



November 2006

SCIENCES PO

**PRIORITY EDUCATION AGREEMENTS
2006 Yearly Report**

Tangible results, ever-greater outreach

I. TANGIBLE RESULTS

1. 264 students admitted to Sciences Po

Set up in 2001, the Priority Education Agreements (PEA) program is entering its seventh year. Since 2001, nearly 1500 secondary-school graduates have taken the challenge of going through the selection process designed especially for this program and among them, 264 were ultimately admitted to Sciences Po. There were 17 of them the first year. They were 75 in July 2006. The effects of the program are tangible and measurable in regions that have been victims of social and spatial neglect. About one hundred of the students selected through this process (99) came from secondary schools in the Seine-Saint-Denis department to the northeast of Paris, 56 of them from the Moselle department, suffering from the relocation of its major industries outside the area and recent closure of its last remaining coal mines. Many of the students return to the secondary school they graduated from to talk about their social ascension through success academic, thereby inspiring others. Partner school teachers have noticed the highly beneficial effects of the “study dynamic” thus created.

Not only has the aim of socially diversifying recruitment been achieved, but its success is repeatedly confirmed year after year: since 2001, between 50 and 70% of the students thus selected are children of unemployed parents or the “working poor.” This rate reflects the characteristic profile of the student body in schools coming under priority education agreements, where it varies between 50 and 80%, while the national average is only 26% in public secondary schools.

2. 33 partner secondary schools throughout France

Seven difficult secondary schools were Sciences Po partners in 2001, from the Créteil, Versailles and Nancy-Metz *Académies* (regional boards of education). There are 33 partner schools today. In addition to these pioneer *Académies*, five others have joined the program. These are Guadeloupe, Lille, Lyon, Montpellier and Poitiers. A testimony to the program’s success at the national level, 15 more secondary schools have applied for agreements for the 2006/2007 academic year, a record figure which would broaden the partnership to the *Académies* of Amiens, Rouen, Martinique and French Guyana. The new applicant schools are distributed as follows:

- 2 on the island of Martinique;
- 2 in French Guyana;
- 4 in the Lille *Académie*;
- 2 in the Rouen *Académie*;
- 1 in the Amiens *Académie*;
- 4 in the Créteil *Académie*.

II. SCIENCES PO, SPEARHEAD FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SELECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION

1. From controversy to consensus

The controversy the idea of this reform sparked in 2001 has yielded, in the space of a few years, to a broad consensus. Several dozen major businesses signed the Diversity Charter in 2004 and attended the *Grandes Ecoles* conference in 2005. Many of these schools have announced the start of tutoring and support programs in secondary schools. **The announcement of such measures by institutions of higher learning is without a**

doubt a significant first step that should lead to a quantitative and qualitative assessment of their results.

Other programs are striving for even greater innovation, which reflects a change in mentalities.

The Institute of Political Studies in Lille decided in January 2005 to enter into a partnership with Sciences Po to extend the PEA program to throughout the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, the first three secondary schools in the Lille school district to sign up for the program having been in Roubaix, Lens and Maubeuge. This collaboration foreshadows a possible extension of the program to four new secondary schools in 2006/2007.

After Sciences Po, **the INSA in Lyon** has established partnerships with the Lycée of Vaulx-en-Velin and the two secondary schools in Vénissieux. INSA's program in Lyon is similar to PEAs: preliminary tutoring, new selection procedures. The Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon has also approached these secondary schools. The ESSEC has started working with the Lycée Edmond Rostand in Saint-Ouen-L'Aumône, a Sciences Po partner since 2002.

The ENSAM and the University Technology Institute (IUT) in Ville d'Avray have set up a system to recruit secondary school graduates from priority education areas, prompting Marie Reynier, director of ENSAM at the time and currently director of the *Académie* in Martinique to state: "we have started to rethink the way selection is done today."

Monique Canto-Sperber, director of **ENS (Ulm)**, declared on October 10, 2006 that the ENS entrance exam favored "students who enjoyed a quality cultural environment and penalized students from underprivileged social backgrounds" and that a reform of the entrance exams was under consideration.

2. Equal opportunities, an issue of general interest

The French government made equal opportunity the theme of the year 2006. The Education Minister and the Minister for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity launched a call for projects in the Fall of 2005, targeting Universities and the *Grandes Ecoles*. Sciences Po is one of the ten successful bidding institutions, winning an endowment of over 100,000 euros (160,000 euros altogether). This achievement should enable the "Priority Education Agreement" program to further expand its outreach. On a larger level, the year 2007 has been designated **European Year of Equal Opportunities for All by the European Union**.

