

# A French education accredited by the French Ministry of Education curriculum: the pillar and trademark of Rochambeau

*An Interview with François Legros, President of the Board of Trustees*

ROCHAMBEAU: Good morning Mr. Legros, you have been President of the Board of Trustees of Rochambeau for 6 years, could you explain for us what is "homologation"?

François Legros: Of course. "Homologation" is the accreditation given by the Ministry of National Education to French schools that offer a program that conforms to French programs and standards. This accreditation also allows French schools to prepare their students and for the Brevet des Collèges and Baccalauréat exams administered at the end of middle school and high school, respectively.



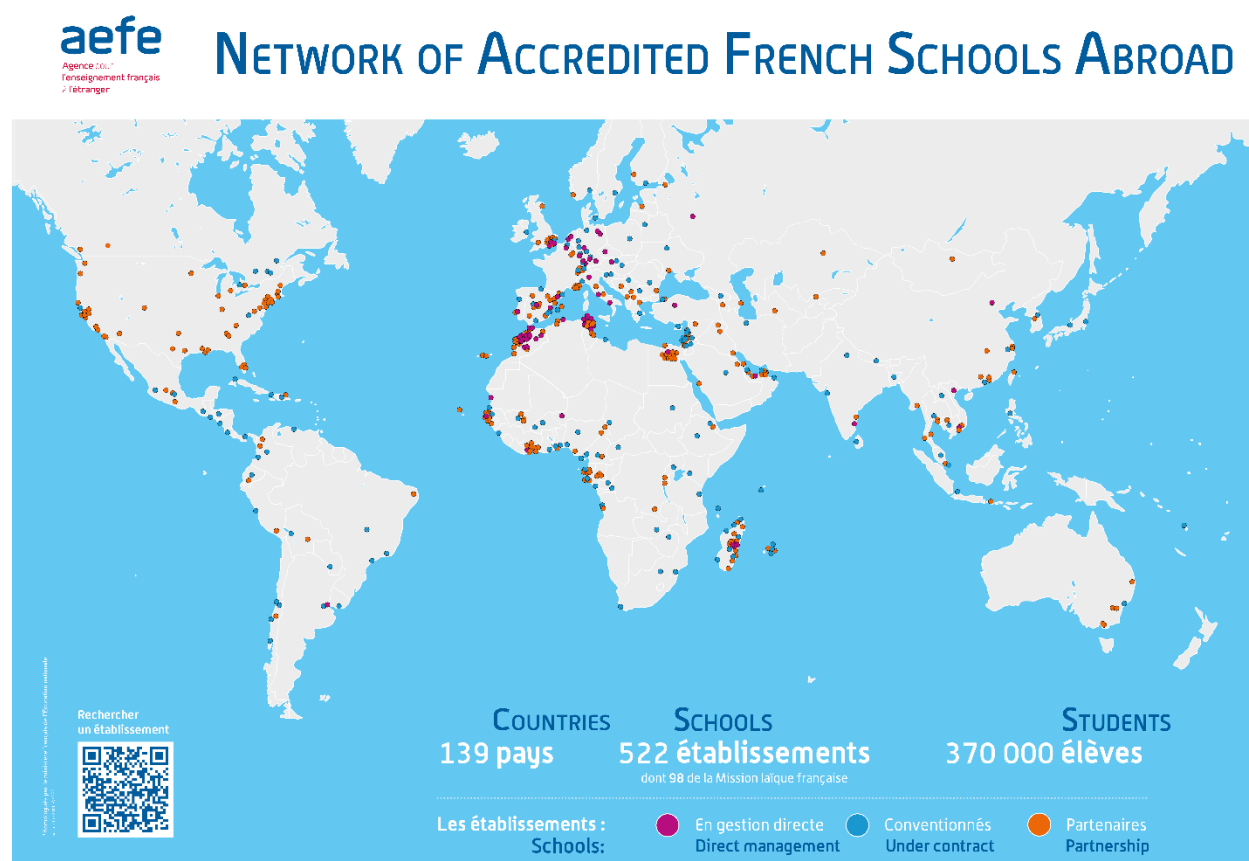
R: How is the accreditation of "homologation" obtained?

