

# NOTEBOOK FOR GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Part 2 of the compulsory training for governing board members

MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION

DU QUÉBEC



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## A WORD FROM THE MINISTER

To all governing board members,

I would like to congratulate you on your election or appointment to a governing board in an elementary or secondary school, or an adult education or vocational training centre.

You are one of the 30 000 board members in Québec who wish to dedicate their time to ensuring the quality of the educational services offered to young people and adults. Your commitment perfectly symbolizes our vision of community involvement in the management of schools and centres. In this way, you play a role in promoting the value of education, which is precisely what we want to achieve in this era of new school governance.

I hope that your training for this role will provide you with tangible support as you perform your duties. I also hope that you feel you are making a real difference. As parents, school staff members, students and members of the community you have a unique opportunity, together with the support of your educational institution, to make decisions that are in the best interests of the students. I am convinced that this collective empowerment is a guarantee of success in all your communities.

To all of you, who are indispensable partners in the decision-making processes of our educational institutions, thank you for your involvement. Enjoy your training!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean-François Roberge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

**Jean-François Roberge**  
Minister of Education

## Note

Throughout this document, the term “educational institution” encompasses elementary and secondary schools as well as adult education and vocational training centres.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This notebook is one of the tools used in the compulsory training for governing board members developed by the Ministère de l'Éducation. It is also intended for administrators of educational institutions.

Produced after consultations and in collaboration with education system representatives,\* this essential and compulsory notebook covers certain points stemming from the *Education Act*, while other aspects are mainly suggestions for overseeing the operations or practices considered to be effective.

## THIS NOTEBOOK CONTAINS:

- › diagrams showing the specific features of governing boards in elementary and secondary schools, on the one hand, and in adult education and vocational training centres, on the other
- › a description of the roles and responsibilities of board members along with those of principals and directors of educational institutions
- › a list of the governing board's powers, roles and collaborators
- › a calendar with a breakdown of topics to be covered during the school year
- › a memory aid to help stakeholders distinguish between the two main powers of a governing board, which are "to adopt" and "to approve"

To ensure that the governing board can successfully exercise its functions and powers, it is suggested that an activity be planned for the start of the school year to give the board members and the principal (or director) an opportunity to discuss the content of this notebook, in order to arrive at a common and shared understanding of each person's roles and responsibilities.

**Enjoy your time on the board!**

\* See the list of education system partners on the next page.

**This training was developed by the  
Ministère de l'Éducation in collaboration  
with partners from the education system:**

- › Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ)
- › Association des directions générales des centres de services scolaires (ADIGECSS)
- › Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Québec (ADGESBQ)
- › Association montréalaise des directions d'établissement scolaire (AMDES)
- › Association québécoise des cadres scolaires (AQCS)
- › Association québécoise du personnel de direction des écoles (AQPDE)
- › Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) and its three federations in the education sector:
  - Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ)
  - Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ)
  - Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation du Québec (FPPE-CSQ)
- › Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN):  
Fédération des employées et des employés de services publics de la CSN (Secteur scolaire-FEESP CSN)
- › English Parents Committee Association (EPCA)
- › Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE)
- › Fédération des centres de services scolaires du Québec (FCSSQ)
- › Fédération des comités de parents du Québec (FCPQ)
- › Fédération québécoise des directions d'établissement d'enseignement (FQDE)
- › Québec English School Boards Association (QESBA)
- › Regroupement des comités de parents autonomes du Québec (RCPAQ)





