



English Parents' Committee Association



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GUIDES FOR PARENT GOVERNANCE & INVOLVEMENT

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Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA). In addition to this vital role in the Quebec educational sector, Katherine has spent most of her life working alongside start-ups in various verticals. For 10 years, she was responsible for the development of entrepreneurial initiatives and projects under the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, a Youth Secretariat program of the government of Quebec. Katherine is Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early stage VC fund that has been around for 22 yrs, and is currently the vice-president of PME MTL Centre-Ouest and on the investment committees of PME MTL Centre and PME MTL Centre-Ouest. Katherine has also authored and co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education and has served on the Boards of numerous corporations.

President's message

A new school year - A new opportunity for involvement.

Dear Parents,

As we embark on a new school year, we are filled with anticipation, optimism, and a fresh enthusiasm to shape the educational experience for our children.

The beginning of this academic year presents us with a chance to enhance our connections as a community of compassionate and involved parents. Our Association serves as a vital link between home and school, working tirelessly to promote the well-being and academic achievement of our children. Together, we can work hand in hand with educators, administrators, and policymakers to ensure that our schools remain safe, nurturing spaces where children can grow, learn, and flourish.

Let's approach challenges with a sense of determination and resilience, promote communication, and cultivate a strong partnership between parents and teachers. This will create an environment where concerns can be shared, and victories can be celebrated. Together, we can collaborate to improve the quality of education by supporting initiatives that foster creativity, critical thinking, and a global perspective. I strongly encourage you to actively participate in the various events and governance activities that your schools have to offer. In this special issue, we have gathered all the guides we have created, as well as those created by our partners in government and elsewhere, to equip you with the necessary information to actively engage in the educational system.

As we begin this thrilling journey together, it is important to remember that our combined efforts have the potential to create a lasting impact on the lives of our children and the educational landscape of our province. We greatly value your involvement, passion, and dedication, as they are crucial to our collective mission of delivering the highest quality education to the next generation.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all parents and guardians, both new and returning. We are excited to embrace the opportunities and challenges that the new school year will bring. Cheers to a year brimming with growth, learning, and unforgettable moments for our children. Thank you, and let's strive to make this school year truly exceptional!

School Annual General Assembly (AGA)

As children return to classes, you will soon be receiving, if you have not already, an email from your principal notifying you about the Annual General Assembly (AGA) at your school. **We urge you to attend.**



Whether this all-important meeting is managed by the Chairperson of your Governing Board or rolled into the welcome assembly by your school principal, this is the moment for parent participation that can really make the difference in your child's education.

At these Annual General Assemblies, members of your Governing Board will be elected, as will delegates to your respective Parents' Committees. This is the gateway to profound involvement in educational governance and gives you a front-row seat and a voice in decision-making at your child's school.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community and what drives and supports so much student success. Your time and input are valuable and valued and, as the official voice of parents of students in Quebec's English public system, **EPCA implores you to get involved.**

We cannot say this any more emphatically: **Parents have power in their respective schools**, they need only exercise it. If we are to represent you to the government and our education partners, we need you to do so on behalf of your community.

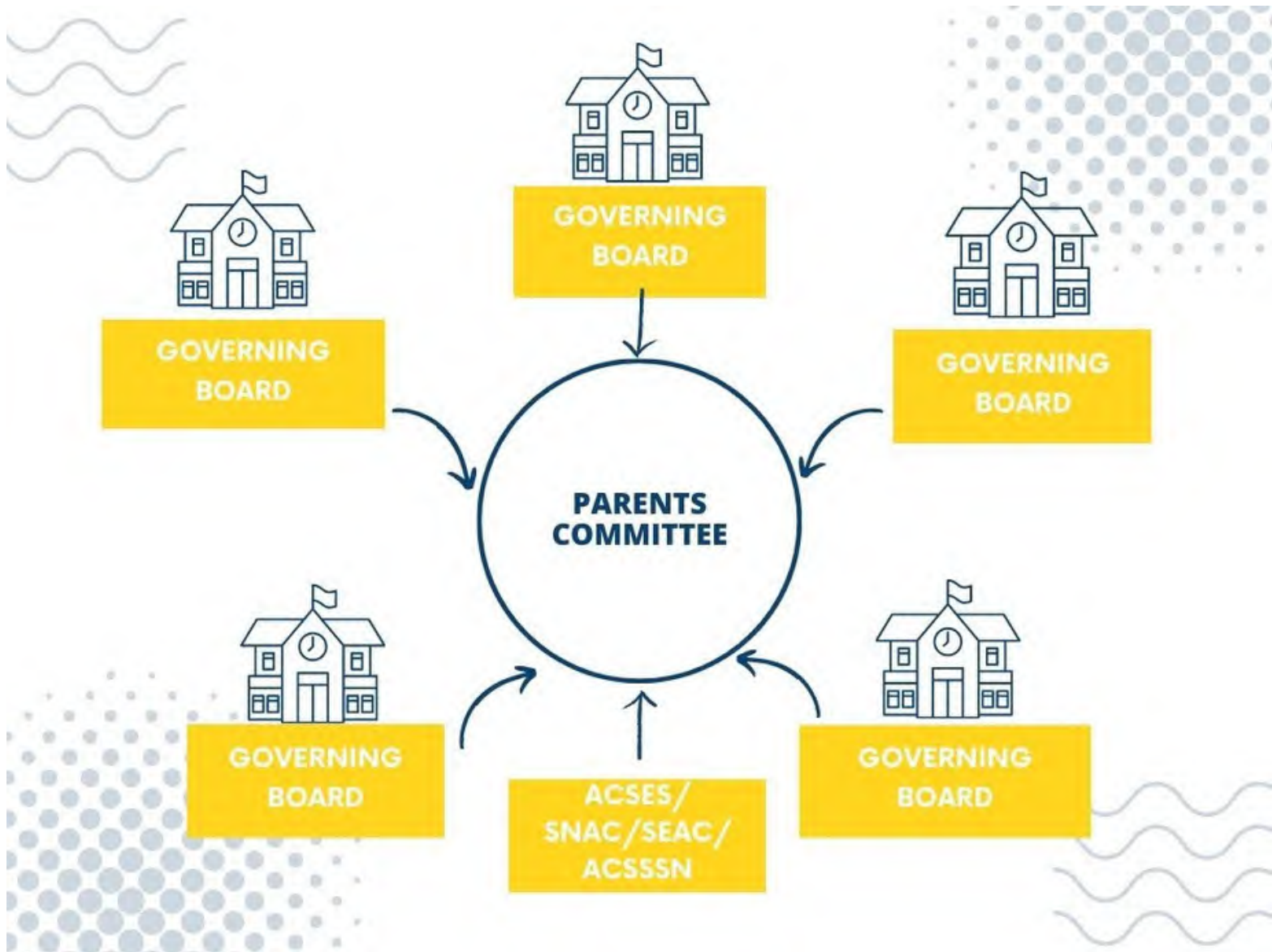
By standing for Governing Board, you can be part of the important deliberations in your school regarding budgets, programs, initiatives, and more. It is an opportunity to really engage with teachers, administrators and other parents, and share your unique insights and perspectives in an official forum.

You should note that schools may be holding in-person, hybrid, or virtual assemblies online (via Zoom or other platforms). You should be notified of all the details and procedures by your principal when this is determined.

All schools holding the meeting virtually should have a plan in place to accommodate the large numbers of participants, including for voting, validation of eligibility to vote, and of course dedicated support for those who may have difficulty logging on or participating.

If you feel you are missing information, please ensure that you consult your school, school board, and Parents' Committee website regularly, as well as the EPCA website and social media pages.

GOVERNING BOARD



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GOVERNING BOARD OF A SCHOOL

This diagram provides an overview of the composition of a school governing board. The exact composition may vary from school to school. It is important to refer to the *Education Act* in all circumstances.



PLEASE NOTE:

- The positions of chair and vice-chair are assumed by parent members elected to the governing board. The chair and vice-chair hold their positions for one year.
- The school staff and the students can elect substitute members to replace regular members in case they are absent.
- All categories of school staff should be represented on the governing board to ensure that the entire school team can participate.
- Although community representatives are not entitled to vote at governing board meetings, they help to maintain close ties with organizations that share the school's interests and objectives.

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

The school service centre determines the number of parents' and staff representatives on the governing board after consulting with each group and ensures parity between the two groups.

SMALL SCHOOLS

Where fewer than 60 students are enrolled in a school, the school service centre may, after consulting with the parents of the students attending the school and with the school staff, vary the rules governing the composition of the governing board.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office of parents' representatives on the governing board is two years and the term of office of the representatives of other groups is one year.



Draft calendar for the main topics to be covered in governing board meetings

This calendar is to be used in the compulsory training provided for members of the governing board. It is for information purposes only and the *Education Act* has precedence.

Certain responsibilities (e.g. adoption of the annual budget, annual consultation with students¹, annual report) must be among the topics that are covered and that appear in the calendar of the governing board, which must plan to hold **at least five meetings per school year**.

The follow-up of the educational institution's annual budget, the educational project and the anti-bullying and anti-violence action plan can take place at various times during the school year, depending on the situation and timetable of each institution. The other powers (e.g. consulting with parents, advising the principal or director, entering into contracts) can be executed in accordance with the decisions of the governing board.

All decisions taken by the governing board remain valid until such time as they are modified again by the board. In addition, the board, in accordance with the internal management rules it has adopted, can add items relating to information and communication to its meeting agenda, based on needs expressed by the board members and the institution's administration.

The term "educational institution" covers elementary and secondary schools as well as adult education centres and vocational training centres.

Main sections of the <i>Education Act</i>	Main topics covered
AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER	
s. 47	Preparation of the annual parents' general assembly and transmission of the invitation, election of representatives, their substitutes and the representative of the parents' committee (as well as a substitute member for the parents' committee, should the assembly so decide)
ss. 48 to 51.1 and 102	Election of staff members and students
ss. 83 and 110.3.1	Information for parents and the community about the services offered by the institution and their quality, particularly regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the educational and community services offered the content of the educational project and its evaluation the evaluation of the results achieved with respect to preventing and dealing with bullying and violence
ss. 75 and 109.1 ss. 83.1 and 110.4	Formation of an organization to facilitate parents' participation, should the assembly so decide
s. 96	Full formation of the governing board, in accordance with the rules governing its composition set out in the <i>Education Act</i>
ss. 42 and 102	Formation of a parents' committee for the daycare service, at the request of parents
s. 256 ss. 53 and 459.5	Compulsory training for governing board members² <i>It is suggested that all governing board members, including the principal or director, plan and attend the training sessions together around the time that the board holds its first meetings.</i>
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER	
ss. 53 and 70	First meeting of the governing board, compulsory training ³ and disclosure of interest by all members
ss. 56 and 107	Election of the chair and vice-chair ⁴
s. 42	Appointment of representatives of the community
ss. 67 and 108	Establishment of the internal management rules and the board's meeting schedule, as well as transmission of this schedule to the parents and staff members
ss. 66 and 108	Adoption of the board's annual operating budget
ss. 74 and 109	Presentation and follow-up of the educational project
s. 87	Approval of the programming of educational activities that entail changes to the students' regular arrival and departure times, or that require the students to leave school premises
ss. 95, 96.24, 110.4 and 110.13	Adoption or follow-up of the institution's annual budget (e.g. revised budget, specific allocations, decentralized measures)
NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER	
ss. 37 and 97.1	Follow-up of the educational project or update, if necessary

1 In the English school system, this does not apply.

2 In the English school system, this does not apply.

3 In the English school system, this does not apply.

4 In the English school system, if the board chair is absent or cannot attend, the board designates someone from among its eligible members to execute the chair's duties and powers.