FL: Accreditation is obtained after an inspection visit by the Ministry of National Education (MEN). Accreditation is based on meeting the standards outlined in the French curriculum, including the qualifications of teacher, and the quality of teaching. Rochambeau obtained a renewal of its accreditation in 2019.

R: What does the AEFE do in relation to the MEN?

FL: The Agency for French Education Abroad ("AEFE") is one of the two French public agencies that coordinate a network of French educational institutions outside of France

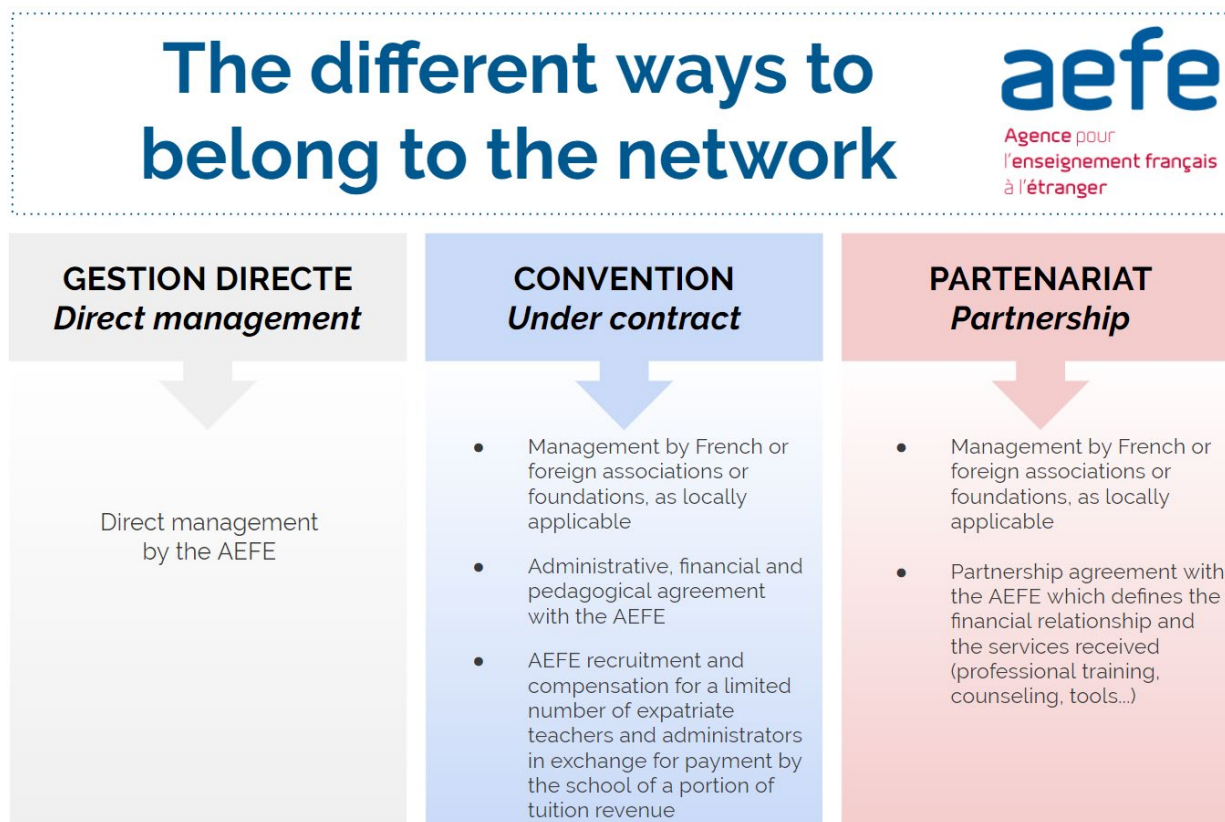
approved by the MEN. There are three types of organizational relationships and management for the 522 schools within the AEFE network around the world. 71 schools are managed directly by the AEFE (they are called "en gestion directe"), 156 schools are under a contractual agreement ("conventionnés"), and 295 are in partnership ("partenaires"). One can therefore be part of the AEFE network in several different ways.



