

Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff:

Thousands of Talents
to Support Our Students

2022-2026



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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As a result of the signing of a historic agreement with teachers during the last round of negotiations of collective agreements, the *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff* is part of a major movement to properly recognize the central role played by all school staff in the educational success of students and, more broadly, in society as a whole.

Our actions, aimed at shining a light on school staff and on careers in education, will focus on important recognition factors: the autonomy of educational organizations, professional development and public recognition. Moreover, we will be implementing follow-up and evaluation measures to get a sense of current practices in the field and take action based on organizational needs and best practices.

School staff are one of the key drivers behind our educational mission. It is, in fact, this staff who make our schools and centres healthy, safe and inclusive learning environments, and who provide instruction, socialize and provide qualifications to our students, young people and adults to help them develop and achieve their full potential.

The *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff* will be instrumental in our efforts to recognize the invaluable contribution of school staff to helping our students succeed and our society prosper.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean-François Roberge". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Jean-François Roberge
Minister of Education

INTRODUCTION

In Québec, as in all societies, schools have a very important mission: to instruct, socialize and qualify the young people who will form the society of tomorrow. Fulfilling this key mission depends on thousands of people who, every day, through their skills, implement the conditions needed to foster the educational success of more than one million students.

It is thanks to the staff working in schools, vocational training centres and adult education centres that the future of young people and adults is being forged, at the same time as our collective future is being built. The commitment and expertise of school staff helps create a healthy, dynamic environment that is conducive to educational success, student retention and the achievement of students' full potential.

In the *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff*, the Ministère de l'Éducation would like to formally recognize and highlight the invaluable contribution of school staff to the success of students and to the human and economic wealth of our society. To achieve this, the Strategy proposes concrete actions to provide school staff with a rewarding, engaging and caring work environment, and to allow them to develop and showcase their expertise and skills, as well as their achievements.



WHY TAKE ACTION?

Education is a priority for Québec. It is thus necessary to take action in order to ensure that the people who work in education continue to do so, and to maintain a competent, strong and engaged school staff, thereby ensuring a bright future for young people in Québec. By adopting the *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff*, the government wishes to reaffirm and publicly recognize the key role of school staff in carrying out the mission of Québec schools, while providing lasting solutions to the labour shortage in the school system.

Over the past few years, school staff have shown resilience, ingenuity and great commitment to provide students with quality educational services despite the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. These feats—and they are indeed feats—have demonstrated for all of society the essential nature and the complexity of the work accomplished by school staff.

The current labour shortage also brings its own share of challenges: school staff must continue their work while dealing with reduced resources, and school organizations must work harder to attract competent and qualified people in order to maintain services.

Taking action to promote the recognition of school staff will, in the long term, help foster staff retention, strengthen their commitment and engagement, and make careers in education more attractive. Staff who are valued, supported and confident in their skills will be able to devote themselves to their educational mission, and thus contribute to the development of students committed to their success.

The actions implemented in the Strategy are therefore intended to provide tools to ensure that the changes take shape in the medium- and long-term, and for them to have a lasting effect on the recognition of school staff. Consequently, through the Strategy, the Ministère is adopting a vision to act prospectively and sustainably on certain issues, such as the labour shortage in the school system.

The *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff* wishes to recognize the contribution of all members of school teams and centre teams to the educational success of students:

- Teachers, including all persons employed by a school service centre, school board or private educational institution, whether legally qualified or not, whose occupation is to teach students
- Professionals, who provide student services, instructional services and administrative services
- Support staff, which includes workers in four categories: paratechnical, technical, administrative and manual
- Staff working as school or centre administrators

Together, they form a support network that leads students to success.



Taking action at the local and provincial levels

The recognition of school staff begins within schools, vocational training centres and adult education centres. The work environment can have a significant impact on job satisfaction: staff who feel competent and who work in a caring environment where they can grow and develop will be more committed, happy and proud of their achievements. In addition, a fulfilled staff will promote their profession or trade, and thus contribute to attracting the best people to carry out the educational mission.

