



Governing Board Training Manual

October 2018



Composition and Operation of the Governing Board

On July 1, 1998, linguistic school boards were formed as part of a wide reform of the educational system in Quebec.

Governing boards are a component of the educational reform. They were created to decentralize powers so that they are concentrated at the school level.

A governing board is a group of people, either elected or appointed who are genuinely interested in education. Every member has the same goal, which is to promote student success.

The governing board has an important role to play in interpreting and achieving school success through the school's educational project, and its MESA Plan.

Composition

The composition of the governing board is determined by the school board (Section 43).

The total number of seats for staff representatives **must be equal** to those for parent representatives (Section 43).

Governing boards must be composed of no more than 20 members including:

- A At least 4 parents
- B At least 4 school staff members
 - At least 2 must be teachers
 - At least 1 non teaching professional or a teacher as a substitute
 - At least 1 support staff or a teacher as a substitute
 - 1 daycare representative (elementary level)
 - 2 students (high school level)
- C 2 community representatives (non-voting member) (Section 42)
The parent members (A) must be equal to the staff members (B)

Term of Office

The term of office for parent representatives is **two years**; the term for representatives from other groups is **one year** (Section 54).

- ❖ Requests for a change in composition:
 - a. must be made in writing to the Board;
 - b. must include resolutions from the governing board and staff;
 - c. must be approved by the Council of Commissioners;
 - d. must be made prior to May to come into effect the following year.

Election of Governing Board Members

ALL representatives must be elected by September 30th

- ❖ The general assembly of parents:
 - elects parent representatives to the governing board (Section 47);
 - elects a delegate and an alternate to the parents committee (Section 47);
 - decides on the formation of a PPO, decides on the number of members and how to elect them (Section 96).

- ❖ Staff members hold meetings in September to elect their representatives (Sections 48, 49, 50).
- ❖ Students are appointed by the students' council or the association representing the students; if they do not exist, students meet in September to elect their representatives with the principal presiding over the elections (Section 51).
- ❖ The governing board chooses whether or not they want to have community representatives. The community representatives should not be staff members of the school. It is recommended that community representatives not be parents of the school but that the governing board look to the people from the community organizations first (i.e. police, church, city hall, etc.).
- ❖ The principal acts as the resource person.
- ❖ They ensure that the proposals are prepared and submitted to the governing board and that the governing board is provided with all necessary information before making decisions.
- ❖ The principal by law is responsible for the minutes of the governing board ensuring that the minutes are duly completed, signed and stored safe (Section 69).

Substitution

A governing board member **can** be temporarily replaced by a substitute (Sections 54-55).

- ❖ Any member who is unable to take part in a governing board meeting may be replaced by a substitute member (Section 51.1).

Section 51.1 Any meeting called in accordance with sections 47 to 50 may elect substitute members to the governing board to replace the members who are unable to take part in a governing board meeting. Likewise, substitute members may be appointed or elected during the process carried out in accordance with section 51. The number of substitute members cannot be greater than the number of governing board members.

When Does the Governing Board Replace a Member?

- ❖ A member is replaced only when there is a vacancy created by a resignation or disqualification.
- ❖ A parents' representative whose child no longer attends the school may remain a member of the governing board until the next meeting held pursuant to section 47 (general assembly).
- ❖ A vacancy resulting from the departure of a parents' representative shall be filled, for the unexpired portion of the representative's term, by a parent designated by the other parents' representatives on the governing board.
- ❖ A vacancy resulting from the departure or disqualification of any other member of the governing board is filled, for the unexpired portion of the term, according to the mode of appointment prescribed for the member to be replaced (Section 55).