R: What does "conventionnement" and "partenariat" mean?

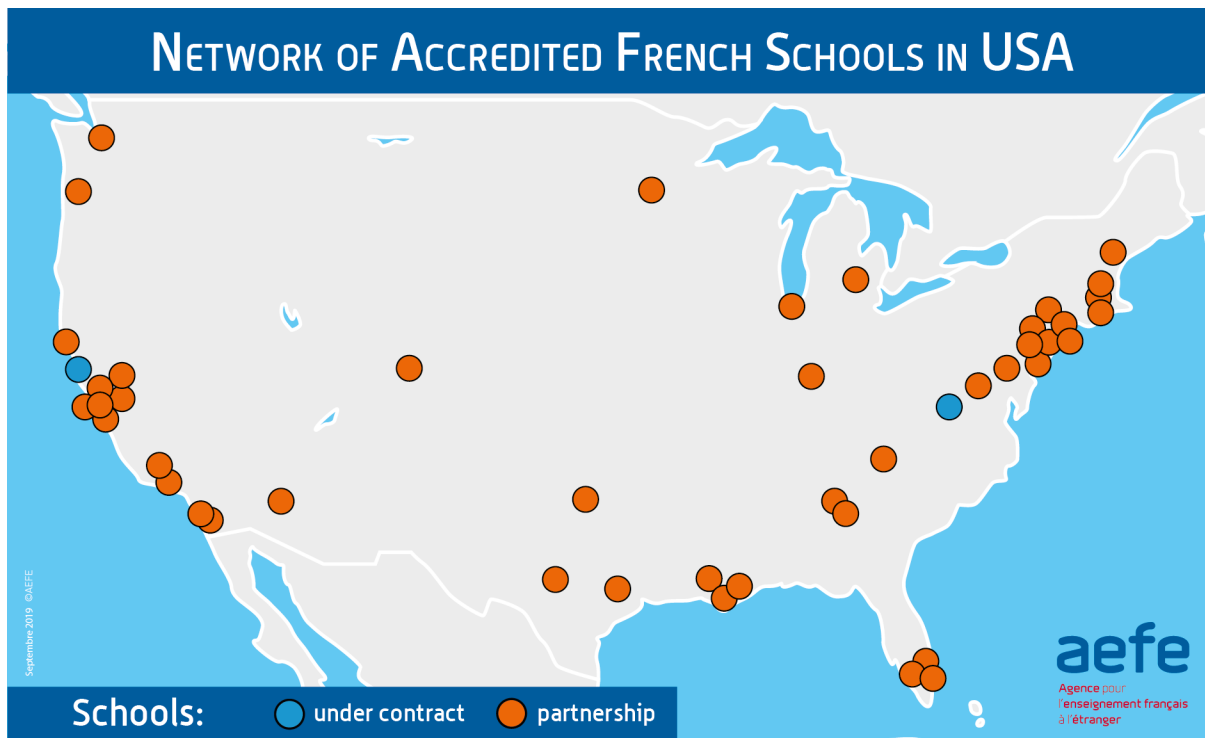
FL: The "conventionnement" and the "partenariat" are two ways of being part of the AEFE network. The conventionnement is a contract for the purchase of services by which a French school obtains from the AEFE a certain number of school administrators (Principal, School Directors) and expatriate teachers in exchange for the payment of a portion of its tuition revenue to the AEFE. The partenariat, or partnership, marks a school's membership in the

AEFE network but does not include an exchange of services. The partnership is less costly for both the schools and the AEFE and gives the schools more autonomy in their management. This is the most common way for schools to belong to the AEFE network.



R: How many French schools in the United States are accredited and what is their status vis-à-vis the AEFE?

