

France wants to fix 'catastrophic' math scores, conquer fear

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France's government is worried about how many of its schoolchildren consider themselves "stupid at math."

The education minister released a report Monday commissioned by renowned mathematician and legislator Cedric Villani describing "catastrophic" scores and recommending 21 steps to turn things around.

France's [math scores](#) have been sinking on international rankings for most of this century. The report warns that the current system is leading to "a lasting loss of self-esteem" that continues into adulthood, and greater inequality between those strong in [math](#) and the rest.

The [report](#) urges better math training for primary school teachers, most of whom come from literary or social studies backgrounds. It recommends more hands-on activities, efforts to teach children early to calculate in their heads, and support for high-schoolers struggling with abstract math.

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