Various factors can influence job satisfaction, such as relationships with colleagues, the feeling of competence, participation in the decision-making process, opportunities for advancement and development, recognition of work accomplished, etc. In all cases, it is important that the means implemented be adapted to the reality of each school and centre. This is why the Strategy gives educational organizations a great level of autonomy in implementing actions that will strengthen the feelings of job satisfaction and well-being at work of school and centre staff. By promoting decision-making at the local level, the Strategy also allows schools and centres to take advantage of the expertise and skills of their staff by including them in the reflection process behind the solutions to be implemented to ensure staff recognition.

Since the value placed on careers in education is also influenced by the subjectivity of public opinion, initiatives implemented under the Strategy will involve a strong message aimed at raising the profile of these professions and trades and ensuring their recognition in the public eye. To this end, major actions will be implemented by the Ministère at the provincial level to recognize the work accomplished by school staff and to promote careers that are essential to student success.

These various actions will revolve around four main areas of intervention:

- Local actions to promote recognition
- Professional development
- Public recognition
- Follow-up and evaluation

Consultations

To ensure the implementation of a strategy tailored to the realities and needs of all school staff, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Minister's office consulted key education stakeholders in Québec in fall 2021. During various discussion sessions, groups representing education stakeholders were given the opportunity to speak. These meetings made it possible for partners, including Indigenous partners, from general education in the youth sector, adult general education and vocational training, as well as from the higher education community, to express their views on current issues with regard to the recognition of school staff and the main actions to be implemented to address them. The findings of these consultations have enabled the Ministère to develop a Strategy that is in line with the needs of all communities.

Some data

During the 2020-2021 school year, 221 477 people were employed in the public school system, in 278 different types of jobs:

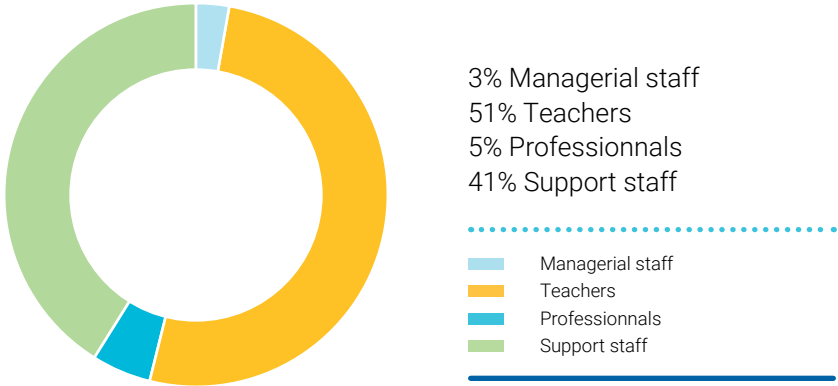
1. 47 types of jobs for managerial staff, such as human, financial or material resource administrators, and principals or directors
2. 36 types of jobs for professionals, such as psychologists, speech therapists, education consultants, remedial teachers and school librarians
3. 105 types of jobs for teachers, i.e. teachers in the three sectors: general education in the youth sector, adult general education and vocational training
4. 90 types of jobs for support staff, such as school daycare services or secretarial staff, computer technicians, attendants for students with disabilities and special education technicians

Across all job categories,¹ teachers make up about 50% of all school staff, and support staff make up 40%. Out of these 40%, more than one-quarter are educators and technicians in school daycare services.

More than three-quarters of school staff are women. This female predominance applies to jobs traditionally held by women (i.e. secretary, educator, teacher) and to jobs where women are usually less represented, such as managerial positions.

