

# Return to Schooling Holiday

## The potential impact of school holiday reform

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# Motivation

Last year when visiting a school in Marseille, Emmanuel Macron revived the debate on the school holiday, which he considers too long and believes increases inequalities between students from different financial backgrounds.

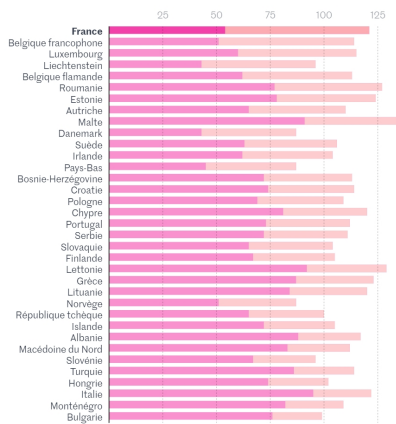
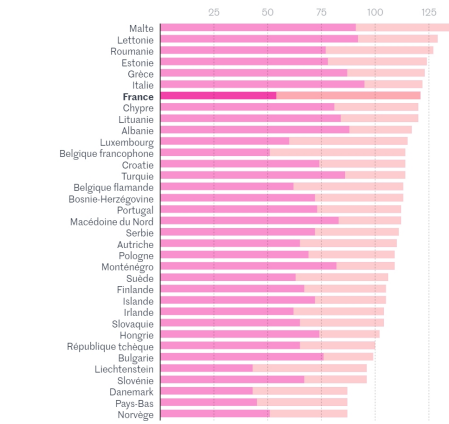
- ▶ What is the right length of school holiday, and what should we do with it?
- ▶ (Long) school holiday
  - cons: summer learning loss (+ crammed school day), increase in social inequalities, working parents.
  - pros: for obvious reasons (who doesn't like holidays?)
- ▶ Potential reform
  - Rearrange the school calendar, e.g., shorten the summer holiday.
  - "*Vacances apprenantes*" initiatives (learning holidays).

## Background: Length of holiday across Europe

The data is from Eurydice, visualized by lemonde.fr<sup>1</sup>

Overall holiday:

Small holiday:



<sup>1</sup>Data not available for Germany, Spain, and Switzerland due to variations between federal states (Germany), autonomous regions (Spain), or cantons (Switzerland).

# Background: Vacances Apprenantes initiatives



Ministère  
Système  
éducatif

Enseignements

Vie  
scolaire

Métiers et ressources  
humaines

Bulletin  
officiel

Accès  
rapide



## QUE SONT LES VACANCES APPRENANTES ?

### — ÉCOLE OUVERTE

École ouverte buissonnière :  
des séjours en zone rurale du  
CP à la terminale

Mon patrimoine à vélo

L'Été du pro : École ouverte  
pour les lycées  
professionnels

## COLOS APPRENANTES

## STAGES DE RÉUSSITE

## ÉCOLE OUVERTE

Le dispositif École ouverte permet de proposer aux élèves un programme équilibré associant renforcement scolaire et activités sportives et culturelles, pendant les vacances scolaires, dans leur école ou leur établissement de scolarisation habituel ou dans un établissement proche.

Ce dispositif répond à trois enjeux essentiels :

- lutter contre le décrochage scolaire en conservant le lien avec l'école pendant la période cruciale des vacances scolaires et en proposant un programme de renforcement scolaire pour les élèves qui en ont besoin ;
- permettre à des enfants qui n'ont pas la possibilité de partir en vacances de bénéficier d'actions éducatives, culturelles, sportives et de plein air ;
- ouvrir la sensibilité des jeunes aux enjeux contemporains du climat et de la biodiversité grâce à des activités de découverte de la nature.



Les directeurs d'école et chefs d'établissement peuvent compléter ce dépliant s'agissant des dates proposées pour le dispositif École ouverte ainsi que du nom ou courriel des personnes à contacter pour l'inscription en accueils de loisirs. Ce dépliant pourra leur être également utile pour enregistrer les demandes des familles intéressées par les deux dispositifs: "École ouverte" et "École ouverte buissonnière".

## Questions and related literature

**Objective:** compare the impact of **modifying the academic calendar** with **learning holiday initiatives**.

- ▶ Performance measure: academic, physical, mental?
- ▶ The difference between before and after holiday or the end of year performance?

**Data:** OECD PISA project across European countries. Survey from the *Vacances apprenantes* program<sup>2</sup>

**Literature:** mostly in education research. In the US, there are Cooper et al. (2003); McMullen and Rouse (2012) on the impact of year-round schooling reform. In the UK, Kromydas et al. (2022); Morgan et al. (2019) studied the impact of summer holiday on inequality, mental health and cognitive abilities.

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<sup>2</sup>which does not exist for the moment.

## Treatment: Length of holiday

### Treatment:

- ▶ The length of school holiday is fixed by the education ministry. Everyone has to comply. The length varies between countries/regions.
- ▶ Policy change from  $D = d$  to a set of  $D = d'$ .

Potential outcome: After  $D$  days of holiday, the performance  $Y_i(D)$ .

Treatment effect parameter:  $ATE(X) = E(Y_i(d') - Y_i(d)|X)$ .

## Treatment: Learning holiday

Since this is not compulsory, there will be the usual issue of selection.<sup>3</sup>

**Treatment:** "Vacances apprenantes" initiatives.

**Potential outcome:**  $Y(1)$  of attending the program.

$$Y(1) = \mu_1(X) + U_1$$

**Choice:**  $D = 1\{\mu_D(X) > U_D\}$ .

**Treatment effect parameter:** MTE (and others)

- ▶  $X$  initial performance, family background etc.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶  $Z/X$  the instrument that affects the choice of attending the program, e.g., distance to the summer school camp.

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<sup>3</sup>To be honest, I am glad that there's selection otherwise I won't be able to relate the proposal to the MTE literature.

<sup>4</sup>The vacances apprenantes program is targeted at children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## History

- ▶ "A legacy of the farm economy"?
- ▶ The rise of urban schools and the need for a break during the hot summer months.
- ▶ A time for leisure, travel, and family bonding.



Thanks!



## References I

- Cooper, H., Valentine, J. C., Charlton, K., and Melson, A. (2003). The effects of modified school calendars on student achievement and on school and community attitudes. *Review of educational research*, 73(1):1–52.
- Kromydas, T., Campbell, M., Chambers, S., Boon, M. H., Pearce, A., Wells, V., and Craig, P. (2022). The effect of school summer holidays on inequalities in children and young people's mental health and cognitive ability in the uk using data from the millennium cohort study. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1):154.
- McMullen, S. C. and Rouse, K. E. (2012). The impact of year-round schooling on academic achievement: Evidence from mandatory school calendar conversions. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 4(4):230–252.
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