# 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.

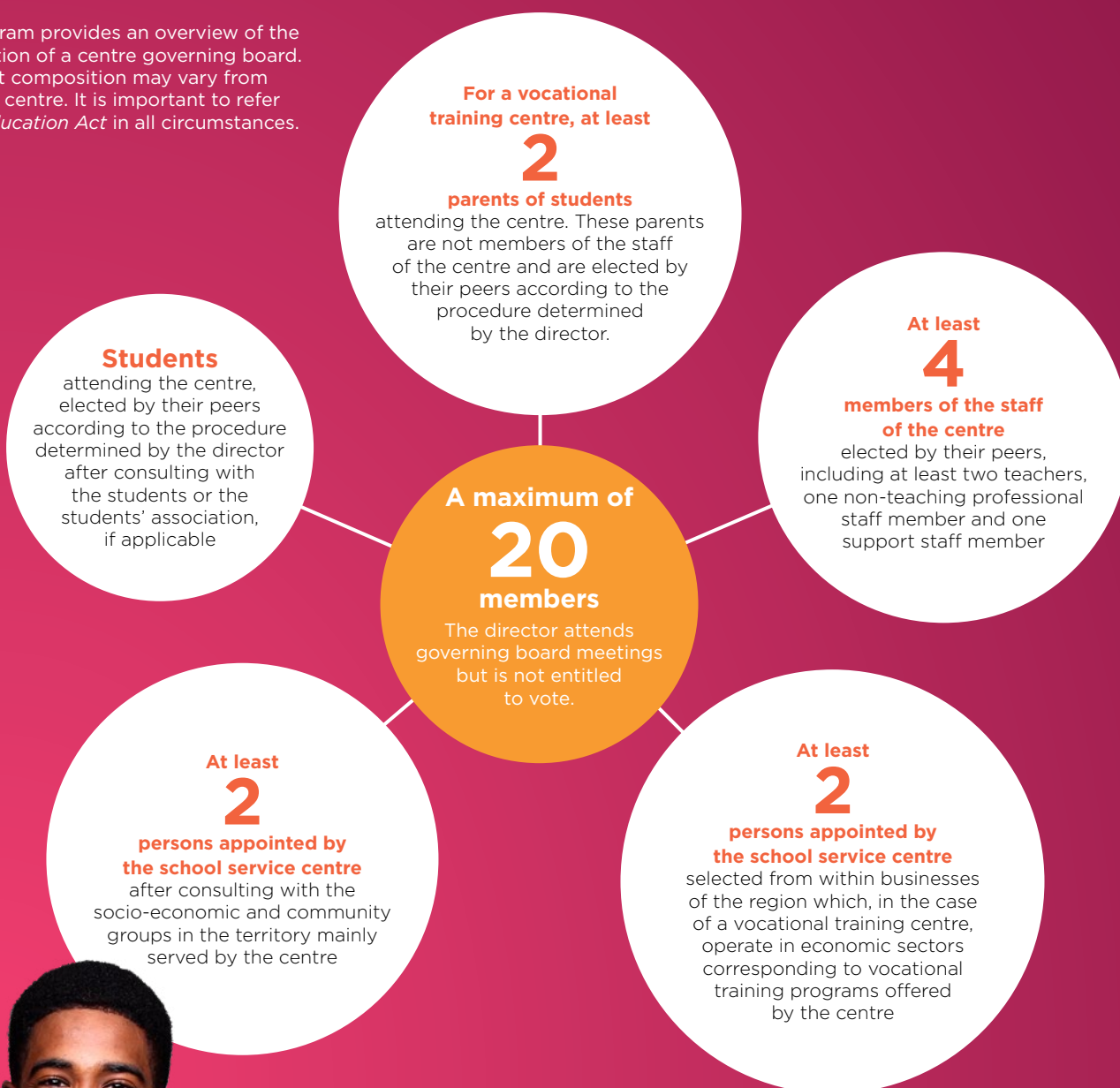




# GOVERNING BOARD OF A CENTRE

(vocational training centre and adult education centre)

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



## PLEASE NOTE:

- The positions of chair and vice-chair are selected from among the elected parents' representatives and the members appointed by the school service centre. The chair and vice-chair hold their positions for one year.
- All members are entitled to vote.
- All categories of staff should be represented on the governing board to ensure that the entire centre team can participate.

## NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

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.

## TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office of governing board members is two years.



### 3. GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS<sup>1</sup> AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION PRINCIPALS AND DIRECTORS

This section is based on the provisions of the *Education Act* and on experience acquired on governing boards since their inception in Québec over 20 years ago. In case of doubt, the Act takes precedence.

#### Ethical considerations

- › Follow the training developed by the Ministère de l'Éducation.
  - › Act within the limits of the functions and powers conferred on you.
  - › Act with care, prudence and diligence (just as any reasonable person would do in similar circumstances), with honesty and loyalty, and in the best interests of the educational institution, its students, their parents, the staff members and the community.
    - **Acting with care** involves tailoring your interventions and closely examining proposals.
    - **Acting with prudence** means avoiding interventions that could cause harm or damage.
    - **Acting with diligence** means acting promptly and assiduously within the time requested.
- › Inform the principal or director of the educational institution<sup>2</sup> in writing of any direct or indirect business interests that could bring your personal interests into conflict with those of the institution. In such cases, abstain from voting, ensure that you do not unduly influence the decision-making process, and recuse yourself from related discussions.
  - › Act in a responsible and ethical manner before, during and after meetings and for the entire duration of your mandate.
  - › Assume a share of the responsibility for the climate required to start discussions, and make decisions in a spirit of collegiality.
  - › Recognize that, in almost all cases, proposals submitted to the governing board are the result of a development process (collaborative work) involving the staff members concerned and the administration, in compliance with the legal requirements. For additional information, see the **List of governing board powers**.