Election of the Chairperson

- ❖ *The Chairperson is elected at the first meeting of the governing board by **all** the **voting members**.*
- ❖ Presides over meetings of the governing board (Section 59).
- ❖ Has the deciding or casting vote in the event of a tie (Section 63).
- ❖ *The governing board **does not elect a vice-chair**.*

Section 60 *If the chair is absent or unable to act, the governing board shall designate a person from among the members who are eligible for the office of chair to exercise the functions and powers of the chair.*

What Constitutes a Good Chair

- ❖ Is well prepared for the meeting
- ❖ Presides over the meeting (starts and ends on time)
- ❖ Respects the rules of internal procedure
- ❖ Keeps a speakers list
- ❖ Keeps order and ensures speakers remain on topic
- ❖ Listens attentively
- ❖ Encourages all members to speak and explain their views
- ❖ Clarifies intervention and summarizes the various opinions
- ❖ Speaks no more than is necessary but helps to clarify and gives information
- ❖ Ensures that discussions respect the mandate of the governing board

Role of the Treasurer

- ❖ Gives updates on the allocation of the annual operating budget (\$250) given to the governing board from the school board.

Section 66

The governing board shall adopt and oversee the administration of its annual operating budget and render an account thereof to the school board.

The budget must maintain a balance between expenditures and the financial resources allocated to the governing board by the school board, on the other.

Commissioners

Commissioners **when carrying out a mandate by the council of commissioners** can take part in meetings, but **are not entitled to vote** (Section 45).

- ❖ Commissioners elected or appointed pursuant to the Act respecting school elections (chapter E-2.3) cannot be members of the governing board of a school under the authority of the school board.
- ❖ However, when carrying out a mandate under paragraph 4 of Section 176.1 (carrying out any mandate entrusted to them by the council of commissioners, on a proposal by the chair, for the purpose of providing information to the other council members on any specific matter), a commissioner may take part in meetings of the governing board but is not entitled to vote (Section 45).

School commissioners play a key role:

- ❖ Elected by the citizens.
- ❖ They determine the orientations of the school board, taking into consideration the interests of the students, parents and electors of their community.

- ❖ Since the school board is an autonomous local government, the commissioners, who together make up the council of commissioners, exercise responsibilities comparable to those of municipal councilors.
- ❖ Since 2014, the chairs of school boards are elected by universal suffrage, meaning that the electors choose the person who will chair their local school board.

The commissioner decides on the following matters:

- the orientations and priorities of the school board;
 - educational and administrative policies;
 - the school board's commitment to success plan;
 - the use of schools and training centres under the school board's jurisdiction;
 - the equitable distribution of human, material and financial resources among the schools and training centres;
 - the school transportation policy (including fees and walking distances);
 - summer courses offered and related fees;
 - awarding of professional service contracts (eg. in architecture or engineering) or hygiene and sanitation service contracts;
 - the budget orientations and expenses to be authorized;
 - the Policy on School Daycare Services;
 - affiliation with national or international organizations (e.g. International Baccalaureate) or withdrawal from these organizations;
 - fees for renting out rooms or space to municipal or community organizations;
 - social projects to prevent students from dropping out or to eliminate violence and bullying.
- ❖ The council of commissioners usually meets once a month. Since the elected officials represent their community, they must take the time to become familiar with the issues that concern them and to inform parents, electors, the governing boards and the community as a whole of the decisions taken.
 - ❖ The commissioners' remuneration is determined by the council of commissioners and varies according to the number of students in the school board. The government establishes benchmarks and decrees the maximum amount that may be paid. The basic remuneration of a commissioner may range from \$3,000 to \$5,000 in the case of school boards with fewer than 50 000 students. It may be over \$11,000 in the case of a school board with 50,000 or more students.

Observers

- ❖ Do not take part in governing board meetings
- ❖ Are given an opportunity to ask questions addressed to the chair during question period
- ❖ Copies of the agenda should be made available to observers
- ❖ Governing board meetings are open to the public, however it is recommended that the meeting be closed to the public (in camera) if a matter being discussed could cause injury to a person (Section 68)

Quorum

A majority of the members of the governing board, who are in office, including **at least half the parents**, is a quorum of the governing board (Section 61).

