

TRANSLATION

October 8, 2020

TO ALL PARTNERS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Clearly, you are already aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a variety of new challenges in daily life, on a human level as well as on a logistic and pedagogical one. This has led us to review our procedures in order to facilitate and reduce the workload of school staff. After having implemented measures to reduce bureaucracy and hire additional personnel, we are announcing a modification to the *Basic School Regulation* today that will allow more time for learning, which fosters educational success for students in elementary and secondary school. Since the return to school, we have been listening to our partners in the school system. The measure announced today is the direct result of close collaboration with all education stakeholders.

The modification to the *Basic School Regulation* that was adopted on October 7 includes several measures. For this year only, two report cards will be sent to parents instead of three. The first report card will be produced no later than January 22 and the second, no later than July 10. On an exceptional basis, the report card normally produced on November 20 will not be issued, the dates for the end of terms have been modified, and each of the two terms will have a weighting of 50%.

These changes demonstrate our full confidence in teachers, as we are trusting in their expertise and professional judgement. By removing the November report card, our aim is to reduce the amount of pressure on teachers and free up teaching hours to provide more support to students.

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Initial communication

The report card is an important tool for communication with parents. It is important that, despite the exceptional elimination of the fall evaluation, measures be put in place to allow parents to become aware of their child's progress. Therefore, teachers are required to communicate with parents, in writing, no later than November 20. This communication may include a summary of the learning accomplished by their child since the start of the year, the child's progress, the child's behaviour and the support that can be provided based on the challenges the child is facing.

Parent-teacher meetings

Additionally, the parent-teacher interviews that are normally held in November when the first report card is distributed have an even greater importance this year. Teachers are therefore asked to make themselves available to meet with all parents who are interested in doing so. This will complement the written communication with a more personal and reassuring interaction. These meetings may take various forms, depending on the health measures in effect: over the phone or using videoconferencing, or in person if the situation permits.

The goal is to allow productive discussion and feedback to take place, in order to encourage continued learning and strengthen the collaboration between the school and families. From that perspective, we also recommend that teachers plan for a period of availability in April (between the two report cards) to hold additional parent-teacher meetings.

January report card

The first formal report card, which will be sent in January 2021, must be thorough in order to provide parents with relevant information. The report card must therefore include results for each subject and competency. Comments must be provided on one of the four additional competencies (exercises critical judgment, organizes his or her work, communicates effectively, and works in a team) in both terms.

In addition to reducing the number of report cards, we acknowledge the need expressed by our partners in the school network regarding the ministerial examinations. Accordingly, a modification has been made to reduce the weighting of the examinations written in Elementary and in Secondary Cycle One. These examinations, which will also be reduced in length, will count for 10% of a student's final result this year, instead of 20%.

More specific information regarding the content of the report card and the form that compulsory examinations for Elementary and Secondary Cycle One students will take this year will be sent to you shortly. School teams are also asked to reflect on the locally administered evaluations carried out with their students, with the goal of demonstrating greater flexibility in this exceptional year in order to reduce the pressure on students and school staff by limiting the number of in-school evaluations.

In closing, I would once again like to thank all school staff for their professionalism, exceptional work and impressive ability to adapt. Thanks to teachers, professionals, administrative staff and administrators in the network, we can continue to offer students the best chances for success.

Yours truly,

[Original signed by]

Jean-François Roberge
Minister of Education