<sup>1</sup> This training also applies to all substitute members, whether they are parents, staff members or students.

<sup>2</sup> The principal or director of the educational institution is also required to declare any direct or indirect personal business interests that could be in conflict with the interests of the school or centre (ss. 96.11 and 110.8 of the EA).

## Roles and responsibilities

- › Represent the individuals that you were elected or appointed to represent.

The parent members represent the parents of children at the school, and the teacher members represent the teachers at the school. The same goes for the professional and support staff, as well as for the student members who represent the student body. As a member, you express your views always with regard to the individuals that you were elected or appointed to represent.

- › Communicate in a constructive manner relevant to the topic or proposal in question, in other words, be:
  - **in listening mode** when other members are speaking
  - **in questioning or proposing mode** when you are speaking
  - **in problem-solving or decision-making mode** when you need to take a position
- › Ensure that you have obtained all the necessary information and the answers to your questions before taking a position as a board member with respect to an upcoming vote or decision.
- › Express your views clearly when a decision has to be made (e.g. be in favour of or against, abstain from voting, disagree<sup>3</sup>) without fear of reprisals, and stand behind your decision.

<sup>3</sup> A board member may agree or disagree with a proposal, abstain from voting or express a difference of opinion with regard to a decision of the board. The internal management rules that the governing board must adopt may stipulate how votes are to be recorded in meetings (e.g. a member can ask that their name be mentioned in the minutes along with the fact that they disagree with a board decision).

- › In all circumstances, make decisions that are **in the best interests of all students and conducive to their educational success**.

In keeping with the **principle of equality of opportunity**, the mission of a school is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study.

Accordingly, governing board members as well as the principals and directors of educational institutions are required to respect this principle in all circumstances, so that the board's decisions offer **all students** (paying special attention to those who need it the most) the conditions most conducive to **their well-being and educational success**.



## Expected attitudes and competencies

### ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVEMENT

- › Be present<sup>4</sup> and fully available and play an active role in each meeting.
- › Read and take notes on all documentation you receive before board meetings and be prepared for discussions.
- › Consult the people you represent depending on the topics to be covered in board meetings and ensure follow-up, if appropriate.

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To ensure that you stay connected to the group you represent and are aware of the orientations its members agree on, use the means available for doing so (e.g. online consultation, email, meetings) and report to the group on decisions taken (e.g. the principal or director and staff share the minutes of meetings with other members of the educational institution; the board chair consults parents on a specific topic and subsequently informs them of any decisions taken with respect to it).

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- › Take part in all consultations requested by the school service centre.
- › If you anticipate that you will not be able to attend a meeting, notify the board chair in advance.
- › Should you plan to resign from the board, notify the chair in advance so that the position can be filled as soon as possible.

### RESPECT, COMMUNICATION AND ACTIVE LISTENING

- › Always address the chair of the board.
- › Respect the internal management rules of your board.
- › Respect each member's time and right to speak as well as their opinions and voting decisions while being polite and courteous in all circumstances.
- › Ask questions relevant to the topic of discussion to ensure that you understand it well.
- › Express your opinion or point of view clearly and succinctly while recognizing that personal matters cannot be addressed at board meetings, just like topics that do not fall within the board's area of expertise.

<sup>4</sup> Attendance at meetings is an essential requirement for all governing board members. If the governing board is unable to hold a meeting for lack of a quorum after three consecutive notices have been sent at intervals of at least seven days, the school service centre may order that the functions and powers of the governing board be suspended for a period determined by the school service centre and that they be exercised by the principal or director (ss. 62 and 108 of the EA).





## TEAMWORK AND RECOGNITION

- › Recognize the benefits of working in partnership.
- › Highlight the initiatives and achievements of the community.
- › Recognize and value the personal commitment of all governing board members, including:

- the contribution and expertise of the staff, who thoroughly understand the education community, the institution and educational issues, as well as the students' needs and issues specifically related to their educational success
- the essential contribution of the parents, who are very familiar with the realities and responsibilities associated with the parental role and with that of elementary and secondary school students
- the contribution and participation of student members, who have a good understanding of their community, including the interests, concerns and needs of the students in the school or centre
- the contribution of members of the community, who bring with them a diverse range of expertise and points of view that enrich the discussions and decisions of the governing board

## DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT AND LOYALTY

- › Recognize that **all governing board decisions require the support of the majority of the board members who are present when decisions are made and who are entitled to vote** (while there may be a consensus, all members must have had an opportunity to express their views on the proposal in question).
- › Avoid conflicts but accept disagreements, compromises and dissidence (e.g. while you may not be in favour of a proposal and may even disassociate from it, you can still respect the board's decision).