Main sections of the Education Act	Main topics covered
NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER (CONT.)	
ss. 76 and 110.2	Approval of the rules of conduct and the safety measures (or the operating rules, in the case of centres) <i>For example, the board could approve these rules and measures so that they come into effect in November of the current school year and remain in effect until November of the following year. A board could also approve these rules and measures in the spring to ensure that they are in effect for the following school year (e.g. code of conduct on the agenda given to the students at the start of the school year).</i>
ss. 84, 89 and 110.2	Approval of the approach for implementing the <i>Basic school regulation</i> – at any time
s. 85	Approval of the overall approach for the enrichment of the suggested content and the development of local programs of studies, and of the conditions and procedures for integrating the activities and content prescribed by the Minister
ss. 89.2 and 110.4	Planning of the compulsory consultation with the students ⁵
ss. 94 and 110.4	Decisions bearing on funding activities – designated funds
ss. 96.24 and 110.13	Follow-up of the institution's annual budget
JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH	
s. 77.2	Adoption of the operating rules for the childcare services (for the following year) ⁶
ss. 86 and 89	Approval of the time allocation for compulsory and elective subjects (for the following year)
ss. 88 and 110.2	Approval of the implementation of services (or popular education in the case of centres)
ss. 89.2 and 110.4	Consultation with the students on a matter relating to the operations of the institution (e.g. extracurricular activities, social climate) ⁷
ss. 96.22 and 110.13	Consultation by the principal or director on the institution's requirements with regard to goods and services – current year or in preparation for the following year
MARCH, APRIL AND MAY	
ss. 3 para.4, 7 para. 3, 75.0.1 para. 1 and 2, and 292 para. 3	Approval of financial contributions required for material, school activities, services provided within the scope of a special school project, and lunchtime supervision (for the following year)
s. 77.1	Establishment of the principles for determining the cost of the documents and approval of the list of material for personal use (for the following year)
ss. 79 and 110.1	Consultation by the school service centre on the selection criteria for the appointment of the principal or director
s. 96.15	Consultation on textbooks and instructional material for the following year
ss. 75.1 and 110.4	Adoption or updating of the anti-bullying and anti-violence plan for the following year and distribution of a document to the parents and, if appropriate, to the students ⁸
ss. 74, 75, 109 and 109.1	Analysis of the situation prevailing at the institution, adoption of the educational project, its transmission to the school service centre, transmission and publication of the document (and its evaluation) to parents and staff
MAY AND JUNE	
s. 87	Approval of the educational activities for the following year (e.g. field trips, trips abroad) (may be done at any time throughout the year)
ss. 95 and 110.4	Adoption of the institution's proposed annual budget in preparation for the following year
ss. 74, 75, 109 and 109.1	Evaluation of the educational project and transmission of the evaluation to parents and staff members
ss. 83.1 and 110.4	Evaluation of the results achieved by the institution with respect to preventing and dealing with bullying and violence for the current year, and distribution of the document reporting on the evaluation to parents, staff members, students (if applicable) and the Student Ombudsman
ss. 66 and 108	Report to the school service centre on the governing board's annual operations budget
ss. 82 and 110.4	Preparation and adoption of the governing board's annual report, and transmission of a copy to the school service centre
THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR, OR AS NEEDED	
ss. 78, 78.1, 110 and 110.0.1	Provision of advice to the school service centre or the institution's principal or director (power of initiative) ⁹
s. 87	Approval of activities that entail changes in the students' regular time of arrival and departure or that require the students to leave school premises
s. 89.1	Consultation with the students' parents
ss. 96.13 and 110.10	Transmission of documents intended for parents ¹⁰
ss. 90 and 110.3	Organization of community services (e.g. extracurricular activities)
ss. 93 and 110.4	Approval of the use of the premises and immovables placed at the disposal of the institution
s. 96.15	Information on the proposals approved by the principal or director
ss. 96.24 and 110.13	Follow-up of the institution's annual budget
s. 217	Consultations by the school service centre (e.g. policies, regulations)

5 In the English school system, this does not apply. However, the board may consult with students on matters relating to the educational project.

6 With regard to the English school system, the *Education Act* does not attribute this power to the board. However, the board must nonetheless approve the institution's operating rules in accordance with the provisions set out in section 256 of the *Education Act*.

7 In the English school system, this does not apply.

8 In the English school system, the governing board approves the new or updated plan.

9 In the English school system, the governing board's power is limited to giving advice to the school board.

10 In the English school system, this does not apply.

Main powers, roles and collaborators of a governing board

This table is to be used in the compulsory training provided for members of the governing board. While it gives an overview of the powers of a governing board, the *Education Act* (EA) provides more details and has precedence.

* Pertains only to schools

■ General functions and powers

■ Functions and powers relating to educational services

■ Functions and powers relating to community services

■ Functions and powers relating to physical and financial resources

■ Other functions and powers to be considered

Topic (power) and main sections of the EA ¹	Roles of the governing board	Main role of the principal or director of the educational institution and its staff members (collaborators)	Suggested time frame ²
Educational project ss. 74, 75, 96.13, 109, 109.1 and 110.10	Analyzes the situation of the educational institution and fosters the participation of all stakeholders interested in student success Adopts the educational project and ensures that it is implemented and evaluated Transmits the educational project to the school service centre and publishes it along with its evaluation ³	The principal or director of the educational institution coordinates the analysis of the institution's situation, as well as the development, implementation and periodical evaluation of the educational project. The staff members are involved in all the steps. ⁴	Spring (approval) + at any time (follow-up and evaluation)
Anti-bullying and anti-violence action plan ss. 75.1, 77, 83.1 and 110.4	Adopts ⁵ the new or updated action plan Ensures that the document explaining the plan is written in a clear and accessible manner and that it is distributed to the parent and students, as applicable Carries out an annual evaluation of the educational institution's situation with regard to the anti-bullying and anti-violence action plan Ensures that a report on the evaluation is distributed to the parents, staff members and students, as applicable, and to the Student Ombudsman	The principal or director of the educational institution coordinates the development, revision and updating of the plan, submits it for approval ⁶ and ensures its implementation. The staff members participate in the development of the plan and work together to ensure its implementation.	Spring (for the next school year) + at any time
Rules of conduct and safety measures Operating rules (centres) ss. 76, 77 and 110.2	Approves	The principal or director proposes the rules and measures, organizes a training activity on civics for the students, and transmits the rules and measures to the parents. The staff members participate in developing the rules and measures.	Spring (for the next school year)

1 *Education Act*, CQLR, c. I-13.3.

2 These are suggestions since there are no "precise times" given in the *Education Act*, except in the case of certain matters such as the annual report and the annual budget of the educational institution.

3 The governing board must also transmit the educational project and its evaluation (the results obtained) to parents and staff members (e.g. in the annual report and on the website of the institution).

4 The principal or director is responsible for approving, on the proposal of the staff members concerned, the measures selected to achieve the objectives and targets set out in the educational project (s. 96.15, *Education Act*).

5 In the English school system, the governing board approves the new or updated action plan.

6 In the English school system, the principal or director of the educational institution submits the plan for approval.

Topic (power) and main sections of the EA	Roles of the governing board	Main role of the principal or director of the educational institution and its staff members (collaborators)	Suggested time frame
<p>Financial contributions required for materials, school activities, services provided within the scope of a special school project, and lunch monitoring services</p> <p>ss. 3 para. 4, 7 para. 3, 75.0.1 para. 1 and 2, and s. 292 para. 3</p>	Approves	The principal or director proposes them, with the participation of the teachers.	Winter or spring (before the next school year – so that the parents receive the list before the summer and the bill in the fall) + at any time
<p>Principles for determining the costs of documents and material for personal use</p>	Establishes the principles		
<p>List of materials for personal use</p> <p>s. 77.1</p>	Approves the list		
<p>Operating rules for childcare services*</p> <p>s. 77.2</p>	Adopts ⁷	The principal proposes them, with the participation of the person responsible for childcare services. ⁸	Winter or spring (for the next school year)
<p>Advice and recommendations⁹ (power of initiative)</p> <p>ss. 78, 78.1, 110, 110.0.1</p>	Advises the principal or director, or school service centre ¹⁰	The principal or director assists the governing board and provides reasons for any refusals.	At any time
<p>Establishment of committees¹¹</p> <p>ss. 78.2 and 110.0.2</p>	Can form committees	The principal or director assists the governing board.	At any time
<p>Deed of establishment</p> <p>ss. 40, 79, 101 and 110.1</p>	<p>Must be consulted by the school service centre (if the deed is modified or revoked)</p> <p>Can request that the deed be modified or revoked</p>	The principal or director assists the governing board and ensures that the school service centre is kept in the loop.	At any time
<p>Selection criteria for the appointment of the principal or director</p> <p>ss. 79 and 110.1</p>	Must be consulted by the school service centre	The principal or director assists the governing board.	At any time
<p>Annual report containing an account of the governing board's activities</p> <p>ss. 82 and 110.4</p>	Prepares, adopts, and transmits a copy of the report to the school service centre	The principal or director assists the governing board.	End of the school year or September of the next school year
<p>Educational services offered and their quality</p> <p>ss. 83, 96.12, 110.3.1 and 110.9</p>	Informs the parents and the community annually and reports on the quality of services	The principal or director ensures the quality of educational services offered to the students.	Spring, for providing information on the services offered in the educational institution, and during the fall parents' general assembly
<p>Documents for parents¹²</p> <p>ss. 96.13 and 110.10</p>	Prepares the documents to be sent to the parents	The principal or director sends the documents to the parents. ¹³	At any time

7 In the English school system, while the *Education Act* does not specify this power, the governing board must nevertheless approve the operating rules in accordance with the provisions set out in section 256 of the *Education Act*.

8 Although the *Education Act* does not specify it, the school principal can work out these rules in conjunction with the person responsible for childcare services. In addition, the childcare service may have a parents' committee that can make recommendations, particularly to the school principal and the governing board (s. 256, *Education Act*).

9 In the English school system, the governing board's power is limited to giving advice to the school board.

10 If so authorized by a vote representing at least two thirds of its members, the governing board can advise the principal or director on all matters relating to the smooth operation of the educational institution. This advice cannot bear, however, on subjects that concern the professional responsibilities of teachers, non-teaching professionals or support staff, or those of the principal or director of the educational institution (ss. 19, 96.15, 96.20, 96.21 and 110.12, *Education Act*). Moreover, this voting condition (i.e. of at least two thirds of the governing members) does not apply to advice given to the school service centre, which must however provide reasons in the case of a refusal.