Example

A governing board consists of 13 members:

- 6 parents
- 4 teachers
- 1 member of the support staff
- 1 daycare worker
- 1 community representative (non voting members)

A quorum consists of 7 members:

- 3 parents (half)
- 1 teachers
- 1 daycare worker
- 1 community representative (non voting members)

Governing Board Decisions

The decisions of the governing board are made by a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote (Section 63).

- ❖ A majority of members including half the parents.
- ❖ Abstentions do not count.
- ❖ Community representatives are non-voting members.
- ❖ Decisions are made in public and recorded in the minutes.

Rules of Internal Management

The governing board shall establish rules for its internal management.

- ❖ The rules should reflect the needs of the governing board.
- ❖ Should be reviewed annually.
- ❖ The internal management rules shall provide for at least five meetings every school year.
- ❖ The governing board shall fix the date, time and place of its meetings, and inform the parents and the members of the school staff (Section 67).

Rules for questions from the public must be determined by members of the governing board and should be included in the rules of internal management.

- ❖ A public question period is included on the agenda at the beginning and/or end of the meeting.
- ❖ Questions from the public are addressed at question period on the agenda and are directed to the chair.
- ❖ Questions do not have to be answered right away. You can come back with an answer at the following meeting.

The Internal Rules of Management may Include the Following:

- ❖ The procedures for calling regular and special meetings
 - Number of days required to send notice of meetings
 - Who sends the notice (e.g.: chair, principal, etc. ...)
 - By which means (e.g.: mail, e-mail ...)
 - What should be sent (notice, agenda, documentation ...)

- ❖ The procedural rules for the meeting
 - Location, schedule and duration of meeting, discussion process
 - How to bring a proposal forward
 - Conduct of the members
- ❖ Agenda
 - Who is responsible for drafting and distributing the agenda, content: priorities in the choice of items
 - Time allocation and nature of the discussion should be indicated beside each item
- ❖ Minutes
 - Who will record the minutes
 - Who is responsible for drafting and distributing them, content, who should receive the minutes (other than the members of the governing board)
- ❖ The principles and procedures for the management of the annual operating budget that belongs to the governing board (allocation of \$250 from the school board)

Following approval, the minutes must be signed by the chairperson and countersigned by the principal or the person appointed by the principal. The minutes must be kept by the principal or a person specially designated by the principal (Section 69). The minutes must be kept in a register and they are open to the public.

Minutes

What do they include:

- ❖ Date, time, and location of the meeting
- ❖ Names of the members present
- ❖ Names of members who sent regrets or are absent
- ❖ Time the meeting was called to order
- ❖ Adoption of the agenda
- ❖ Adoption of the previous meeting minutes (with modifications)
- ❖ Corrections should not change the sense of what was recorded but should clarify any factual or clerical mistake
- ❖ Exact wording of a motion with the vote
- ❖ Brief summary of items discussed
- ❖ Items that have tabled or deferred
- ❖ Time of adjournment

Role of the Governing Board

“Governance” and “Management”

- ❖ Governing is setting goals.
- ❖ Governing boards govern; they do not manage.
- ❖ Managing is taking action to ensure that these goals are met and ensuring that the decisions of the governing board are implemented.
- ❖ School administrators manage and serve as resources to help guide the governing board in setting goals.
- ❖ Governing boards determine what the school should achieve through the educational project.

Conduct

- ❖ Members of the governing board must act within the scope of the functions and powers conferred on them, and exercise the care, prudence and diligence that a reasonable person would exercise in similar circumstances.
- ❖ They must also act with honesty and loyalty and in the interest of the school, the students, the parents, the school staff and the community.

Conflict of Interest

- ❖ A governing board member who has a direct or indirect interest in an enterprise that puts that member in conflict of interest with the school must disclose the interest in writing to the principal.
- ❖ In such a case, the member should withdraw from the meeting while the issue is being discussed and voted on (Section 70).
- ❖ Having a conflict of interest is not prohibited, but not declaring it could lead to forfeiture of office.