## KNOWLEDGE

- › Know how governing boards work and be familiar with their internal management rules (e.g. know how to call for a vote or obtain recognition to speak).
- › Have a general knowledge of the powers of a governing board (see the **list of powers** and the **calendar for the topics to be covered**).
- › Know the role and responsibilities of the board chair as well as those of the principal or director of the educational institution.
- › Understand the difference between the power to adopt and the power to approve.
- › Know the strengths and challenges of the educational institution and the respective roles of the members of the school team and the centre team.
- › Know the broad outlines of the *Education Act* and the respective basic regulation as it applies to students, young people or adults.

## 4. SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### a) Chairs and vice-chairs

The board chair sees to it that the board functions properly and performs their role in tandem with the principal or director of the educational institution.

The vice-chair assists the chair in the performance of their duties and replaces the chair when they are absent or temporarily unavailable. In such cases, the roles and responsibilities of the vice-chair are the same as those of the chair.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities that they already assume as a board member, the chair (or the vice-chair in their absence) has to perform other important functions that enable the board to carry out its mandate in a harmonious and constructive manner.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- › Remind the members of their responsibilities regarding compliance with the ethics rules and the conduct expected of them should a conflict of interest arise during their mandate.
- › Ensure, together with the board members and the principal or director, that there is follow-up in the transmission to parents, staff members and the community of information relating to the services offered by the educational institution and accountability for their quality.
- › Ensure that board meetings are public and facilitate access to them.
- › Ensure that the board follows the procedures outlined in the internal management protocol, which allows the board to hold meetings behind closed doors when analyzing any matter that could otherwise be harmful to an individual (e.g. when the board is choosing a company to provide certain services at the school, or when the board needs to study the files of one or more individuals, in which case a closed-door meeting ensures that they are not harmed in any way).
- › Maintain **regular communication** with the principal or director to ensure that they keep each other apprised of the situation at the institution, or of specific issues that the board needs to consider.

### NOTES

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- › Write to the students' parents at the start of the school year and invite them (at least four days in advance) to a general assembly to elect parent representatives to the board along with a representative to sit on the parents' committee; prepare for the meeting along with the principal or director.
- › Ensure the proper functioning of the board and its meetings by fostering order during discussions and debates prior to making a decision, in accordance with the board's internal management rules (e.g. call the members to order when they stray from the topic under discussion or from the board's mandate).
- › Ensure that you are available to prepare for meetings in conjunction with the principal or director (e.g. draft agenda and documentation to be sent to the members).
- › Ensure, in conjunction with the principal or director, that the governing board members and substitute members are invited to the board's meetings and that they receive all the documents needed for these meetings.

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***Note: Unless otherwise stated in the board's internal management rules, the agenda and accompanying documents must be transmitted to the board members and their substitutes at least two days before the date of the meeting.***

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- › Represent the board and keep the parents informed of its activities (e.g. a brief message from the chair or the board in the school bulletin, email to parents).

- › Keep an updated list of the parents' names and contact information and call on substitutes to sit in when a regular member is absent.
- › Ensure that there is a quorum at each meeting.
- › In accordance with the board's internal management rules:
  - Make sure that the documents are available in the meeting room for all those present.
  - Chair board meetings from opening to adjournment (e.g. read and keep track of the items on the agenda; make room for various items suggested by members; give board members and any members of the public who may be present their turn to speak; ensure effective time management during the meeting or delegate a member to do so; work cooperatively with the person acting as secretary<sup>5</sup>).
  - Ensure that all members have had an opportunity to voice their views before the board makes a decision on a proposal.
- › Exercise your right to vote like all the other members who enjoy this right (Note: Members vote, but decisions regarding proposals are made by the board).
- › Cast a deciding vote<sup>6</sup> when there is a tie or put off the decision until a later date in order to continue studying the proposal in question.
- › Ensure that all decisions are recorded in the minutes along with the appropriate mentions (e.g. unanimous decision, majority decision, number of abstentions or members in disagreement, if applicable).
- › Sign the minutes of the meeting.

