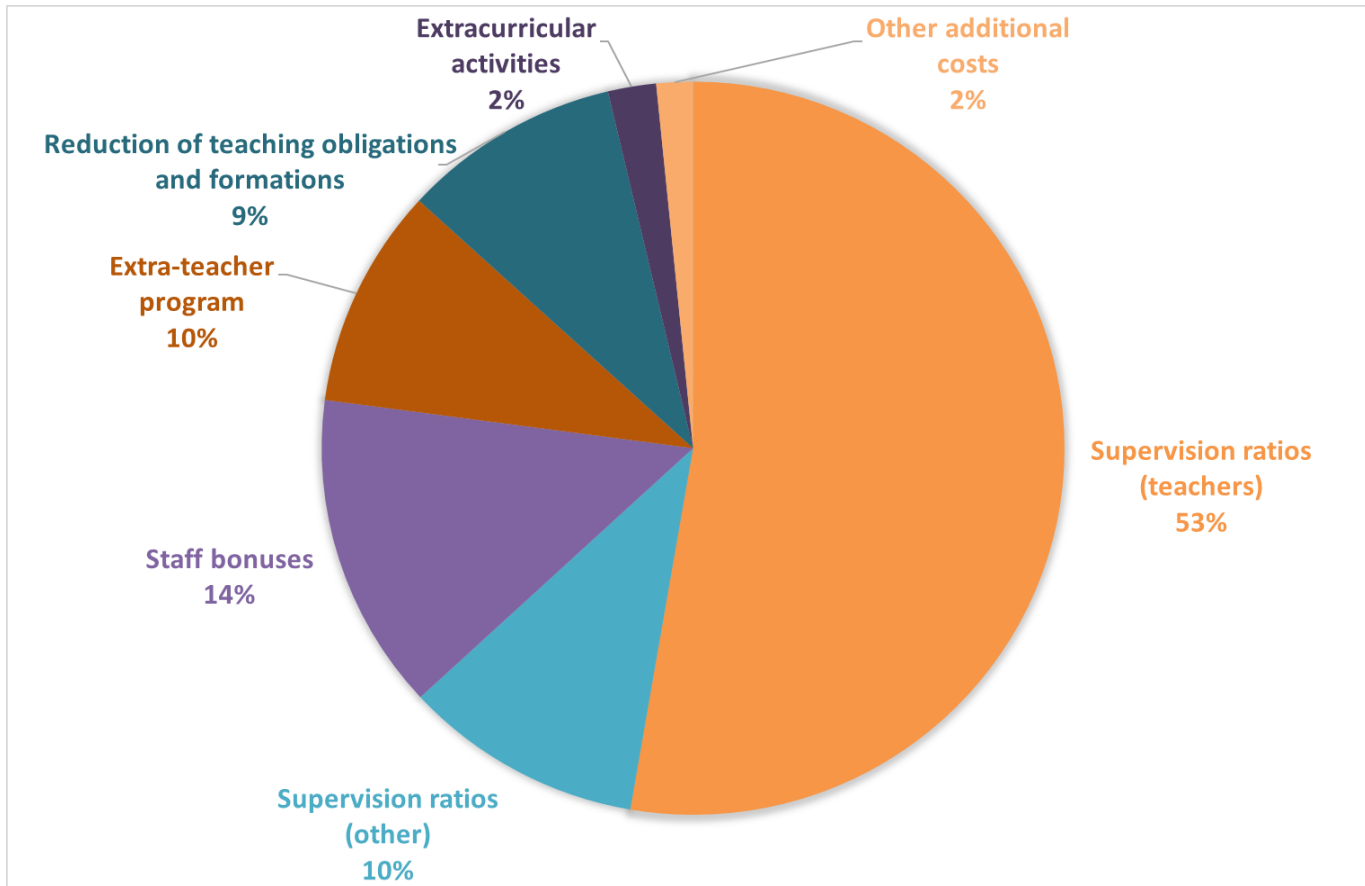
Estimation of additional costs due to the ZEP policy

Total : 1 520 million €

- Done by the Ministry of National Education for 2016
- But weaknesses :
 - Some methods problems
 - Indirect effects not intergrated in the equation
 - Estimation at average cost



DISTRIBUTION OF COSTS BETWEEN MEASURES





WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF THIS 40-YEAR POLICY?

The achievement gap between ZEPs and non-ZEPs is not reduced

- Still a 10% difference in results
- The few quantitative evaluations available conclude that effects are not significant

The PISA results

- The French educational system is one of the most unequal among OECD countries
- 20% of pupils achievement is explained by their socio-economic background VS 13% in average for all OECD countries

A large-scale policy not well-targeted ?

- Dilution of the efficiency of the means allocated
- Problems with targeting schools and not pupils



THE MAIN GOALS OF THE EVALUATION CARRIED OUT BY THE COURT



HOW TO EVALUATE THIS POLICY ?

Do a complete audit of means allocated

- Weaknesses of previous audits
- Experience and expertise of the *Cour des Comptes*
- Necessary to conclude on the efficiency of the policy

Try to assess the real impact of the policy

- Quantitative evaluation
- Based on econometric methods : establish robust causality links
- Need for economists with specific qualifications



STEPS OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

- 1. An audit, conducted with the usual methods of the *Cour des Comptes***



STEPS OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

- 1. An audit, conducted with the usual methods of the *Cour des Comptes***
- 2. A first econometric evaluation on pupils' results**
 - Conducted in the *Cour des Comptes* by an economist from INSEE (French National Statistics Bureau), Hicham Abbas, with the help of two students from Paris School of Economics



STEPS OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

- 1. An audit, conducted with the usual methods of the *Cour des Comptes***
- 2. A first econometric evaluation on pupils' results**
 - Conducted in the *Cour des Comptes* by an economist from INSEE (French National Statistics Bureau), Hicham Abbas, with the help of two students from Paris School of Economics
- 3. A second evaluation on staff management practices**
 - Conducted by a PhD student of the PSE, Asma Benhenda