Role of the Governing Board

- ❖ The Education Act defines the powers and responsibilities between the governing board and principal.
- ❖ The governing board powers are defined in Sections 74-95.
- ❖ The principal's powers are defined in Sections 96.12-96.26.
- ❖ The governing board is the focal point for decisions that affect the life of the school.
- ❖ The governing board members should consult the relevant policies and by-laws on the EMSB website.
- ❖ It determines what the school should achieve through the educational project.
- ❖ It seeks collaboration of persons having an interest in the school.
- ❖ It encourages communication and dialogue between all parties in order to achieve students success.

Section 74

The governing board shall analyze the situation prevailing at the school, principally the needs of the students, the challenges tied to student success and the characteristics and expectations of the community served by the school. Based on the analysis and taking into account the commitment-to-success plan of the school board, the governing board shall adopt the school's educational project, oversee the project's implementation and evaluate the project at the intervals specified in it.

Each of these stages shall be carried out through concerted action between the various participants having an interest in the school and in student success. To that end, the governing board shall encourage the collaboration of students, parents, teachers, other school staff members, and community and school board representatives.

Collaboration

- ❖ In exercising such functions, the governing board shall seek the collaboration of persons having an interest in the school.

Concerted Action

- ❖ To that end, the governing board shall encourage the communication of information, dialogue and concerted action between students, parents, the principal, teachers and other school staff members and community representatives, and their collaboration in helping students to achieve success.

The governing board has to be consulted by the school board and the principal on certain issues related to the operation of the school.

The governing board may also take the initiative to advise the school board.

Section 78

The governing board shall advise the school board concerning:

- (1) any matter the school board is required to submit to the governing board;
 - (2) any matter likely to facilitate the operation of the school;
 - (3) any matter likely to improve the organization of the services provided by the school board.
- ❖ The principal is the academic and administrative director of the school and shall see to the implementation of the decisions of the governing board and of the other provisions governing the school.
 - ❖ School administrators are the academic and administrative directors of the school; they ensure that the decisions of the governing board are implemented.
 - ❖ School administrators ensure that the objectives of the educational project are achieved; they coordinate the analysis of the school situation and the work related to the educational project.

Section 96.12

The principal, under the authority of the director general of the school board, shall ensure that educational services provided at the school meet the proper standards of quality.

Section 96.13.1

The principal shall assist the governing board in the exercise of its functions and powers and, for that purpose, the principal shall:

- (1) coordinate the analysis of the situation prevailing at the school and the development, implementation and periodical evaluation of the school's educational project.

Section 96.14

The principal shall see to the implementation and periodical evaluation of the education plan and inform the student's parents on a regular basis.

Different Types of Decision Making Taken by the Governing Board

Decision

The governing board has certain responsibilities (obligations) that it should assume and on which it should make a decision.

Adoption

The governing board has the power to change, adapt, add, or remove one or more elements of a proposal submitted by the principal.

Approval

The governing board accepts or rejects the proposal without the possibility of making changes (the power to say *yes* or *no*). If rejected, a new proposal should be submitted to the governing board for approval before its implementation.

Due to the fact that the proposals to be approved are connected to the responsibilities attributed to the school staff, the nature of this power is more limited (restrictive) than the power of adoption.

Before a proposal of this nature is presented to the governing board, the principal has an obligation to develop the proposal with the participation of the staff.

Information

The governing board receives information after a decision is made by the principal with no possibility to reconsider the decision.

Consultation

The governing board provides an opinion on any matter with the possibility of influencing the final decision.