11 In the English school system, this does not apply.

12 In the English school system, this does not apply.

13 It is suggested that the governing board, with the support of the principal or director, agree on means of sending documents to the parents (e.g. types of documents, preferred channels of communication, desired time between the preparation and sending of the document).

Topic (power) and main sections of the EA	Roles of the governing board	Main role of the principal or director of the educational institution and its staff members (collaborators)	Suggested time frame
Approach for the implementation of the <i>Basic school regulation</i> ss. 84, 89 and 110.2	Approves	The principal or director proposes the approach, with the participation of the staff members.	At any time
Choice of textbooks and instructional materials required for teaching the programs of study and means of communication for informing parents about the academic progress of their children ss. 77.1, 89.1, 96.15 and 110.12	Must be consulted about the proposals	The principal or director approves the teachers' proposals, after first consulting with the governing board.	In the spring and at the start of the school year
Overall approach for the enrichment or adaptation of the objectives and suggested content of the programs of studies* ss. 85 and 89	Approves	The principal proposes it, with the participation of the teachers.	Winter or spring, before the next school year
Conditions and procedures for integrating, into the educational services provided to the students, the activities or content prescribed by the Minister in the broad areas of learning* ss. 85 and 89	Approves	The principal proposes them, with the participation of the teachers.	Winter or spring, before the next school year
Time allocation for each subject* ss. 86 and 89	Approves	The principal proposes it, with the participation of the teachers.	Winter (ideally February or March)
Educational activities that entail changes in students' regular time of arrival and departure or that require the students to leave school premises* ss. 87 and 89	Approves	The principal proposes them, with the participation of the staff members.	At any time
Student services and special education services programs (or popular education programs) ss. 88, 89 and 110.2	Approves their implementation	The principal or director proposes them, with the participation of the staff members.	Spring, before the next school year
Consultation with parents* s. 89.1	The parents on the governing board can consult the students' parents	The principal assists the governing board.	At any time
Consultation with students¹⁴ ss. 89.2 and 110.4	Must consult the students or a group of students at least once a year on topics related to the operations of the educational institution	The principal assists the governing board.	At any time
Community services (educational services other than those prescribed by the <i>Basic school regulation</i> and social, cultural or sports services) ss. 90 and 110.3	Can organize these services and can also allow other individuals or organizations to organize them	The principal assists the governing board.	At any time
Conclusion of contracts for the provision of goods or community services with a person or organization ss. 90, 91 and 110.3	Can enter into a contract and require a financial contribution from users of the goods or services offered	The principal assists the governing board.	At any time

14 In the English school system, this does not apply.

Topic (power) and main sections of the EA	Roles of the governing board	Main role of the principal or director of the educational institution and its staff members (collaborators)	Suggested time frame
<p>Use of premises or immovables placed at the disposal of the educational institution</p> <p>ss. 93 and 110.4</p>	<p>Approves their use</p> <p>Approves the organisation by the school service centre, on the educational institution's premises, of the cultural, social, sports, science or community services provided by the institution</p>	<p>The principal or director proposes how they are to be used and keeps the school service centre in the loop.</p>	<p>At any time</p>
<p>Special funds (to support the educational institution's activities)</p> <p>ss. 94 and 110.4</p>	<p>Can solicit and receive funds</p> <p>Supervises the management of the funds (e.g. adopts by resolution authorizations for the disbursement of the funds) and can ask to examine the records of the funds</p>	<p>The principal or director assists the governing board.</p>	<p>At any time</p>
<p>Annual budget of the educational institution</p> <p>ss. 95, 96.24, 110.4 and 110.13</p>	<p>Adopts the budget and submits it to the school service centre for approval</p> <p>Receives an accountability report from the principal or director</p>	<p>The principal or director prepares the budget, submits it for approval, oversees its administration and reports on it to the governing board.</p>	<p>June or early fall (adoption) + at any time</p>
<p>Various needs of educational institutions with respect to goods or services and to needs related to its premises and immovables</p> <p>ss. 96.22 and 110.13</p>	<p>Must be consulted</p>	<p>The principal or director consults the governing board.</p>	<p>At any time</p>
<p>Consultations (e.g. policies and regulations)</p> <p>ss. 217</p>	<p>Must be consulted by the school service centre</p>	<p>The principal or director assists the governing board and ensures that the school service centre is kept in the loop.</p>	<p>At any time</p>
<p>Student enrollment criteria*</p> <p>ss. 239</p>	<p>Must receive a copy (at least 15 days before the start of the enrollment period)</p>	<p>The principal ensures that the school service centre is kept in the loop.</p>	<p>Winter (during registration for the next school year)</p>
<p>Means for the supervision of students who remain at the school during lunchtime*</p> <p>ss. 75.01 and 292</p>	<p>Agrees on means with the school service centre</p>	<p>The principal assists the governing board.</p>	<p>In the spring, before the next school year</p>
<p>Childcare services*</p> <p>ss. 256</p>	<p>Can request for them to be organized and must reach an agreement with the school service centre regarding organizational procedures</p> <p>Forms a parents' childcare committee at the request of the parents</p>	<p>The principal assists the governing board.</p>	<p>At any time</p>

INFORMATION SHEET

01

Part 3 of the compulsory training for governing board members

COMPOSITION OF A GOVERNING BOARD

The composition of governing boards varies from one educational institution to another. The board is made up of a maximum of 20 members with various types of experience and profiles. The purpose of a governing board is to ensure that the different groups who have a common link with the educational institution are represented. Consult the diagrams of a typical **school** or **centre** governing board to see the specific characteristics of each.

SCHOOLS

The school service centre determines the number of parents' and staff representatives on the governing board after consulting with each group. The total number of seats for staff members must be equal to the number of seats for parents' representatives.

CENTRES

The school service centre determines the number of representatives on the governing board after consulting with each group. The total number of seats for staff representatives must not exceed the total number of seats for representatives of other groups.

Are principals and directors of educational institutions members of the governing board?

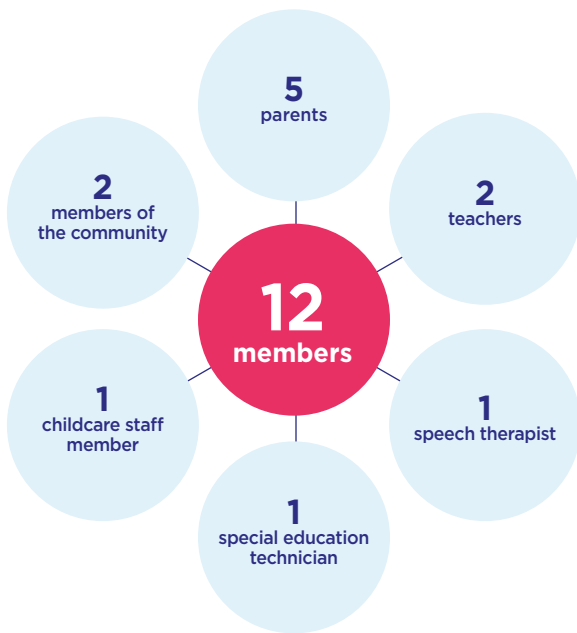
Principals and directors of educational institutions participate in board meetings (they are involved in the board's deliberations) but are not entitled to vote; nor are they counted when determining the number of board members or if there is a quorum (i.e. the minimum number of board members who must be present before a meeting can be held, according to the *Education Act*).

The principal or director must be present at school or centre governing board meetings, in the same way that the director general's presence is required at meetings of the board of directors of school service centres. The principal or director is generally the one who submits proposals to the board. In most cases, these proposals have been developed in conjunction with the staff members concerned.

Moreover, depending on the institution's situation, the principal or director can rely on a vice-principal or assistant director to help them carry out their board duties but not to replace them completely, except in cases when the principal or director is absent or cannot attend a meeting. If need be, one or more vice-principals or assistant directors appointed by the school service centre can replace the principal or director on the board.

What might be an example of a governing board composition in an elementary school?

The board could consist of 12 members, including 5 parents, 2 teachers, 1 speech therapist, 1 special education technician, 1 childcare staff member, and 2 members of the community. As we see here, the number of parents is equal to the number of school staff members (5 each).



What might be an example of a governing board composition in a secondary school?

The board could consist of 20 members, including 8 parents, 5 teachers, 1 psychoeducator, 1 psychologist, 1 recreation technician, 2 Cycle Two students, and 2 members of the community. In this case, the number of parents is equal to the number of school staff members (8 each).



What might be an example of a governing board composition in an adult education centre?

The board could consist of 14 members, including 3 students, 3 teachers, 2 non-teaching professionals, 1 secretary, 3 representatives of socioeconomic and community groups, and 2 representatives from local businesses. In this example, the number of centre staff representatives is less than the number of representatives of the other groups, which is in compliance with the EA.

And what might be an example for a vocational training centre?

The board could have the same composition as for the adult education centre, plus 2 parents of students, for a total of 16 members.



Can there be more teacher representatives on the board?

Yes. After the school service centre has consulted with each group, some categories of employees could decide to not sit on the board. In this case, the teaching staff could fill the vacant positions.

Note

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MAIN SECTIONS OF THE LAW

- › Sections 42 to 46 of the *Education Act* (schools)
- › Sections 102, 103 and 105 of the *Education Act* (adult education centres and vocational training centres)



ADVICE BEST PRACTICES

-  Describe the composition of the board on the website of the school or centre well before the annual general meetings (e.g. show the number of positions reserved for each group of representatives).
-  To encourage participation on the governing board of a school or centre, inform the parents, staff members, students and members of the community about the role of the board, the application procedure, the positions to be filled and the benefits of being a governing board member. Direct them to the following address: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/preschool-elementary-and-secondary-schools/school-governance/governing-boards>
-  Share a reminder outlining how important it is to encourage all parents to attend the general meeting, so that the required number of seats for parents' representatives on the school governing boards can be filled (e.g. twin this event with a meet-the-teachers activity).
-  Promote and reinforce the role of community members, who can be difficult to recruit at times but make considerable contributions to board meetings, decision making and in creating links with the community (e.g. extension of the activities offered to young people at youth centres, exploratory field trips to businesses, visits to community organizations for students).

INFORMATION SHEET

02

Part 3 of the compulsory training for governing board members

FORMATION OF A GOVERNING BOARD

Once the composition of the governing board has been determined, the next step is to appoint or elect those interested in occupying the positions to be filled. The *Education Act* sets out rules for the various categories of board members. The timing of the key steps involved must also be respected.

SCHOOLS

The board is formed by no later than September 30 of each year. The parents' general assembly must elect **at least four parent members** in order for the board to be constituted.

CENTRES

The board is made up of members who take office as they are appointed or elected; and it can still be formed even if there are not the requisite number of representatives for each group.