The Agreements are thus at the intersection of economic, social and cultural concerns. They are proof that it is possible, through affirmative action, to **create diversity**, often felt by many fellow citizens in their daily lives as a cause of suffering, identity crisis or insecurity, **a positive factor with multiple effects**.

3. Strengthened corporate partnerships

Major companies continue to join the Sponsorship Committee whose members now include **Accor, Areva, BNP Paribas, CDC IXIS Asset Management, Deloitte, EDF, Ernst & Young, France Télévisions, HSBC, L'Oréal, Prisma Presse, Schlumberger, SFR Cégétel, SNCF French railroads, Self-Trade, Suez, Total, Unilever-France**, to name only a few. Not only do business demonstrate their interest in diversified recruitment but also emphasize the issue of diversification among their own personnel recruitment as a factor of growth and development at a time when the markets they are involved with are increasingly complex.

III. ENCOURAGING RESULTS CONFIRMED EVERY YEAR FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS

A/ Results in terms of the selection process and social diversification are confirmed year after year

1. Excellent applicants

The selectivity of the PEA procedure is comparable to that of other admission channels to Sciences Po. 17% of the applicants were selected **in 2006**, halfway between those admitted by application file procedure (nearly 30%), and those secondary school graduates who pass the Sciences Po entrance examination (12%). In 2006 as in 2005 and 2004, four out of five admitted PEA program students had excellent results on their Baccalaureate exam. Whereas this was not the case in the pilot year of the PEA program in 2001 or in 2002, four of them had top marks on their Baccalaureate in 2003, five in 2004 and 2005, seven in 2006, with one student having obtained a remarkable score by any standard.

2. Social diversity in recruitment

Without any sort of quota system having been set up, selection process entirely fulfills its aim of social diversification in recruitment. The sociological and cultural profiles of the students admitted to Sciences Po corresponds with those observed in the secondary schools of difficult areas. Self-censorship is indeed being overcome. Each year for the past four years, **between 2/3 and 3/4 of PEA program students have received government scholarships. Between 50% and 70% of them come from underprivileged socio-occupational categories.** This percentage is much higher than that in the University undergraduate student body (29%).

Socio-occupational origin of students' families	University undergrads (for ref.)	Admitted Entrance exam (1998)	Admitted PEA 2001	Admitted PEA 2002	Admitted PEA 2003	Admitted PEA 2004	Admitted PEA 2005	Admitted PEA 2006
Total underprivileged classes. (unemployed+blue-collar + white collar workers)	29%	3%	50,5%	57%	67,6%	51%	56%	59%

3. Diversity of geographic origins: continual enrichment over six years

Since 2003, about **two-thirds of those admitted have at least one parent born outside of France, half of them, both parents.** This cultural diversity often mirrors that found in secondary schools in difficult areas, which generally belong to the 10% of schools that accommodate 90% of the children from immigrant stock. Moreover, several students also come from French overseas territories.

Origin of PEA students or their parents	Number 2002	Number 2003	Number 2004	Number 2005	Number 2006
AFRICA					
Algeria	5	11	10	15	30
Cameroon			2		
Comores	1				
Congo	1			2	2
Egypt				2	
Guinea					4
Ivory Coast			1	1	
Madagascar			1		
Mali		1	2		2
Mauritania					2
Mauritius					2
Morocco	4	4	7	8	18
Senegal			1		1
Togo		1			
Tunisia			4	1	5
AMERICA					
Dominican Republic					1

ASIA					
Cambodia				2	
China			1	1	
India					2
Indonesia				1	
Iran		1			
Pakistan	1				
Vietnam		2		1	
EUROPE					
Bosnia-Herzegovina		1			
Great Britain		1			
Germany	1			1	
Italy	4	1	2	2	2
Moldavia				2	
The Netherlands				2	
Poland	1			2	2
Portugal	1		1	2	5
Turkey	1	1	2	2	
Former Yugoslavia		1		2	2
Total	20	25	34	51	82

B/ Successful integration in Sciences Po

1. Particularly involved students

Over the past six years, several PEA program students have had leading responsibilities in the Sciences Po Student Association and the Sports Association. Some of them have even founded new associations. For example, the **Le Relais association** which brings together students of all classes admitted through the various admission channels at Sciences Po was founded in 2004 by two students admitted in the framework of PEAs. A month after its inception, the association had already enabled over one hundred new students at Sciences Po to find a “big brother/sister” among students in the upper classes. In 2005 and 2006, it further reinforced its action by systematically welcoming newly admitted students. It also has set up a mentoring program for students at the Master’s level with senior company managers.