<sup>5</sup> The governing board may use the school's administrative support services and facilities free of charge, subject to the conditions determined by the principal or director (s. 65 of the EA). It is therefore possible to have a person who acts as a secretary. This frees up board members so that they can focus more on board discussions and the decisions before it.

<sup>6</sup> When the board is undecided, the chair has two options: the chair may break the tie, that is to say, vote for or against a proposal; or the chair may choose to postpone the decision if the division in the group is too large and the decision is too difficult to make in the best interests of students (e.g. large number of issues raised or disadvantages for students).

## 4. SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT.)

### b) Principals and directors of educational institutions

Principals and directors of educational institutions participate in governing board meetings but are not entitled to vote. Even though they are not board members, they are required to work in conjunction with the chair and to assist the board members in exercising their functions and powers. Working in tandem with the chair, principals and directors foster a spirit of collegiality and the creation of essential partnerships involving all the board members concerned.

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- › Provide the chair with sufficient support in the exercise of their functions and give them all the latitude they need to chair and run meetings.
  - › Respect the board's governance rules, particularly with regard to members taking turns speaking.
  - › Ensure that members have all the information they need to make good decisions and that this information is clear and conducive to real understanding.
- › Depending on the culture of the institution and if the context allows for it, present the broad outlines of pending proposals and gather suggestions from members, or invite a board member to do so.
  - › Maintain **regular communication** with the chair to keep them apprised of specific situations in the educational institution or of matters to consider during board meetings.

### NOTES

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- › Prepare and hold the general assembly for parents together with the board chair.
- › Preside over the board until a chair has been elected.
- › Ensure that the members have disclosed, in writing, any direct or indirect business interests.
- › Ensure that a file of the minutes is kept and countersign the minutes with the person acting as chair.
- › Ensure that all the board's decisions are applied.
- › Assist the board in exercising its functions and powers,<sup>7</sup> namely:
  - Coordinate the analysis of the institution's situation as well as the development, implementation and periodic evaluation of its educational project.
  - Coordinate the development, revision and, if necessary, the updating of the anti-bullying and anti-violence plan.
  - Ensure the development of proposals to be submitted to the governing board.<sup>8</sup>

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Recognize that, in almost all cases, proposals submitted to the governing board are the result of a development process (collaborative work) involving the staff members concerned and the administration, in compliance with the legal requirements. For additional information, see the **List of governing board powers**.

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- Ensure that the board receives the information it needs before making decisions.
- Transmit to parents all documents that the board would like them to see.<sup>9</sup>
- Foster cooperation among parents, students and staff as well as their involvement in the life of the institution and students' educational success.
- Inform the board members of the proposals the board approves under section 96.15 of the *Education Act* (e.g. new instructional methods, standards and procedures for the evaluation of student achievement).
- › Consult the board regarding the requirements of the institution as regards goods and services, and of any required improvement, equipment, construction, conversion or repair of the premises or immovables placed at the disposal of the institution.
- › Draw up the institution's budget, submit it to the governing board for adoption, ensure that it is implemented, and report on its implementation to the board.
- › Facilitate the creation of sub-committees, if necessary.
- › Give feedback on follow-ups indicated in the minutes of meetings.
- › Together with the chair and if necessary, reframe discussions should the topic exceed the board's mandate (e.g. pedagogical issues or human resources).

- <sup>7</sup> Since school service centres support to educational institutions, administrative services (e.g. the general secretary, the financial resources department) can provide principals and directors of educational institutions and governing boards with the information and guidance they need to meet specific needs.
- <sup>8</sup> If the principal or director fails or refuses to submit to the governing board a proposal concerning a matter within the purview of the governing board within 15 days of the date on which the governing board requests the proposal, the governing board may act without such a proposal (ss. 96.13 and 110.10 of the EA).
- <sup>9</sup> To this end, the governing board and the principle or director of the educational institution agree on the terms and conditions for sending documents to parents (e.g. types of documents, preferred lines of communication, amount of time between preparing and sending documents).

## 4. SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT.)

### c) Representatives on the parents' committee and designated parent substitutes, if applicable

One of the parents' representatives elected to the governing board (during the general assembly for parents) is elected to represent the school's parents on the parents' committee at the school service centre.

Also, should the assembly so decide, another parents' representative is appointed as a substitute to sit on the parents' committee and vote in place of the representative if the latter cannot be present at a meeting. Both positions have a one-year term of office.