FL: There are currently 57 accredited schools in the United States, 11 of which are like Rochambeau in that they offer classes from preschool through high school. Only 2 schools have a contract "conventionnés" with the AEFE: Rochambeau in Washington, DC and La Pérouse in San Francisco. The 55 others are all in partnership, including very prestigious schools such as LFNY in New York, the Lycée Français in Los Angeles, the Lycée Français in Boston and the Lycée Français in Chicago.



R: Do you see differences in the academic results or post-secondary opportunities for students as between those attending schools which are in contract or in partnership?

FL: No, there is no visible difference. The best French schools in the United States, whether they are partnership or conventionnés schools, all have students with the same kind of results on their exams (Brevet des Collèges and Baccalauréat). And looking at the University admissions for our graduates, students from all of these schools are admitted to prestigious North American, French and European universities, including the "classes préparatoires".

R: How do you think French schools in the United States maintain high quality educational standards and achievement for students?

FL: The quality of education provided by a French school in the United States comes primarily from the percentage of teachers from the national education system that the school recruits. In the United States this rate is generally very high, above 80%, which is higher than the overall average for the AEFE network of schools. As Bruno Eldin, who supervises all the French schools in North America for the French Ministry of Education, recently reminded us, the Rochambeau Board of Trustees has made this a major focus of its quality policy, since Rochambeau's rate is over 90% and is the highest in the United States. These recruitment policies are the responsibility of the schools themselves and have nothing to do with the status of conventionné or partnership of the AEFE network. Rochambeau has put in place a series of processes to measure and ensure the highest standards of education for our students.

**90%**  
of Rochambeau teachers  
are from the national  
education system

R: Since the announcement of Mr. Leroy-Lusson's departure, there have been rumors that Rochambeau would like to leave the AEFE network. Can you tell us more about this?

FL: The Board of Trustees has made it clear to the AEFE that Rochambeau does not wish to cancel its conventionnement contract, let alone depart from the AEFE network. This is similar to the last time that a Proviseur stayed for only one year at Rochambeau, about 10 years ago. Then as now, the school was committed to maintaining its conventionnement relationship with the AEFE.

R: What is the purpose of the current discussions with the AEFE?

FL: The heart of the discussions we are having with the AEFE is to determine whether Rochambeau or the AEFE will recruit the next Proviseur for our school. The Director of the

AEFE and I are committed to look at things as objectively as possible and to finding the best solution so that Rochambeau, within the AEFE network, can continue to offer the pedagogical excellence that is our hallmark. The success of Rochambeau and our students is our highest priority - a goal shared by the Director of the AEFE and the Board of Trustees of Rochambeau. Following these discussions, a decision will be reached together, likely in the second half of March.

R: What impact could this decision have on the quality of teaching and on our students?

FL: Objectively none. The quality of teaching offered by Rochambeau will remain the same; teacher recruitment will continue to be done in the same way, our school's accreditation and curriculum will not change, our students will continue to earn excellent results on the Brevet des collèges and Baccalaureate exams, and they will continue to be admitted to prestigious North American, European, and French Universities, including "classes préparatoires", on the basis of their merits.

R: How will you keep members of our community informed of the progress of these discussions?

FL: The Board of Trustees, after having met with representatives of parents, teachers, administrative staff and students, determined it was important to create a special committee to accompany the discussions with the AEFE. This committee will include two members elected from each of the school councils and representative bodies, with parity between men and women and representing the diversity of our community, including our 80+ nationalities. As the discussions progress this committee will objectively analyze the positive and negative aspects of each option. All opinions will be recorded in minutes that will be given to the members of the Board of Trustees before a final decision is reached with the AEFE.

R: Which solution do you think is better?

FL: At this stage, I'm really quite open to either of the two options (recruitment of the Proviseur by the AEFÉ or recruitment by Rochambeau). Neither option would impact our accreditation nor would our students face any challenge in preparing for or succeeding in their Brevet des Collèges and the Baccalauréat exams. As I said before, the Director of the AEFÉ and the Board of Trustees have a common goal which is to find the best solution for Rochambeau so that the quality of the education we offer continues to improve. We also wish to find a solution that is sustainable in the long-term and that avoids the risks associated with rapid turnover in Rochambeau's management team.



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