How are governing boards for elementary and secondary schools formed?

PARENTS' REPRESENTATIVES ON THE BOARD (TERM OF OFFICE: 2 YEARS)

The parent members must be elected at the parents' general assembly at the start of the school year. The number of positions available on the governing board and the respective terms of office are announced in an invitation sent to all parents at least four days before the general assembly takes place.

Generally speaking, two types of situations are possible:

- A parent who has never sat on a governing board applies to become a member¹
- A parent has completed their term of office and wants to apply again for one of the positions available

If the number of candidates is equal to the number of positions to be filled, the parents are said to be elected by acclamation.

¹ A parent may apply to become a board member or be nominated by another person, depending on the rules adopted by parents during the general assembly.

The assembly must also elect **at least two parent substitutes** to the board to stand in for parents who may not be able to attend a board meeting during the school year. The number of substitutes must not exceed the number of seats indicated for the initial composition of the board (e.g. if 4 seats are reserved for parents, there can be no more than 4 substitutes).

At the general assembly, one of the parents elected or appointed to the board is also named **a representative at the parents' committee**.

At the same time, another parent member may also be appointed as a substitute to sit on the committee and vote in place of the main representative.

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE GOVERNING BOARD (TERM OF OFFICE: 1 YEAR)

During the month of September, the school's teachers, non-teaching professionals and support staff meet in a general assembly to elect their representatives to the governing board in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in their respective collective agreements or, in the absence of such agreements, in accordance with the terms and conditions determined by the school administration following consultation with the concerned parties.

At least four school staff members, **two of whom must be teachers**, have to be elected.

If **daycare services** are offered in the school, the members concerned must also elect a representative.

At their respective general assemblies, school staff can also elect substitutes to replace those members who cannot take part in a board meeting.

MEMBERS REPRESENTING SECONDARY CYCLE TWO STUDENTS (TERM OF OFFICE: 1 YEAR)

In September of each year, the students' committee or, if applicable, the association that represents the students, appoints two representatives to the board. The substitute members can also be elected at this time.

MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY (TERM OF OFFICE: 1 YEAR)

These two people are appointed by the other board members, generally as soon as possible after the election of the parent members and staff members (and student members, if applicable), to complete the formation of the board.

How are governing boards formed in adult education centres and vocational training centres?

The term of office of all members is two years.

MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE STUDENTS

It is often at the start of the school year that students attending the centre are elected by their peers to sit on the board. However, they can also be elected or appointed during the school year (e.g. a student leaves the board after completing their program and another student, whether starting or still pursuing their studies, wants to fill this vacant seat).

MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE CENTRE STAFF

The board members representing the centre's teaching staff, non-teaching professionals and support staff must be elected by their peers or in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in their respective collective agreements or, in the absence of such agreements, in accordance with the terms and conditions determined by the centre administration following consultation with the concerned parties.

At least four centre staff members, **two of whom must be teachers**, have to be elected.

MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE PARENTS

Parents of students attending a vocational training centre are elected by their peers in accordance with the terms and conditions established by the centre's director. In adult education centres, parents are not represented on the governing board.

MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY

At least two people nominated by the school service centre are chosen after consultations with socioeconomic and community groups in the territory that the centre mainly serves.

At least two people representing local businesses are also nominated by the school service centre. In the case of vocational training centres, these members are chosen from businesses in sectors of economic activity that correspond to vocational programs taught at the centre.

What happens when a member leaves the board?

In the case of a school governing board, a vacancy resulting from the departure of a parents' representative is filled, for the time left in the person's term of office, by a parent appointed by the other parents on the board.

In the case of a school or centre, a vacancy resulting from the departure or reduced effectiveness of any other member is filled, for the time left in the person's term of office, following the procedure that was used to appoint the member to be replaced.

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MAIN SECTIONS OF THE LAW

- › Sections 47 to 55 of the *Education Act* (schools)
- › Sections 102 to 106 of the *Education Act* (adult education centres and vocational training centres)



ADVICE BEST PRACTICES

-  Draw up a list of the names and contact information of all board members and distribute it to them, with their prior authorization. This practice will facilitate any communication that may be required during the school year and make it possible to identify the positions held on the board, as well as the amount of time left in the respective terms of office.
-  Post the full name of each board member on the institution's website to let the parents, the staff members and the community know who the governing board members are.
-  Publish an announcement in the institution's newsletter with the names of the board members who have been appointed or elected and take advantage of the opportunity to congratulate them and thank them for their commitment.



INFORMATION SHEET

03

Part 3 of the compulsory training for governing board members

FUNCTIONING OF A GOVERNING BOARD

Governing boards function in accordance with certain terms and conditions established by the *Education Act*. Smooth functioning is ensured by the chair, who leads meetings, but also by all the members, who must comply with the board's internal management rules and the limits of their functions and powers.

What procedures should be followed to ensure that the board functions smoothly?

The members must, among other things:

- › select those who will assume the roles and responsibilities of the chair and vice-chair
- › declare any business interests that could lead to a conflict of interest
- › establish internal management rules for the board
- › ensure that there is a quorum at each meeting
- › adopt the board's annual operating budget
- › comply with the rules governing the public nature of board meetings
- › make decisions based on the majority vote of the members who are present and entitled to vote

All decisions of the board, regardless of when they are made, must:

- › be in the best interests of the students
- › respect the school's mission (to provide instruction, to socialize and to provide qualifications)
- › respect the principle of equal opportunity for all students

How are governing board chairs and vice-chairs selected?

FOR THE SCHOOLS

The chair and vice-chair are chosen from among the parents on the board who are not on the staff of the school service centre.

FOR THE CENTRES

Any members, except for centre staff members and students, can hold these positions.

This selection is generally made at the opening of the board's first meeting. If the selection process takes place through a vote, only members eligible to vote may participate.

The process can follow the usual internal management rules or take place in accordance with the terms and conditions established by the board (e.g. show of hands, secret vote).

Are members required to complete a form regarding potential conflicts of interest?

At the start of their term of office, each member must complete a form stating whether or not they have any direct or indirect business interests that could bring their personal interests into conflict with those of the educational institution (e.g. they may enter into a contractual agreement with the school or establish a private partnership).

What are the internal management rules and what do they say?

These rules relate to the smooth functioning of the board and orderly proceedings at meetings. Each board determines its own rules based on the specific context of the educational institution.

In all cases, these rules must provide for the holding of at least five regular meetings per school year, and must set the day, time and place of these meetings in advance.

The board must inform the parents and the institution's staff as well as the students (in the case of centres) and all other concerned persons when and where the board meetings will be held.

Apart from these obligations, the rules may pertain to:

- › meeting agendas and notices of upcoming meetings
- › terms and conditions governing the use of administrative support services and school equipment
- › procedures relating to deliberations, voting procedures and the recording of votes
- › procedures relating to recording the minutes and the register
- › rules governing the question period for members of the public
- › principles, terms and conditions governing the board's operating budget
- › all questions relating to the maintenance of order during the meetings

Unless otherwise stipulated in the internal management rules, the agenda and the accompanying documents must be disseminated to the board members and their substitutes **at least two days** before the date of the meeting.

Where can governing board meetings be held?

The board has the right to meet on the institution's premises.

Are board meetings open to the public?

Board meetings are open to the public and anyone who wants to attend should be able to do so (e.g. question period for members of the public at the start of the meeting). However, the board can decide to meet behind closed doors in order to study any topic that could otherwise be detrimental to an individual.

How are the board meetings recorded?

The board is entitled to use, free of charge, the institution's administrative support services and equipment in accordance with the terms and conditions established by the principle or director.

A person could, therefore, act solely as secretary in board meetings (without being a board member). This person would take notes on the board's discussions and decisions and record them in the minutes of the meeting. Therefore, a board member representing the support staff (a school secretary, for example) would not have to assume administrative support functions or take notes during board meetings.

All minutes of board deliberations are kept in a register maintained by the administration or a person designated by it. The register is open to the public.



What is a quorum?

A board meeting can be held only if the chair (or vice-chair, in their absence) determines that there is a quorum.

FOR SCHOOLS

A quorum is deemed to exist when a majority of the board members (including at least half of the parents' representatives) are present.

For example: if there are 10 members on the board (including 4 parent members), at least 6 board members (2 of whom have to be parents) must be present.

FOR CENTRES

A quorum consists of the majority of active members, regardless of the groups they represent.

For example: for a 16-member board in a vocational training centre, a quorum is deemed to exist if there are least 9 board members present. This could include 1 student, 2 teachers, 1 member of the support staff, 1 parent, 2 members representing socioeconomic groups, and 2 representatives of the business community.

What is the procedure for meetings?

There are points for discussion on the agenda for each meeting. These can be items relating to information, consultation and decisions to be made. The decision-making process generally follows the sequence below:

- › a proposal is submitted
- › deliberations take place (discussions and questions)
- › a vote is held
- › a decision is made
- › the minutes are recorded

Generally speaking, after deliberations relating to a proposal (e.g. a document, an activity, a budget), the board makes decisions based on the **majority of votes cast** by the **voting members present at the meeting**. A consensus can be sought when possible, as long as this is consistent with the board's internal management rules. It is essential that all board members have first had a chance to express their views on the matter at hand.

All board members are entitled to abstain from voting on a proposal. However, abstentions must not be taken as nay votes. Abstaining members are present at meetings and have decided in advance to go with the majority decision, regardless of who constitutes the majority and whether it is for or against a proposal. Abstentions are recorded in the minutes of the meeting but must not be taken into account when calculating the majority (e.g. 5 for, 2 against, 1 abstention). A board member can also have a dissenting voice (see the board members' notebook).

As an example, during a meeting with 12 members in attendance, 10 of whom are entitled to vote, at least 6 votes (5 + 1) are required in order to approve or adopt a proposal **with a majority**, or 10 votes to accept a proposal **unanimously**.

The vote of the chair has a casting (i.e. tie-breaking) vote. What does that mean?

When there are an equal number of votes for and against a proposal (e.g. 5 for, 5 against, 2 abstentions) the chair can ultimately cast the deciding vote.

This does not mean that the chair votes twice or that their vote counts for two. However, the chair is not required to cast a deciding vote, particularly if the situation does not call for it. The chair could decide to continue discussion of the proposal during the same meeting, or at a later date, particularly to seek additional information that could shed light on the decision-making process.

The chair, like all other members of the board, may abstain from voting. If a vote results in a tie, the chair can cast a deciding vote. In addition, if there has been a secret vote, the board members cannot know if the chair abstained, or if they voted for or against the proposal.

What is the council's annual operating budget used for?

As its name suggests, this budget, which is established by the school service centre each year, is used for governing board operations. For example, planned expenditures can be related to:

- › the holding of ordinary or extraordinary meetings of the board or working committees (e.g. travel expenses and childcare expenses)
- › training for council members (e.g. registration fees for a convention)
- › outside representation (e.g. to meet a member of the National Assembly or an organization)

It is the board that determines the operating expenses that can be reimbursed, sees that this is done and reports on it to the school service centre.