2. Excellent academic performance

PEA program students take the same courses as all other students and naturally pass both oral and written exams under the same conditions. For five years their scores have been fully comparable to those of the other students. Over 9 out of 10 pass directly into the following year. Better still, they aspire to excellence as much as their fellow students: each year several of them are among the best in their class. Out of the 15 students admitted at Sciences Po in 2001, thirteen of them earned their degree in 2006. As proof of their dynamism and recognition for their skills, three of them had been recruited for a long-term contract over a month prior to having passed their final exams. After having taken the same courses as their fellow students and passed the same exams, these

preliminary results suggest that the students recruited via the PEA procedure are entering the job market under the same conditions as any other graduates. They have earned **the right not to be differentiated**.

IV. A FUNDAMENTAL TREND IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. The drop in self-censorship

The program's development has also evolved in qualitative terms. **There was a 38% leap in the number of short-listed candidates for the 2005 session** whereas the number of partner secondary schools merely went from 20 to 23. According to the teachers, this progression corresponds to a deep-seated trend and a significant drop in the tendency to censor oneself. When 10th grade students start the school year, they have already discussed Sciences Po in their families, something that was virtually unimaginable in difficult neighborhoods only six years ago.

2. Orientation: rising ambitions

Nearly all *Académie* inspectors, school principals and teachers have noted a strong progression of applicants to preparatory classes for the *Grandes Ecoles* in schools taking part in the Agreements. According to Michel HERON, a regional pedagogy inspector for the Créteil *Académie*, the program helps secondary school students gain self-confidence. "When they undertake the Sciences Po selection process, the students realize that preparatory classes for the *Grandes Ecoles* are also a possibility for them." This extremely positive dynamic can naturally be seen in **the rise in the number of applicants for admission to the preparatory classes for the *Grandes Ecoles***. For instance, at the Lycée Jean Renoir in Bondy, these applications have increased threefold. In other secondary schools, it has been noted that in the event candidates in the selection process are rejected by Sciences Po, over half of them turn toward a preparatory curriculum to enter the *Grandes Ecoles* and that this proportion is on the rise year after year. For instance, at the Lycée Auguste Blanqui in Saint-Ouen north of Paris, the share of short-listed applicants to Sciences Po who were finally not admitted and who then undertook a preparatory curriculum rose from 50% to 80%, between 2001 and 2005.

3. Building momentum

The pedagogical teams in partner secondary schools have also noticed **a building momentum not only among students involved in the selection procedure but for the others as well**. This momentum also affects the teachers, whose motivation increases, encouraging them to stay longer in their position, whereas secondary schools in difficult areas are known to suffer from a high rate of turnover. More generally, it is the secondary school's image that is improving considerably at the neighborhood and community level. For these various reasons, Michel CAMPA, teacher-coordinator at the Lycée Jean Macé in Vitry-sur-Seine (south of Paris), talks about a **"faster than expected return on investment."** For Henri THEODET, Principal of the Lycée Auguste Blanqui in Saint-Ouen, the agreements have enabled them to "broaden horizons and instill ambitions in students whose only knowledge of Paris stops at the Line 13 'Place de Clichy' metro station" (northern Paris). It is a deep-seated trend with an increased awareness almost across the board of the need and above all the possibility of undertaking and successfully completing a long academic curriculum. Five years ago, students' expectations were limited to an associate's or a vocational degree. Today, two years of college is considered as merely a stepping stone enabling them to pursue higher level education."

4. A culture of success

Philippe Destelle, a teacher-coordinator at the Lycée Jean Renoir in Bondy east of Paris concludes: "In record time, the agreements have managed to **restore the notion or success through hard work** and defeat the culture of failure through the entire school." Taking advantage of synergies between teams of teachers in the secondary schools and Sciences Po, and various actors in voluntary associations and business, four Sciences Po partner secondary schools in Seine-Saint-Denis have undertaken **a large-scale teaching experiment at the 10th grade level. This has involved over 500 students since the start of the 2006 school year.**