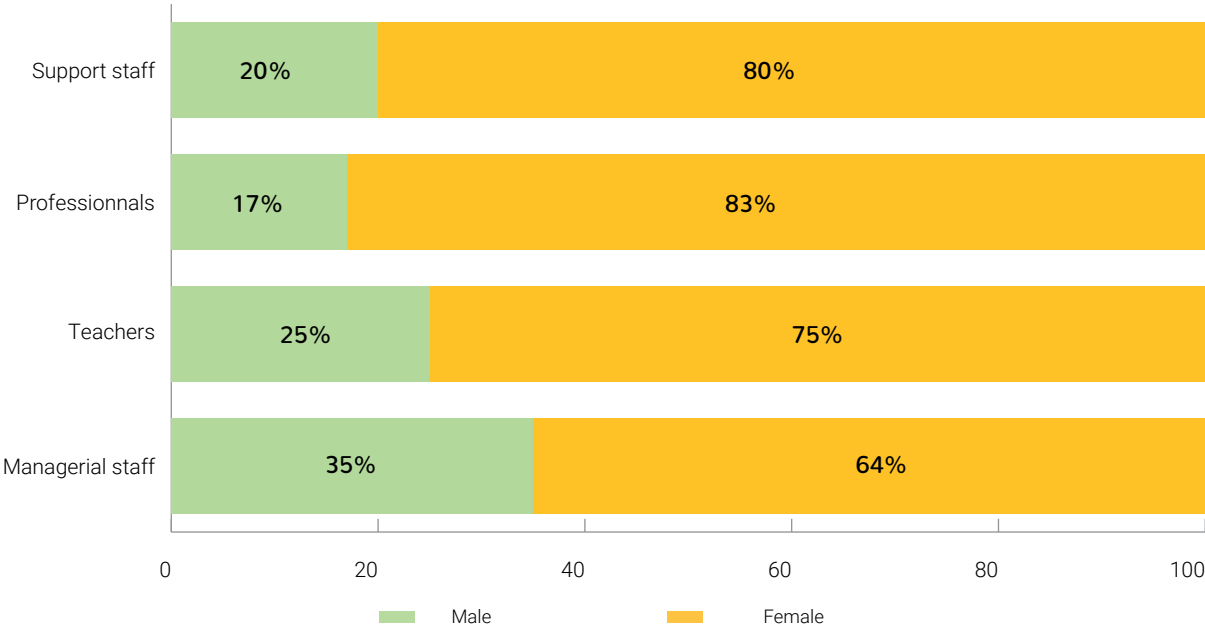
1. The job category is determined based on the main task performed by an employee. For more than 25 years, the main task performed has been the Ministère's chosen criterion for representing and accounting for each employee as a unique staff member in school service centres and school boards. This criterion determines the most important job category that can be assigned based on the job category that combines the greatest number of hours of work or the recurrence of the employment contract.

Distribution of School Staff,² by Job Category, 2020-2021



Source: Adapted from MEQ, SPS, DIS, système du personnel des commissions scolaires (PERCOS), fichier de la TP, data as at 2022-03-02.

Distribution of School Staff,³ by Job Category and Gender, 2020-2021



Source: Adapted from MEQ, SPS, DIS, système du personnel des commissions scolaires (PERCOS), fichier de la TP, data as at 2022-03-02.

2. School staff includes all people who are employed by a school service centre or a school board between July 1 and June 30.
 3. School staff includes all people who are employed by a school service centre or a school board between July 1 and June 30.

Significant investments to promote the recognition of school staff

In March 2021, in the *2021-2022 Budget Plan: Québec is Resilient and Confident*, the government announced investments totalling \$70 million by 2025-2026 to promote the recognition, recruitment and professional engagement of school staff. This announcement reflects the government's desire to acknowledge the central role that school staff play in the educational success of students and in society at large.

In addition, in order to continue efforts to recognize school staff and to meet the challenges brought about by the labour shortage in the school system, specific measures in the education sector were announced in January 2022 as part of *Opération main-d'œuvre* (Operation Workforce). In particular, funding has been allocated to promote the well-being of staff and a positive work environment. These actions complement the ones already implemented in the *Strategy to provide academic assistance and support well-being at school*.