Is a governing board the same as a board of directors?

No, a governing board is not a board of directors even if they occasionally have some operating procedures in common (e.g. selecting a chair, establishing internal management rules, voting on proposals). Governing board members represent the stakeholders of their educational institution while the members of boards of directors are neutral and independent administrators.

! Note

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MAIN SECTIONS OF THE LAW

- › Sections 56 to 73 of the *Education Act* (schools)
- › Sections 107 to 110.4 of the *Education Act* (adult education centres and vocational training centres)



ADVICE + BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ Always have a copy of your governing board's internal management rules at hand so that you can consult it during meetings.
- ✓ Ensure that your board's internal management rules cover as many points as possible, in order to avoid errors or deadlocks for the term of the board's operations.
- ✓ Call upon substitute members to ensure that there can still be a quorum when members notify the board in advance that they cannot attend a meeting.
- ✓ Do not hesitate to draw on the board's operating budget, which is accessible to all members including the parents, staff, students and community representatives who can use it to cover certain personal expenses incurred in the performance of their respective duties.



INFORMATION SHEET

04

Part 3 of the compulsory training for governing board members

VERBS USED (ADOPT, APPROVE, CONSULT, INFORM, ETC.)

The *Education Act* contains close to two dozen verbs referring to the functions and powers of the governing board. Board members might need to “adopt” a document, “approve” an activity or “be consulted” on a project. Below you will find some of the verbs frequently used in board meetings and how they differ from each other.

TO ADOPT

The verb “to adopt” implies that the board has **full control** over the content of a document, proposal or project it deals with. The board can **modify** them in whole or in part, **amend** them (board members vote on modifications submitted to correct, improve, complete or remove any part of a document), or **receive** them exactly as submitted (adopted by a majority or unanimous vote).

In “adopting” the board thus has all the autonomy and latitude it needs over the content and scope of what it wants to adopt. Therefore, it must carefully evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of its decisions to ensure that they are always in the students’ best interests.

During a meeting, board members may therefore make any modifications they deem necessary and then adopt the modified document at the same sitting. In certain cases, however (e.g. the educational institution’s annual budget), if individuals are calling for major changes, but the members want to first carry out an in-depth analysis or require additional information, they can send the document back to the principal or director for analysis. A decision on the proposal is then put off until a later meeting.

For example, the governing board adopts the institution’s educational project as well as its anti-bullying and anti-violence action plan and its annual budget.

TO APPROVE

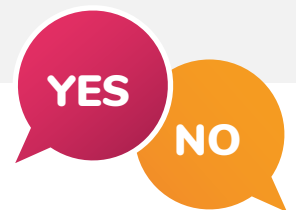
“To approve” something is **to be in agreement with it**.

The board can therefore vote in favour of (in a majority or unanimous vote) or refuse to approve a proposal in the form in which it was presented. The board cannot itself modify the content of such a proposal, which means the proposal cannot be adopted or applied.

This power of the board is restricted to most proposals developed in collaboration with the staff, since it directly concerns the responsibilities that have been conferred on them.

Therefore, when a board wishes to modify some or all of a proposal, it cannot do so itself. Instead, it must return the proposal, along with the board members’ comments, to the person or group entrusted with reviewing it. Once they have completed their work, the proposal is re-submitted for board approval at a later meeting.

For example, the board must approve the educational institution’s code of conduct and safety measures as well as the time allocated for the various school subjects and the financial contributions that may be required of parents.



Can / Must

It is important to differentiate between certain shades of meaning in the sections of the *Education Act* that deal with issues of “powers” and “duties” (e.g. the board “can,” the board “must”).

While “can” indicates a possibility, “must” refers to a duty, that is an obligation prescribed in the *Education Act*.

TO CONSULT (or to be consulted)

In this context, “to consult” is to be understood broadly as meaning “to ask for an opinion.”

Consultation may be compulsory and constitute a responsibility of the board.

For example, the board **must consult** the students at least once a year.

Consultation can also be a power attributed to the board.

For example, the board **must be consulted** on the choice of school textbooks and instructional materials required for teaching the programs of study, on the selection criteria for the appointment of principals or directors, and on the needs of the educational institution or the school service centre with regards to goods and services.

When consultation is optional, the *Education Act* stipulates that the board “can advise, can consult,” depending on the circumstances.

For example, the parents on the board **can consult** the school’s parents on any topic relating to educational services.

Where the *Education Act* stipulates that consultation is compulsory, a decision taken without prior consultation could be contested.

For example, the school service centre **must consult** the board regarding specific subjects (e.g. deed of establishment, certain documents relating to policies or regulations).

On the whole, compulsory consultations must be genuine and sufficient; the school service centre or the principal of the educational institution must provide sufficient quality information and give the board enough time to express its point of view well before a decision is taken, so that the board has an opportunity to influence it. Compulsory consultations are therefore prerequisites for the validity of all decisions made by the school service centre or the principal of the educational institution.

TO INFORM

This means transmitting all relevant information to those concerned.

MUST INFORM

The board must, therefore, inform the parents, staff members and the community of the services offered by the educational institution and report on their quality, in addition to informing the parents and staff members of the dates of board meetings, etc.

MUST BE INFORMED

The principal or director of the educational institution must regularly inform the board of proposals such as those approved under section 96.15 of the *Education Act* (e.g. criteria for the introduction of new instructional methods, the measures selected to achieve the objectives and targets set out in the educational project, the budget of the institution).



INFORMATION SHEET

05

Part 3 of the compulsory training for governing board members

THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT¹

One of the main responsibilities of a governing board is **to adopt** the educational project of the school or centre, oversee its implementation and evaluate it periodically according to an agreed-on schedule. Boards must also promote the educational project and make their evaluations of it public.

All steps leading to the adoption and implementation of the educational project must be carried out in collaboration with the various stakeholders in the educational institution concerned with the implementation of the project and the students' educational success (parents, students, staff members, representatives from the community and from the school service centre).

As board members, therefore, you will in your own way help to ensure that the educational project is based solidly on an analysis of the institution's situation and that it corresponds to the students' needs.

What is an educational project?

The educational project is a roadmap that makes it possible for an educational institution to define, and make known to all partners concerned with educational success, its challenges, orientations, priority actions and expected results with a view to ensuring the success of all students, young people and adults.

The orientations and objectives identified in the educational project concern mainly the implementation, adaptation or enrichment of the basic regulation and the programs of study established by the Minister. The educational project must take into account the **commitment-to-success plan**² of the school service centre.

The vision and values that the educational institution wishes to promote must also be included in the educational project.

In short and in keeping with the principle of equality of opportunity, the mission of a school or centre is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications. A school or centre shall pursue its mission within the framework of an educational project.

1 This information sheet is related to the one on the annual budget of educational institutions. Section 218 of the EA obliges the school service centre to facilitate the implementation of the educational projects of the schools and centres under its jurisdiction. Accordingly, educational projects must take into account the requirements of the institution as regards goods and services (see section 96.22 and the requirement to consult the governing board about this matter).

2. For more information, consult the following guide: http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/PSG/politiques_orientations/GUIDE_3_GAR_PlanEngagementReussite_Edition_Ang.pdf

What steps are involved?

ANALYZING...

The governing board members analyze the situation of the school or centre mainly with respect to the students' needs, the challenges associated with their success and the characteristics and expectations of the community.

Based on this analysis and taking into account the commitment-to-success plan, the governing board is required to adopt the educational project, oversee its implementation and evaluate it according to an agreed-upon schedule.

COLLABORATING...

Each step is carried out in conjunction with the various stakeholders: the board is there to foster the participation of all concerned with the help of the principal or director of the educational institution, the objective being to make the process more concrete (e.g. who are the various stakeholders, what means could be used to foster the participation of all the parties).

ADOPTING...

It is still possible to modify the educational project after it has been developed and put in writing until such time as it is adopted by the board in session.

As a board member, you should know that even before the educational project is adopted you must have actively contributed to its development and familiarized yourself with the major challenges that emerged from the analysis of the situation in the educational institution as well as the broad orientations stemming from this analysis and the objectives to be attained.

REMINDER

Following the adoption of the educational project, the principal or director of the educational institution must see to the approval of the means selected to attain the project's objectives and targets based on a proposal from the staff. The governing board is not responsible for this matter.

Who coordinates all these steps?

The governing board is assisted by the principal or director, who coordinates the analysis of the educational institution's situation as well as the development, implementation and periodic evaluation of the educational project. All of these steps are carried out in collaboration with the educational institution's various stakeholders.

What happens when the educational project is disseminated?

Once the educational project has been adopted, the governing board must send it to the school service centre and make it publicly available within 30 days of the date of transmission.

What about the evaluation that the board must conduct and make public?

The board must indeed transmit the educational project and its evaluation to parents and staff members.

This evaluation could focus on, for example, certain observations regarding the success rate of French-language students, the maintenance or improvement of the school climate through certain activities, or an increase in the number of diversified extracurricular activities offered at the educational institution.

Suggested questions for governing board members

- › Where are we with regard to the overall success of our students?
- › What types of consultations could be carried out? Who would be involved?
- › How would we characterize the situation in our school or centre?
- › How can we monitor the evolution of the situation in terms of our stated objectives?
- › Overall, what have we achieved and what have been the benefits for the students?
- › What changes need to be made or what achievements maintained with regard to the educational success of students? With respect to their socialization? Their qualifications or diplomas?
- › How can we ensure that all our students have equal opportunities to succeed?
- › What means can we use to inform parents and the community about our educational institution's challenges and successes?

ADVICE + BEST PRACTICES



✔ Consider becoming involved as a member in the work of a sub-committee if there is one in your educational institution. This could be done in conjunction with the principal or director (e.g. a board member volunteers to work on the committee in charge of developing the institution's existing educational project). Consult the meetings schedule and indicate when you could be available.

✔ Inform the parents and staff of the progress achieved in the development of the educational project. This shows the close collaboration between the board and the administration in favour of greater consensus in the education community.

✔ Add a statutory item related to the educational project to the board's agenda. This will make it possible to report on the situation or ask questions on behalf of members of the group you represent.

✔ Post a summary of the educational project on the educational institution's website. This should be in plain language and present the broad outlines of the project and its results over time. This practice promotes the institution and highlights its distinctive characteristics!

For more information on the entire process involved in the educational project, the Ministère de l'Éducation has produced a guide available at the following address:

http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/PSG/politiques_orientations/GUIDE_4_GAR_ProjetEducatif_Edition_Ang.pdf

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MAIN SECTIONS OF THE LAW

- › Sections 36, 37, 74 and 75 of the *Education Act* (schools)
- › Sections 97, 97.1, 109 and 109.1 of the *Education Act* (adult education centres and vocational training centres)



Parents' Committee Guide



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
The English Parents' Committee Association



The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) represents the interests of English-speaking parents to decision-makers and educational partners across the province of Quebec. It advocates for the rights of parents and children in public elementary and secondary schools so that they can receive a quality education in a safe and healthy environment.