#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- › Ensure that they are easily available, because at least four more meetings are being added to their schedule during the school year in addition to the time required to prepare for meetings).
- › Be rigorous and transparent when representing the school and sharing information.
- › Have a good understanding of the situation in their school.

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- › In addition to the functions as a parent member on the governing board, represent the school's parents at meetings of the parents' committee (e.g. share certain concerns or ideas submitted by the parents of the school or the board).
- › If you cannot be present at a meeting, call upon the parent substitute (as need be).
- › Ensure that you have the information required to take a position in consultations with the parents' committee conducted by the school service centre.
- › If necessary, communicate with the school's parents during certain consultations conducted by the parents' committee.
- › Provide the governing board with accurate reports on discussions, stances and questions originating at the parents' committee (e.g. inclusion of a message by the parents' committee representative on the board's agenda with regard to a legislative item, information in the school bulletin).

## NOTES

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## 5. LIST OF GOVERNING BOARD POWERS

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 <sup>10</sup>                            | Roles of the governing board  | Main role of the principal or director of the educational institution and its staff members (collaborators)  | Suggested time frame <sup>11</sup>                         |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Educational project</b><br>ss. 74, 75, 96.13, 109, 109.1 and 110.10             | <b>Analyzes</b> the situation of the educational institution and fosters the participation of all stakeholders interested in student success<br><br><b>Adopts</b> the educational project and ensures that it is implemented and evaluated<br><br><b>Transmits</b> the educational project to the school service centre and publishes it along with its evaluation <sup>12</sup>  | 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.<br><br>The staff members are involved in all the steps. <sup>13</sup>                           | Spring (approval) + at any time (follow-up and evaluation) |
| <b>Anti-bullying and anti-violence action plan</b><br>ss. 75.1, 77, 83.1 and 110.4 | <b>Adopts</b> <sup>14</sup> the new or updated action plan<br><br><b>Ensures</b> 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<br><br><b>Carries out an annual evaluation</b> of the educational institution's situation with regard to the anti-bullying and anti-violence action plan<br><br><b>Ensures</b> 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 <sup>15</sup> and ensures its implementation.<br><br>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            |

<sup>10</sup> *Education Act*, CQLR, c. I-13.3.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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).

<sup>13</sup> 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*).

<sup>14</sup> In the English school system, the governing board approves the new or updated action plan.

<sup>15</sup> 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  |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Rules of conduct and safety measures</b><br><b>Operating rules</b><br>(centres)<br>ss. 76, 77 and 110.2   | <b>Approves</b>   | 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.<br><br>The staff members participate in developing the rules and measures. | Spring<br>(for the next school year)  |
| <b>Financial contributions required</b><br>for materials, school activities, services provided within the scope of a special school project, and lunch monitoring services<br>ss. 3 para. 4, 7 para. 3, 75.0.1 para. 1 and 2, and s. 292 para. 3 | <b>Approves</b>   | The principal or director proposes them, with the participation of the teachers.   | Winter or spring<br>(before the next school year – so that the parents receive the list before the summer and the bill in the fall) + at any time |
| <b>Principles for determining the costs</b> of documents and material for personal use<br><br><b>List of materials for personal use</b><br>s. 77.1   | <b>Establishes</b> the principles<br><br><b>Approves</b> the list   |  |   |
| <b>Operating rules for childcare services*</b><br>s. 77.2  | <b>Adopts</b> <sup>16</sup>   | The principal proposes them, with the participation of the person responsible for childcare services. <sup>17</sup>  | Winter or spring<br>(for the next school year)  |
| <b>Advice and recommendations</b> <sup>18</sup><br>(power of initiative)<br>ss. 78, 78.1, 110, 110.0.1   | <b>Advises</b> the principal or director, or school service centre <sup>19</sup>  | The principal or director assists the governing board and provides reasons for any refusals.   | At any time   |
| <b>Establishment of committees</b> <sup>20</sup><br>ss. 78.2 and 110.0.2   | <b>Can form committees</b>  | The principal or director assists the governing board.   | At any time   |
| <b>Deed of establishment</b><br>ss. 40, 79, 101 and 110.1  | <b>Must be consulted</b> by the school service centre (if the deed is modified or revoked)<br><br><b>Can request</b> that the deed be modified or revoked | The principal or director assists the governing board and ensures that the school service centre is kept in the loop.  | At any time   |

<sup>16</sup> 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*.

<sup>17</sup> 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*).