Subjects Outside the Mandate of the Governing Board (not exhaustive)

- ❖ Personnel management (hiring, assignment of workload, choice of supply teachers, discussion about members of staff)
- ❖ The situation of a particular student
- ❖ Teaching methods: choice of approaches, activities and types of homework to achieve the objectives of the programs
- ❖ The choice of report card and exams
- ❖ Class size and organization
- ❖ The school calendar
- ❖ Professional development of the staff

(see attached table for examples)

Conclusion

- ❖ Providing guidance and positive influence is the governing board's principal function.
- ❖ The governing board should promote the exchange of information and expertise in order to foster positive relationships.
- ❖ Teamwork is the key to a successful governing board.

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Each of these stages shall be carried out through concerted action between the various participants having an interest in the school and in student success. To that end, the governing board shall encourage the collaboration of students, parents, teachers, other school staff members, and community and school board representatives.

Example of a GOVERNING BOARD Action Plan Suggested Topics

September	<p>Final meeting for previous governing board to approve annual report and submit to the school board (if not completed in June) (Section 82)</p> <p>Call general assembly of parents to elect members (Section 47)</p> <p>Establishment of the meeting dates or approval of the calendar of meetings</p>
October	<p>First meeting of new governing board</p> <p>Election of the chairperson and the secretary (Section 56)</p> <p>Review of Rules of Internal Management</p> <p>Appoint community reps (Section 42.5)</p> <p>Adoption of the governing board's annual operating budget (Section 66)</p>
November	<p>Follow-up on the annual school budget (Section 95)</p> <p>Review of the educational project and MESA (Section 75)</p> <p>Inform the community on the educational project (Section 83)</p>
December	<p>Review rules of conduct and safety measures (Section 76)</p> <p>Budget building consultation begins (Section 96.22)</p>
January	<p>Approve implementation of Basic School Regulation (Section 82)</p> <p>Approval of time allocation for compulsory and elective subjects (Section 86)</p>
February	<p>Criteria for the selection of the school principal (Section 79)</p> <p>Follow-up on the annual school budget</p>
March	<p>Consultation on textbooks and instructional materials for the following year (if necessary) (Section 84)</p> <p>Review the governing board composition and request change (if necessary) (Section 43)</p>
April	<p>Major school changes begins (if applicable) (Section 212)</p>
May	<p>Approval of the programming of educational activities for the following year (field trips, etc.)</p> <p>Adopt proposed school budget in preparation for next year and submit to the Board (Section 95)</p> <p>Assessment of the implementation of the Management & Educational Success Agreement (MESA)</p> <p>Approval of the rules of conduct and safety measures for the following year proposed by the principal (Section 76)</p>
June	<p>Prepare and adopt the governing board end-of-year financial report (Section 82)</p> <p>Prepare and adopt the governing board annual report (Section 82)</p>

SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

	GOVERNING BOARD	PRINCIPAL	STAFF MEMBERS	SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL TERMS				
Educational project	Adopts, oversees the implementation of and evaluates (s. 74) Informs the community (s. 83)	Coordinates the development, implementation and periodical evaluation (s. 96.13)	Participate (s. 74)	Facilitates its accomplishment (s. 218)
Success plan	Approves (s. 75) Informs the community (s. 83)	Coordinates the development, implementation and periodical evaluation (s. 96.13)	Participate (s. 74)	Facilitates its accomplishment (s. 218)
Management & Educational Success Agreement (MESA)	Approves	Coordinates the development, implementation (s. 209.2)		Coordinates the development, implementation (s. 209.2)
Rules of conduct and safety measures	Approves (s. 76)	Ensures that they are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (ss. 75 and 76)	Participate (s. 77)	
Governing board annual report	Prepares, adopts and transmits a copy to the school board (s. 82)			Prepares a report on the educational and cultural activities of its schools (s. 220)
Services provided by the school	Informs the community and reports on their level of quality (s. 83)			
Amendment or revocation of the deed of establishment	Is consulted (s. 79)			Consults & decides (ss. 40 & 217)
Selection criteria for the appointment of the principal	Is consulted (s. 79)			Consults & decides (ss. 79 & 96.8)
Matters pertaining to the proper operation of the school or to the improved organization of the service provided by the school board	Advises the school board (s. 78)			
Principles for determining the cost of the documents	Establishes (s. 77.1)	Ensures that they are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (s. 77.1)		
List of objects required by students	Approves (s. 77.1)	Ensures that they are prepared (s. 96.13)		
Governing board parents may consult parents of children in the school on any matter relating to Educational Services	May consult (s. 89.1)			
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES				
Approach proposed for the implementation of the basic school regulation	Approves (s. 84)	Ensures that proposals are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (s. 84)	Participate (s. 89)	Ensures that the basic school regulation is implemented (s. 222)
Overall approach in terms of enrichment and adaptation of programs	Approves (s. 85)	Ensures proposals are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (s. 85)	Participate (s. 89)	Ensures that the programs are implemented (s. 222.1)
Time allocation for each subject	Approves (s. 86)	Ensures proposals are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (s. 85)	Participate (s. 89)	
Local programs of study	Is informed	Approves (s. 96.15)	Propose (s. 96.15)	
Criteria for the introduction of new instructional material	Is informed	Approves (s. 96.15)	Propose (s. 96.15)	
Instructional material	Is consulted	Consults the governing board and approves (s. 96.15)	Propose (s. 96.15)	Ensures that only the approved textbooks and instructional materials are used by the school (s. 230)
Standards and procedures for evaluation	Is informed	Approves (s. 96.15)	Propose (s. 96.15)	Ensures that each school evaluates student achievement and administers the examinations imposed by the Minister (s. 231) May impose internal exams (s. 231)
Rules governing the placement of students and their promotion from elementary to secondary and from cycle 1 to cycle 2 of secondary	Is informed	Approves (s. 96.15)	Propose (s. 96.15)	Establishes rules governing promotion from elementary school to secondary school and from the 1st cycle to the 2nd cycle of the secondary level (s. 233)

SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD FUNCTIONS AND POWERS				
	GOVERNING BOARD	PRINCIPAL	STAFF MEMBERS	SCHOOL BOARD
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (cont'd)				
Programming of educational activities which entail changes in the students' regular time of arrival and departure or which require the students to leave school premises	Approves (s. 87)	Ensures that proposals are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (s. 87)	Participate (s. 89)	
Implementation of the student services and special educational services programs	Approves (s. 88)	Ensures that proposals are prepared (s. 96.13) Proposes (s. 88)	Participate (s. 89)	Establishes the programs (s. 224)
Student enrollment criteria	Is informed (s. 239)			Sends to governing board 15 days before the beginning of the enrollment period (s. 239)
MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES				
Use of the premises	Approves (s. 93)	Proposes (s. 93)		Authorizes if terms of agreement exceeds one year (s. 93)
Gifts and contributions	May solicit and receive a gift or contribution and supervises the management of this fund (s. 94)			Creates a designated fund, keeps separate books and accounts (s. 94)
School's annual budget	Adopts (s. 95)	Prepares (s. 96.24)		Allocates resources among the school (s. 275) Approves the school's budget (s. 276)
Requirements of the school as regards goods and services, and premises	Is consulted (s. 96.22)	Consults with the governing board and informs the school board of the requirements (s.		
Establish objectives and principals governing revenue distribution	Is consulted (s. 275)			
OTHERS				
Extracurricular service	May organize (s. 90) May conclude a contract after having sent a draft of the contract to the school board (s. 91)			May indicate its disagreement (s. 91)
Noon hour supervision	Agrees with the school board on the manner in which supervision is ensured (s. 292)			Ensures noon hour supervision after having agreed upon the manner with the governing board and on such financial conditions as it may determine (s. 292)
School childcare services	May request (s. 256)			Must provide childcare (s. 256)
Establish procedures for examining complaints and before appointing a student ombudsman	Is consulted (s. 220.2)			