Contact EPCA if your Parents' Committee needs assistance learning more about a topic or locating the appropriate tools or resources.

We can provide:

- Training
- Information
- Tools
- Advice

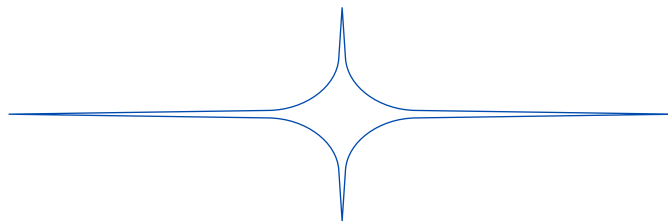
Introduction

Welcome to your School Board's Parents' Committee, and congratulations on being elected to this important position representing your school's parents! Parent participation in School Board activities is essential. As stipulated in Section 189 of the Québec Education Act, each School Board must establish a Parents' Committee (PC). (EA, s. 191).

The Parents' Committee's mission is to represent the interests of your territory's parents to the School Board so that the services provided best meet the needs and expectations of the parents. We know that the parent representation role may seem daunting, but we are here to help! Your Parents' Committee and all of its members are critical collaborators in the success of children in your community and across Quebec!

The school network can rely on parents' active participation in various committees. The parent participation bodies and the links between them are summarized below.

Note: The numbers correspond to the relevant sections of the Education Act.



Laws and Regulations

According to the Quebec Education Act, parents and guardians have a right to participate in the activities of their School Board and to be represented on various School Board committees. Several laws and regulations govern the activities of the Parents' Committee. However, it is the Act sur l'instruction publique (PII), that provides for the creation of a Parents' Committee in each School Board and establishes its composition as well as its functions and powers.

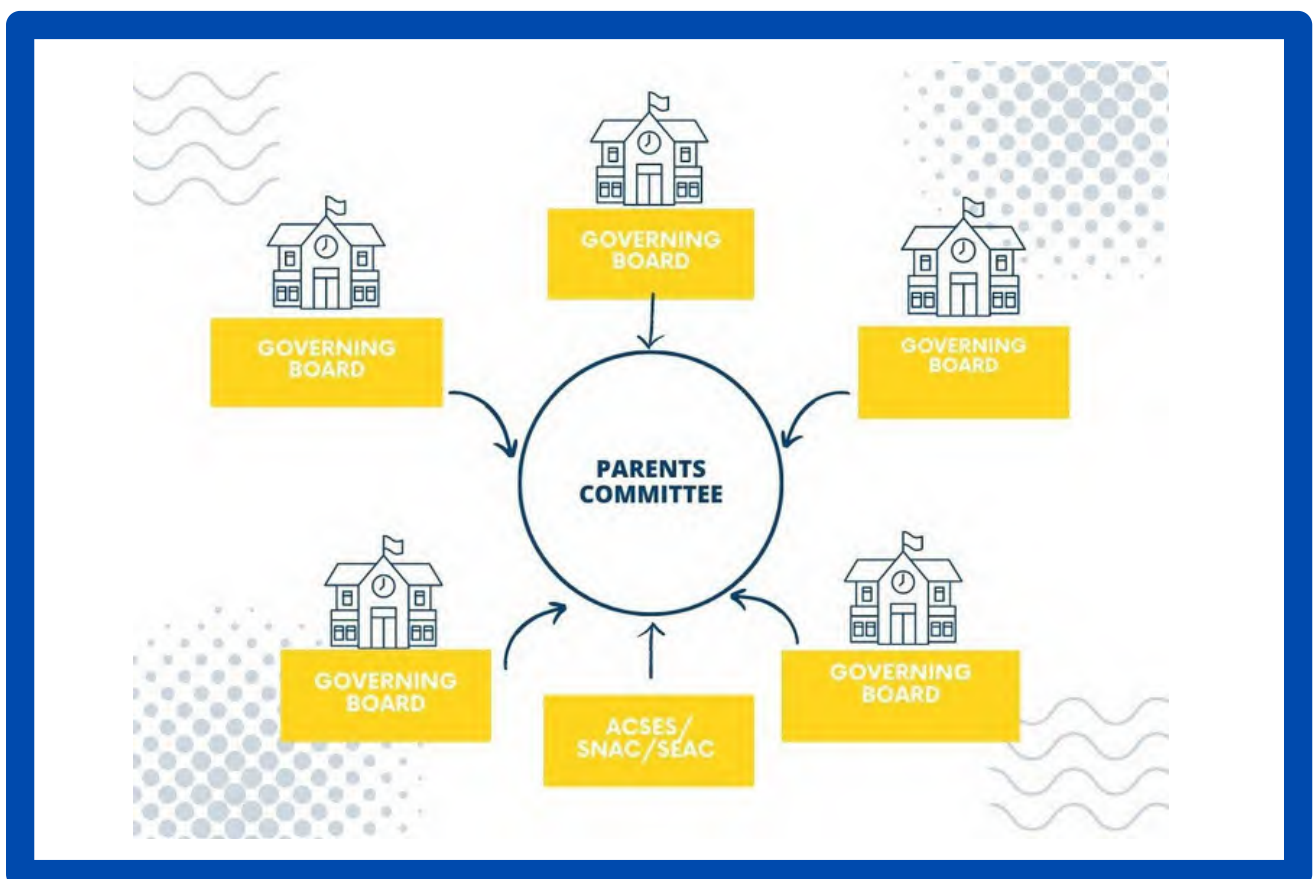
You will find the sections of the Education Act that deal with the Parents' Committee referenced in this guide.

THE PARENTS' COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Each school must hold an Annual General Assembly (AGA) of parents with children attending the school no later than 30 September of each school year. It is during this AGA that the parents must also elect a Governing Board and, from parent members of the Governing Board, a Parent Representative to the Parents' Committee. The members of the Parents' Committee represent all of the parents and guardians whose children attend the school. The term of office for the Parent Representative is one year.

The Parents' Committee is composed of:

- A Parent Representative from each of the schools represented by the School Board
- A parent delegate from the Advisory Committee Services Education Students (ACSES), Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC), or Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) - depending on the set-up of the local school system



Elected Positions

The Parents' Committee shall elect one of its members to serve as Chair of the committee on an annual basis (sec 191). The Chairperson will preside over committee meetings and serve as the committee's spokesperson. The Parents' Committee shall also elect those of its members who will serve as Parent Commissioners on the School Board's Council of Commissioners, representatives to Transportation Advisory Committees, and Directors to EPCA.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Some Parents' Committees choose to have an Executive Committee to help them run smoothly. The composition and functions of the Executive Committee are governed by the Parents' Committee's internal rules and procedures, as established by the Committee. It is important to remember that the Executive Committee is not mentioned in the Education Act and thus cannot exercise the functions and powers that the Act grants to the Parents' Committee.

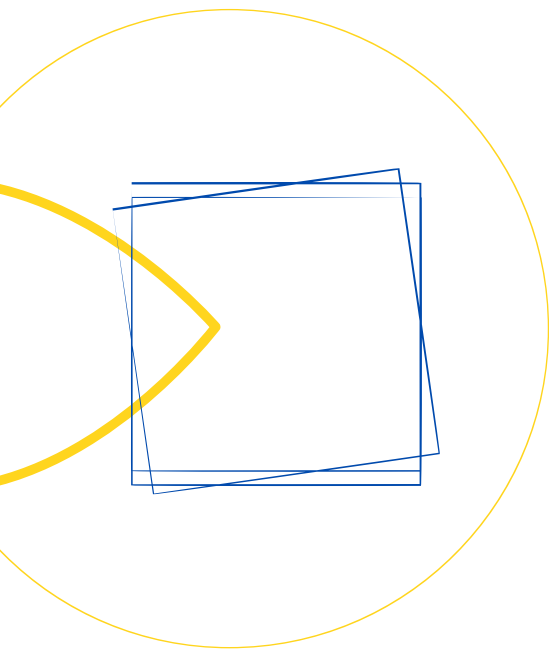
PARENT COMMISSIONERS

What is the mandate of the Parent Commissioners?

The Parent Commissioners attend all regular and special meetings of the Council of Commissioners and Parents' Committee, in addition to their Governing Board meetings. The Parent Commissioner speaks on behalf of the Parents' Committee in accordance with its directions.

When the Council of Commissioners discusses a topic that contradicts the expectations of the Parents' Committee, the Parent Commissioner may request time to consult with the Parents' Committee.

The Parent Commissioner must ensure that the Parents' Committee is consulted and that this consultation is respected. At each Parents' Committee meeting, the topics discussed at the Council of Commissioners are summarized and provided, along with any relevant information.



What characteristics should parents look for when choosing Parent Commissioners?

At the first Parents' Committee meeting, the committee must elect Parent Commissioners to sit at the Council of Commissioners. At that time, representatives should be selected who are:

- available to attend meetings;
- informed on education matters;
- amenable and diplomatic;
- experienced on various Parents' Committees or with parental governance;
- honest and able to reflect the views of the Parents' Committee; and
- able to share and represent parents' priorities and concerns.

When selecting their representative, parents should take the candidate's availability, interest and experience into account.



Role and Responsibilities of the Parents' Committee Parent Representatives

- Parent Representatives represent the parents of their school.
- Parents' Committee Representatives are responsible for attending Parents' Committee meetings on a regular basis to ensure quorum; if unable to attend, they must notify the Chair or Secretary and notify the Alternate.
- If they cannot attend a meeting, Representatives must stress to the Alternate the importance of the school's representation and forward all pertinent documents to them. They must take note of the documentation received prior to the meeting and ensure that the parents in their school are adequately represented in the discussions.
- Each Representative should be able to rely on the Parents' Committee's support when they are unable to attend a committee meeting to ensure that their Alternate has all of the necessary information.
- Representatives must clearly relay to the Parents' Committee the positions or resolutions adopted by the parents of their school (by parents on the Governing Board and the Parents Participatory Organization (PPO), where applicable) and report back to their school.



ETHICS OF THE DELEGATES

Members of the Parents' Committee shall exercise the care, prudence, and diligence that a reasonable person would exercise in comparable circumstances, with honesty, loyalty, and in the best interests of the School Board and the population it serves, within the scope of their duties and powers.

Functions of the Parents' Committee

The legislator's delegation of responsibilities to the Parents' Committee is significant. The Parents' Committee is responsible for encouraging and supporting parent participation in education, in addition to serving as an important advisory body to the School Board.

The Parents' Committee is charged with the following duties under the Education Act (sec 192):

(1) to raise awareness of the value of public education among all the parents of students attending one of the school board's schools;

(2) to propose to the School Board ways of supporting parents' involvement in their role with their child in order to foster their child's success at school;

(3) to propose to the School Board ways of facilitating communication between parents and school staff members;

(4) to promote parents' participation in the activities of the school and of the School Board and, to that end, to designate parents to take part in the various committees established by the School Board;

(5) to inform the School Board of parents' needs, especially their training needs, as identified by the school representatives and by the representative of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities;

(6) to develop, with the School Board support, a policy on financial contributions and propose the policy to the School Board for adoption; and

(7) to advise the School Board on the special school projects offered or considered in its schools, on any matter likely to ensure the best possible operation of the School Board and on any matter on which it must be consulted.