<sup>18</sup> In the English school system, the governing board's power is limited to giving advice to the school board.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Selection criteria for the appointment of the principal or director</b><br>ss. 79 and 110.1   | <b>Must be consulted</b> by the school service centre  | The principal or director assists the governing board.   | At any time   |
| <b>Annual report</b> containing an account of the governing board's activities<br>ss. 82 and 110.4   | <b>Prepares, adopts, and transmits</b> 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   |
| <b>Educational services offered and their quality</b><br>ss. 83, 96.12, 110.3.1 and 110.9  | <b>Informs</b> the parents and the community <b>annually</b> and <b>reports</b> 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 |
| <b>Documents for parents</b> <sup>21</sup><br>ss. 96.13 and 110.10   | <b>Prepares</b> the documents to be sent to the parents  | The principal or director sends the documents to the parents. <sup>22</sup>                                  | At any time   |
| <b>Approach for the implementation of the <i>Basic school regulation</i></b><br>ss. 84, 89 and 110.2   | <b>Approves</b>  | The principal or director proposes the approach, with the participation of the staff members.                | At any time   |
| <b>Choice of textbooks and instructional materials</b> required for teaching the programs of study and <b>means of communication</b> for informing parents about the academic progress of their children<br>ss. 77.1, 89.1, 96.15 and 110.12 | <b>Must be consulted</b> 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   |
| <b>Overall approach</b> for the enrichment or adaptation of the objectives and suggested content of the programs of studies*<br>ss. 85 and 89  | <b>Approves</b>  | The principal proposes it, with the participation of the teachers.   | Winter or spring, before the next school year   |
| <b>Conditions and procedures</b> for integrating, into the educational services provided to the students, the activities or content prescribed by the Minister in the broad areas of learning*<br>ss. 85 and 89                              | <b>Approves</b>  | The principal proposes them, with the participation of the teachers.   | Winter or spring, before the next school year   |
| <b>Time allocation for each subject</b> *<br>ss. 86 and 89   | <b>Approves</b>  | The principal proposes it, with the participation of the teachers.   | Winter (ideally February or March)  |

<sup>21</sup> In the English school system, this does not apply.

<sup>22</sup> 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                        |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Educational activities</b> that entail changes in students' regular time of arrival and departure or that require the students to leave school premises*<br>ss. 87 and 89   | <b>Approves</b>   | The principal proposes them, with the participation of the staff members.   | At any time                                 |
| <b>Student services and special education services programs</b> (or popular education programs)<br>ss. 88, 89 and 110.2  | <b>Approves</b> their implementation  | The principal or director proposes them, with the participation of the staff members.   | Spring, before the next school year         |
| <b>Consultation with parents*</b><br>s. 89.1   | The parents on the governing board <b>can consult</b> the students' parents   | The principal assists the governing board.  | At any time                                 |
| <b>Consultation with students<sup>23</sup></b><br>ss. 89.2 and 110.4   | <b>Must consult</b> the students or a group of students <b>at least once a year</b> on topics related to the operations of the educational institution  | The principal assists the governing board.  | At any time                                 |
| <b>Community services</b> (educational services other than those prescribed by the <i>Basic school regulation</i> and social, cultural or sports services)<br>ss. 90 and 110.3 | <b>Can organize these services</b> and can also allow other individuals or organizations to organize them   | The principal assists the governing board.  | At any time                                 |
| <b>Conclusion of contracts</b> for the provision of goods or community services with a person or organization<br>ss. 90, 91 and 110.3  | <b>Can enter into a contract</b> and <b>require</b> a financial contribution from users of the goods or services offered  | The principal assists the governing board.  | At any time                                 |
| <b>Use of premises or immovables</b> placed at the disposal of the educational institution<br>ss. 93 and 110.4   | <b>Approves</b> their use<br><b>Approves</b> 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 | The principal or director proposes how they are to be used and keeps the school service centre in the loop.                                   | At any time                                 |
| <b>Special funds</b> (to support the educational institution's activities)<br>ss. 94 and 110.4   | <b>Can solicit and receive</b> funds<br><b>Supervises</b> the management of the funds (e.g. adopts by resolution authorizations for the disbursement of the funds) and <b>can ask to examine</b> the records of the funds         | The principal or director assists the governing board.  | At any time                                 |
| <b>Annual budget of the educational institution</b><br>ss. 95, 96.24, 110.4 and 110.13   | <b>Adopts</b> the budget and <b>submits</b> it to the school service centre for approval<br><b>Receives</b> an accountability report from the principal or director   | The principal or director prepares the budget, submits it for approval, oversees its administration and reports on it to the governing board. | June or early fall (adoption) + at any time |