Parents' Committee Consultation

The following is a list of topics on which the School Board is required to seek input from the Parents' Committee (sec 193):

- The division, annexation or amalgamation of the territory of the school board;
- The School Board's commitment-to-success plan;
- The three-year plan of allocation and destination of the immovables of the School Board, the list of school, and the deeds of establishment;
- The policy adopted under section 212 on the continued operation or closure of schools and on other changes made to the educational services provided in a school;
- The distribution of educational services among the schools;
- The School Boards by-law on the complaint examination procedure established under section 220.2;
- The criteria referred to in section 239 for the enrollment of students in schools;
- The dedication of a school to a special project pursuant to section 240 and the criteria for the enrollment of students in that school;
- The school calendar; and
- The childcare provided at school.



OPERATION AND INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

As prescribed by the Education Act, the Parents' Committee is required to meet at least three times a year. The Education Act mandates each Parents' Committee to establish its own rules of procedure. Ideally, a presentation of these operating rules should be made to the Parent Representatives at the beginning of each year.

HERE ARE SOME ELEMENTS THAT YOU SHOULD FIND IN THE INTERNAL RULES:

- Code of Conduct;
- The specific rules for regular and special meetings;
- The deadlines for sending documents related to a Parents' Committee meeting;
- The public nature of the meetings and the in-camera sessions;
- The form and content of the minutes;
- Voting by email;
- The budget;
- The composition and functions of the Executive Committee, if applicable;
- Amendments to the rules of internal management; and
- The election procedures.



BUDGET

The Education Act requires the Parents' Committee to be given an annual budget for its operations. The School Board determines the amount of the budget. In addition to its budget, the Parents' Committee benefits from the School Board's resources: it can meet in its facilities for free, use its equipment, and receive administrative assistance.

The Parents' Committee budget should be used to:

- encourage and support member participation;
- ensure that parent volunteers receive all of the information and training they require to perform their duties effectively; and
- reimburse expenses incurred by members while attending sessions, including travel and babysitting costs (note that internal rules contain information on the amounts allocated as well as how to obtain reimbursement).

IN CONCLUSION

It is critical that Parents' Committee Parent Representatives have access to all of the information and training they require to perform their duties on the Parents' Committee.

The budget of the Parents' Committee can be used to provide training for Parents' Committee members or the School Board can provide training for them. As well, there are a variety of additional resources available at epcaquebec.org and we remain available to support as needed.



EPCAQUEBEC.ORG

PARENT COMMITTEE **BUDGET**

TABLE CONTENTS

- Budget Management
- School Board Support
- Location
- Administrative support
- Equipment
- Parent Committee Expenses
- Parent Support and participation
- Other expenses
- Training
- Surplus & Shortfall
- FAQ



WELCOME MESSAGE

The **English Parents' Committee Association**, the EPCA, is a coalition of parents' committees of Quebec's English school boards; it represents nearly 100,000 students in the young anglophone sector. EPCA is a non-profit association funded by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEES).

The EPCA advocates for public education in English in Quebec and lobbies for questions that concern members of our parent committee.

We hope that you find this guide useful. Do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions you might have.

Section 197 of the Education Act (E.A.) establishes the Parents Committee's budget.

“The parents’ committee and the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities shall adopt their annual operating budget, see to its administration and give an account thereof to the school service centre.

The budget shall maintain a balance between the expenditures of each committee on the one hand and the financial resources allocated to each committee by the school service centre and each committee’s own other revenues, on the other.”

The amount of money allocated to the Parents' Committee varies between school boards due to factors such as the size of the school board, the number of representatives, the territory, and the level of support provided by the school board.





Budget Management

The budget is prepared at the beginning of the year and is used to support activities planned for the coming year. The Parents' Committee must maintain a balanced budget, meaning that its expenses must equal its income. The committee manages its budget, but certain aspects, such as bookkeeping or issuing payments, may be entrusted to the administrative services of the school board. In all cases, it is the Parents' Committee that decides how it uses the financial resources at its disposal.

A parent could be appointed as treasurer to prepare the annual budget, ensure members' requests are compliant, present a regular report to the Parents' Committee, and prepare the financial statement at the end of the year.

School Board Support

It is important to note that Section 194 of the EDUCATION ACT specifies the various types of support that the school board must provide at no cost to the parents' committee:

“The committees may hold their meetings on the premises of the school service center. The committees may also use, free of charge the administrative support services and the facilities of the school service center in accordance with the terms and conditions established by the director general.”

LOCATION

The practice of holding Parents' Committee meetings in school board-provided rooms is well established in the community. Depending on the needs of the Parents' Committee, the school boards make available rooms at their head office, one of their schools, or any other building with adequate space.



Parent Support and participation

The budget of the Parents' Committee can be used to reimburse travel and babysitting expenses for members to attend committee meetings at no cost.

Administrative support

Administrative support encompasses a wide range of activities, such as taking notes and keeping minutes, resolution handling, document printing or reproduction, e-mailing documents, and recordkeeping. The school board provides staff members to complete these tasks, or the Parents' Committee hires its own staff. Each Parent Committee works with their school board to find the best formula.

Equipment

The school board should provide free equipment such as laptops, Internet access, software, audiovisual equipment, and technical support for in-person or remote meetings.

Parent Committee Expenses

Section 197 of the Education Act states that the annual budget of the Parents' Committee must be used to support and encourage the participation of members, and to ensure that parent volunteers have the information and training they need to play their role effectively.

TIPS

- Parents' Committees could calculate travel to meetings based on the address of their school, and provide a minimal travel allowance for those who live in the immediate vicinity.
- The financial resources allocated to the Parents' Committee come from public funds and must be used to ensure its proper functioning, support its mission and sustain the participation of its members.
- Inappropriate use of these funds or the accumulation of excessive surpluses could raise serious questions about the sound budgetary management of the Parents' Committee.

Other possible expenses

Additional expenses could be charged to the Parent Committee's budget, such as refreshments, acknowledgement, courtesies, gifts for Secretaries' Week, and recognition for members whose involvement as a parent is coming to an end.

The internal rules should indicate:

The terms and conditions for reimbursement of expenses must be clearly described in the committee's internal rules, such as the amount offered for each mile traveled, the manner in which the distance travelled is calculated, the conditions under which reimbursement is granted, and the procedure for requesting reimbursement.

To avoid any misunderstanding, the terms and conditions for reimbursement of these expenses must be clearly described in the committee's internal rules.

Training

The Parents' Committee is responsible for informing the school board of the training requirements of parents. To meet these needs, the school board may organize free parent training activities or provide a budget.

EPCA can be used as a training resource.





BUDGET

Budget Surplus

If the Parents' Committee has a budget surplus at the end of the year, and the school board is in charge of deciding what to do with it. In most cases, the school board recovers the surplus, but some Parents' Committees work with their school board to set aside money for next year's activities or carry it forward to the budget balance.

Budget shortfall

When a Parents' Committee has a budget deficit, it is possible to request an increase in the school boards budget. To do this, the committee should conduct a thorough assessment of their requirements, including the amounts required to cover costs incurred by members for their participation, administrative support and equipment, activities or events to increase member mobilization, and training sessions to improve knowledge and ensure full participation. This assessment will help the committee engage in a discussion with the school board and demonstrate the justification for the amounts required.



FAQ

Can a Parents' Committee can have its own bank account that is separate from the School Board?

A Parents' Committee can have its own bank account that is separate from the School Board. This arrangement requires additional work on the part of Parents' Committee members in terms of accountability and changes in signing authorities, as well as increased risk of misappropriation.

Can alcohol be purchased?

Tread carefully! Most public organizations now prohibit the purchase or reimbursement of alcoholic beverages to avoid criticism and controversy.

Where does the budget for the Parents Committee come from?

[Section 197 of the Education Act \(E.A.\)](#)



English Parents'
Committee Association



LET'S WORK TOGETHER

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Montreal, QC. H3W 3C3

PARENT PARTICIPATION ORGANIZATION



GUIDE

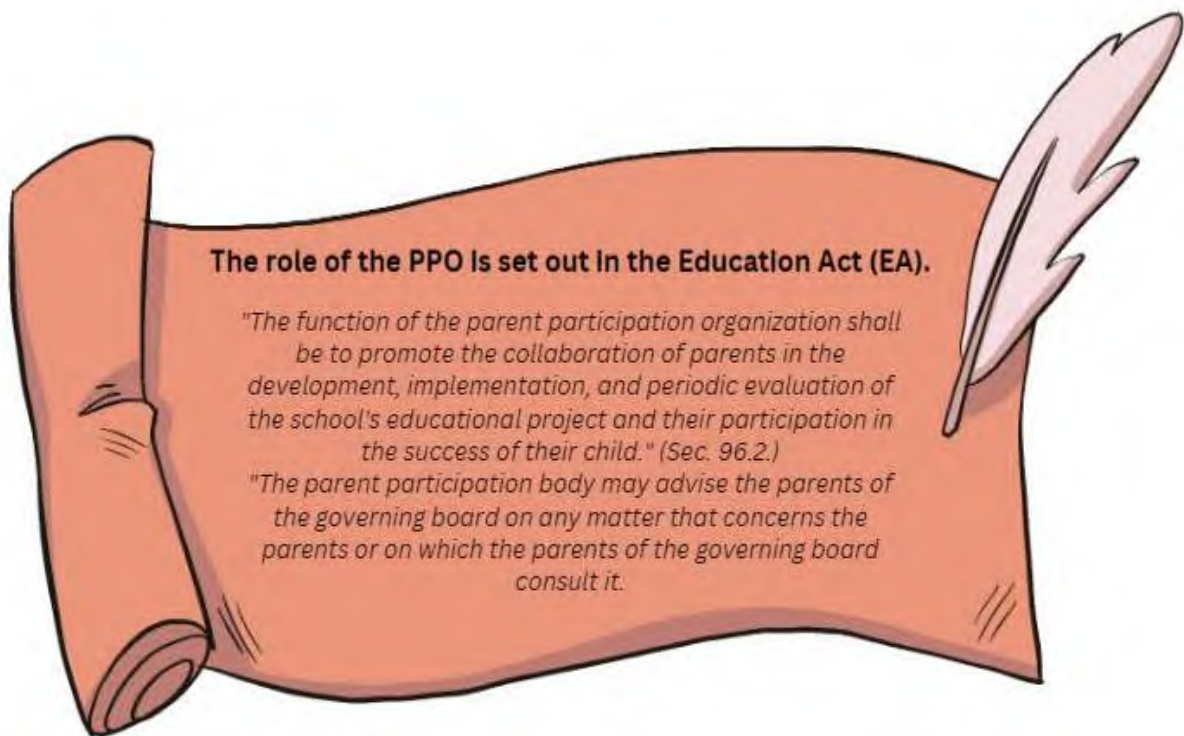
EPCA QUEBEC

PARENT PARTICIPATION ORGANIZATION (PPO) GUIDE

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) thinks that parents need to be involved in school for the school to do its job of educating our children. This participation may be exercised in many different ways but can include participation in official school-based organizations.

To make sure their child goes to school and does well, parents must be involved in their lives. They are often invited to participate in school activities, either as volunteers, resource persons, or by recognizing student achievements. They can also be directly involved in school participation structures such as the Governing Board, Parent Participation Organization, Parent Committee, and the Advisory Committee on Services for Handicapped Students and Students with Special Needs.

The PPO plays a key role in achieving parent engagement. Since 1988, the PPO has been a parent-only table whose main objective is to promote parent involvement in the school.



The Educational Project is a strategic tool that defines what is expected of the school to ensure the educational success of all students. It is developed in response to the characteristics and needs of the students with the collaboration of all stakeholders in the school.



The goals of PPO are to essentially:

- encourage parents to work with the school on planning, implementing, and evaluating the educational project from time to time.
- promote parental involvement in their child's educational success.

In order to play these roles well, PPO parents should therefore:

- be aware of parents' perceptions, comments, and suggestions;
- keep parents' thinking alive about what they want for their children;
- pool parents' concerns and share them with those involved and the school; and
- tell the parents on the Governing Board what they think about everything that has to do with the parents;

Decisions concerning the creation and operation of the PPO are taken at the school's annual meeting of parents (PIL, art. 47 and 96). The chair of the Governing Board is responsible for convening this meeting and preparing the agenda in collaboration with the school administration. An agenda item at the school's annual meeting should be reserved for the PPO. It is at this time, if they wish, that parents can decide to form a PPO for their school.

If the PPO already exists:

- The PPO Chair presents the annual activity report.
- It announces the action plan or a list of projects for the coming year.
- It refers to the election of new members.
- It asks the assembly to make changes, if necessary, to the composition and operation of the organization.



If the PPO has never been trained:

- It is the responsibility of the chair of the governing board to coordinate the project to create a PPO with the assistance of any other interested parents.
- This project must be well prepared in collaboration with the school administration.
- The Chair of the Governing Board submits, in writing, a proposal for the departure of the governing board, including the name, functions, number of members, minimum operating rules, etc.
- If the school has more than one building, one PPO may be formed for each building or one for each level of education if the school offers both primary and secondary education (PIL, s. 96.1).

The composition of the PPO is not provided for in the PIL. It is therefore the general assembly of parents of the school that decides on the composition of the PPO. Usually, the PPO is made up of parents of the school elected by the general assembly of parents. Any parent from the school can be a member, including parents who are employees of the school. Other parents may volunteer during the year to join the team as long as it is within the number of members set by the assembly. Note that the law does not limit the number of members who can be part of the PPO.

The PPO may engage, as needed, any resource person it deems necessary to assist in the development of the project.

At its first meeting, a Chairperson should be appointed to ensure the smooth functioning of the PPO. Another person could be designated to serve as secretary and assist the Chair in carrying out his or her duties.

Depending on the group's planned activities, it may be useful to appoint a treasurer and a project manager(s) for the projects to be conducted by the PPO.

The PIL is silent as to the operation of a PPO, except for:

- the right to meet on school premises (Art. 96.4).
- the right to use the school's administrative support services and facilities in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement; facilities established by the school principal, after consultation with the governing board (Art. 96.4).

The PPO's rules of procedure, adopted by the general assembly of parents, must cover several points: composition, formation, presidency, meetings, reports, budget, etc. The PIL does not require the PPO to prepare agendas for its meetings and keep minutes to record its decisions. However, clear meeting minutes can be an effective communication tool for sharing the PPO's plans with its stakeholders.

With respect to the PPO's operating budget and reimbursement of members' expenses, the PIL does not provide further guidance. Therefore, the Governing Board and school administration should be involved in determining the financial resources available to the PPO and developing a reimbursement policy. This policy will set out how PPO members can be compensated for expenses incurred in attending meetings and training.

The PPO works with a number of people and groups at the school, such as the Governing Board. The Governing Board has a lot of power over the PPO. For example, it decides on the educational project and budget, approves management proposals, and decides on activities that are not related to education and campaigns to raise money. A positive relationship is essential for the smooth operation of both organizations.

Good practice



PPO News

The Governing Board could add "PPO News" to the agenda of each meeting and ask the Chair or another member of the PPO to talk about current activities and projects that are coming up with the parents of the Governing Board.

With the Governing Board's parents as an organization made up entirely of parents, the PPO is an excellent venue for hearing from parents. It can thus give its opinion to the Governing Board's parents and the Parents' Committee's representative at their request or on its own initiative. A close relationship between Governing Board parents and PPO parents has advantages, but the roles of each should not be confused.

With school administration

The principal reports to the Regional Director of the School Board, not the Governing Board. Their primary functions are as follows:

- ensuring the quality of educational services provided by the school;
- ensuring the school's pedagogical and administrative direction;
- ensuring that Governing Board decisions are followed; and
- managing the school's material resources.

The principal is not a PPO member and is not required by law to participate. But for the PPO to work well, there needs to be constant and clear communication with the principal (sections 96.12 and 96.23 of the Education Act).



The PPO is not mandated to be a school fund-raiser, but assists in fundraising activities to make youth projects possible.

Before starting a fundraising campaign, the PPO must get the OK from the Governing Board. The Governing Board is the only body that can receive financial contributions for the school and must approve by resolution the event and the nature of the goods to be sold or the activity to be organized.

The Governing Board administers the school's PPO fund and must adopt a resolution to deposit or withdraw money from it. It also means that when the time comes to organize activities with the money raised, the PPO will again need the Governing Board's approval in order to withdraw money from this account. So, it's important to agree on what the money raised through fundraising will be used for right from the start.

The PPO gives each parent group a wide range of options for how to act, based on the creativity of the people in the group and the needs of the community. For example:

- establish a parent volunteer bank.
- participate in the organization of extracurricular activities, parties, and other important events.
- develop school improvement projects (e.g., schoolyard).
- provide information to parents.
- organize conferences and thematic days or weeks.
- conduct fundraising campaigns on behalf of the Governing Board.
- develop projects in connection with the community.



As a conclusion to this guide, here are a few good practices to implement in order to gain community trust, have fun working together, and contribute to the success of the youth in your school:

- Take the time to build good relationships: among PPO members, with the Chair of the Governing Board, with the school administration, etc.
- Define your needs, including meeting locations, communications, and secretarial support. Communicate these clearly to your partners.
- Use the school's priorities, which are listed in the educational project, as a place to start when deciding which projects to do.
- Set realistic goals and projects. A strong team is built on small wins and successes. Build your projects by ensuring that your partners support you.
- Share your experiences, successes, and challenges with other PPOs from schools in your area to fuel each other.
- Involve parents and youth in your projects.
- Persuade the school's representative on the Parents' Committee to share your accomplishments with representatives from all schools in the School Board.
- Plan for the succession for future years!



What Is a Home & School Association?

And What Can It Do for Your School Community?



It's an independent group of parent volunteers and other volunteers from the school community.

Research shows that when parents are involved with their children's school, the success rate for the child improves.

Parents benefit too: Volunteering brings joy and new friendships!



It enhances the educational experience of students and builds a strong school community through a variety of initiatives—family barbecues, field days, holiday celebrations, teacher/staff appreciation weeks, etc...



It provides extras via fundraisers for special events, teacher wish lists, schoolyard improvement projects, books for classroom libraries, field trips, and more!



It's a democratically-run group with an executive committee, constitution, and by-laws. It works with school administrations and governing boards to ensure all Home and School activities are approved in advance.



It's part of a Quebec-wide network of Home and School Associations in the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA). Since 1944, the QFHSA has been supporting local associations in their work, providing guidance, training, and insurance for their events.

Join the 75+ Home & School Associations in Quebec!

Get in touch with the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) today!



514-481-5619

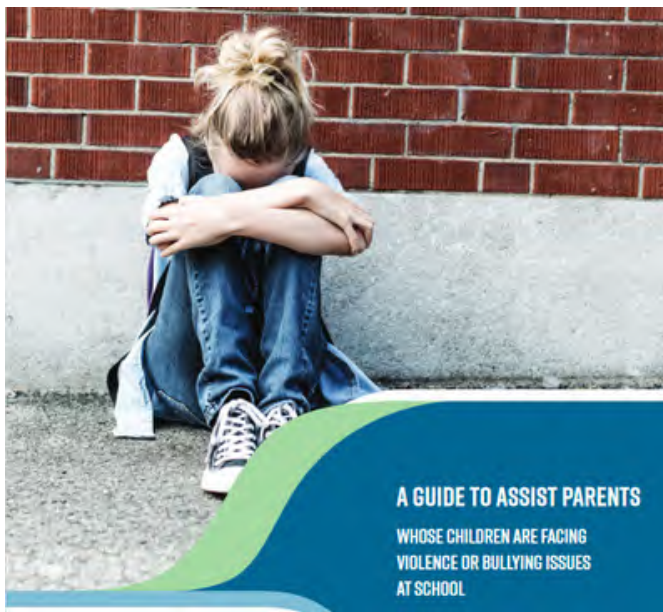


info@qfhsa.org



www.qfhsa.org

Parent Resources



The Quebec Federation of Parents' Committees, with support from various partners - including EPCA's President Katherine Korakakis, has put together a guide to assist parents whose children are facing violence or bullying issues at school - click [here](#).

Tutoring



Homework Help



ENGLISH ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

Explainer: What Quebec parents and students need to know about English eligibility certificates: At this [LINK](#) are details on how to apply for a certificate and who is eligible to attend English schools in Quebec.

EPCA MISSION STATEMENT

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) is a coalition of parents' committees of Quebec's English-language public school boards, representing more than 100,00 students in the youth sector.

EPCA advocates for a strong and sustainable English-language public education system to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our children, while respecting the culture and language of anglophone Quebecers.

To do so, EPCA seeks to engage and motivate parents across Quebec to contribute to strong, representative and effective parent governance, to foster positive relationships with stakeholders across the educational spectrum, and to provide guidance and support to all member organizations.

What would you like to see in
our upcoming editions?

[TELL US HERE](#)

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EPCA STRATEGIC PILLARS

INFORM

Using all communications tools at our disposal, offer up-to-date information on public education initiatives, parent governance interests, best practices and issues management to ensure a healthy, well-engaged anglophone parent community.

CONSULT

Ensure strong, high-quality and consistent feedback mechanisms with members and partners across the English-language public school network through both electronic and in-person methods.

SUPPORT

Provide training and professional development at all levels of parent governance, optimize the sharing of best practices and provide multiple support services for parent committees, governing boards and parent delegates in need.

ADVOCATE

Push for appropriate policy change and improvement through enhanced partnerships with like-minded organizations, Government working groups/tasks forces, and related organizations, through well-considered political positions on behalf of English- Language parents committees across Quebec, taking into account regional difference and the urban/rural divide.