23 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                                  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Various needs of educational institutions with respect to goods or services</b> and to needs related to its premises and immovables<br>ss. 96.22 and 110.13 | <b>Must be consulted</b>  | The principal or director consults the governing board.   | At any time   |
| <b>Consultations</b> (e.g. policies and regulations)<br>ss. 217  | <b>Must be consulted</b> by the school service centre   | The principal or director assists the governing board and ensures that the school service centre is kept in the loop. | At any time   |
| <b>Student enrollment criteria*</b><br>ss. 239   | <b>Must receive</b> a copy (at least 15 days before the start of the enrollment period)   | The principal ensures that the school service centre is kept in the loop.   | Winter (during registration for the next school year) |
| <b>Means for the supervision of students</b> who remain at the school during lunchtime*<br>ss. 75.0.1 and 292  | <b>Agrees</b> on means with the school service centre   | The principal assists the governing board.  | In the spring, before the next school year            |
| <b>Childcare services*</b><br>ss. 256  | <b>Can request for them to be organized and must reach an agreement</b> with the school service centre regarding organizational procedures<br><b>Forms</b> a parents' childcare committee at the request of the parents | The principal assists the governing board.  | At any time   |



## 6. CALENDAR FOR DISCUSSION OF TOPICS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

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 students<sup>24</sup>, 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  |
|---|--|
| <b>AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER</b>               |  |
| 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"> <li>the educational and community services offered</li> <li>the content of the educational project and its evaluation</li> <li>the evaluation of the results achieved with respect to preventing and dealing with bullying and violence</li> </ul> |
| ss. 75 and 109.1<br>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                                    | <b>Compulsory training for governing board members<sup>25</sup></b>  |
| ss. 53 and 459.5                          | <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>  |

<sup>24</sup> In the English school system, this does not apply.

<sup>25</sup> In the English school system, this does not apply.

| Main sections of the Education Act | Main topics covered   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER</b>       |   |
| ss. 53 and 70                      | First meeting of the governing board, compulsory training <sup>26</sup> and disclosure of interest by all members   |
| ss. 56 and 107                     | Election of the chair and vice-chair <sup>27</sup>  |
| 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)  |
| <b>NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER</b>       |   |
| ss. 37 and 97.1                    | Follow-up of the educational project or update, if necessary  |
| ss. 76 and 110.2                   | Approval of the rules of conduct and the safety measures (or the operating rules, in the case of centres)<br><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 <sup>28</sup>   |
| 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  |
| <b>JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH</b> |   |
| s. 77.2                            | Adoption of the operating rules for the childcare services (for the following year) <sup>29</sup>   |
| 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) <sup>30</sup>  |
| 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   |

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

27 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.

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

29 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*.

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

| Main sections of the Education Act                             | Main topics covered  |
|--|--|
| <b>MARCH, APRIL AND MAY</b>                                    |  |
| 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 <sup>31</sup>   |
| 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  |
| <b>MAY AND JUNE</b>  |  |
| 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   |
| <b>THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR, OR AS NEEDED</b>                |  |
| 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) <sup>32</sup>  |
| 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 <sup>33</sup>   |
| 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)  |

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

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

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



## 7. MEMORY AID: “ADOPTING” AND “APPROVING”

The *Education Act* contains close to two dozen verbs referring to the functions and powers of the governing board (e.g. adopt, approve, consult, inform, evaluate, take into account). The key points below will help guide you in the use of two verbs that you will come across frequently in board meetings: “to adopt” and “to approve”.

### To adopt

The verb “to adopt” implies that the governing 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.

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.

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.

### To approve

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

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.

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.

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In brief, although there are fundamental differences between “adopting” and “approving,” the goal in either case is to ensure effective collaboration by all stakeholders and to achieve results that benefit all the students.

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## 8. MAIN LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

*Education Act:*

<http://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/showdoc/cs/l-13.3>

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An Act to amend mainly the *Education Act* with regard to school organization and governance:

<https://www.fcpq.qc.ca/sites/24577/Bill%2040.pdf>

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Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education:

<http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cr/l-13.3,%20r.%208>

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Basic adult general adult regulation:

<http://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cr/l-13.3,%20r.%209>

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Basic vocational training regulation:

<http://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cr/l-13.3,%20r.%2010>



[Québec.ca/newschoolgovernance](https://quebec.ca/newschoolgovernance)