Lastly, in March 2022, the government announced, as part of the *2022-2023 Budget Plan: Your Government*, additional funding totalling \$203.7 million by 2026-2027 to attract and retain school staff. Out of this amount, \$81 million is being set aside for the implementation of actions that are directly aimed at recognizing school staff.

In all, the *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff* consists of actions representing investments of approximately \$140 million over the next four years.

LOCAL ACTIONS TO PROMOTE RECOGNITION

One of the foundations of the governance of our education system is the principle that powers and responsibilities must be delegated to the appropriate level of authority, with a view to bringing decision-making as close as possible to the students. This approach, defined as subsidiarity, must be favoured in terms of promoting the recognition of school staff in order to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the means implemented. In fact, the challenges in terms of attracting and retaining school staff vary according to the reality of the community, be it Indigenous or remote communities, urban or rural communities, disadvantaged communities, etc. Actions to promote the recognition of school staff must therefore be tailored to the reality of the communities, by the communities.

As a result, the Ministère wants to provide schools and centres with the means to fulfill their ambitions with regard to the recognition of their staff. Thus, through two key actions in the Strategy that focus, among other things, on greater integration of all staff within the school team or the centre team, on the decompartmentalization of expertise and on the maintenance and development of a caring work environment, the Ministère gives educational institutions the latitude they need to implement recognition initiatives that meet the needs of their staff and that reflect their reality.

ACTION 1

Set up a pilot project to provide teaching staff with teacher's aides in 100 elementary schools

As announced in the *2021-2022 Revitalization Plan for Educational Success*, the Ministère will set up a large-scale pilot project for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years to hire teacher's aides in 100 elementary schools in order to maximize the time teachers spend on teaching, i.e. the area in which they have specific expertise. The Ministère is partnering with a research team to document the pilot project and identify the success factors associated with the hiring of teacher's aides in elementary school.

**Leveraging the diverse skills of school staff
to foster the educational success
of all students**

The pilot project for the hiring of teacher's aides in elementary school will be an opportunity to both promote the primary mission of teachers and to draw on the skills and expertise of other resources within the school team. To this end, teacher's aides will be assigned to support staff, for example, staff in school daycare services. These teacher's aides will be able to accompany students, support teachers in tasks that are not related to teaching and ensure the well-being and safety of students.

By entrusting the position of teacher's aides to support staff, the Ministère recognizes the important role support staff can play with students and wishes to foster collaboration between categories of staff who sometimes have little opportunity to work together. The Ministère will let the schools concerned decide on other methods for implementing the pilot project, based on their own realities.

ACTION 2

Support local actions aimed at recognizing school staff

The Ministère will provide financial support to educational organizations so that schools and centres can recognize their school staff locally, based on their own needs. This major action of the Strategy involves three components:

- Each educational organization (school service centre, school board, school and centre) will have the means to implement recognition actions that will mobilize both local communities and school staff. More concretely, educational organizations could, for example, create or improve a committee or a plan for the recognition of school staff at the local or regional level, encourage partnerships with parents (e.g. by involving parent participation organizations) and the business community or hire a valorization officer who would initiate, coordinate and promote various initiatives showcasing school teams and centre teams.
- The Ministère will provide educational organizations with the necessary means and latitude to create a lasting culture of collaboration within their organization. Various initiatives could make it possible to achieve this goal: support for the development of a collaborative culture (e.g. coaching, mentoring, support from an expert), establishment of inter-professional communities of practice, development of innovative collaboration methods in a real work context, etc.
- Educational institutions will be encouraged to foster the well-being of their staff and to provide them with a caring environment. School teams and centre teams will be able to implement appropriate means of ensuring a healthy work environment and supporting one another. A variety of prevention mechanisms can be deployed to promote the mental health of staff, based on the reality of the community and supplementing existing services. For example, peer aides could be trained, or a committee of kindness set up, to provide staff with a sympathetic ear to voice their concerns, to make people aware of support resources available and to promote respectful and positive behaviour within work teams.

Actions Adapted to the Reality of Indigenous Communities

Indigenous communities, or even non-Indigenous communities with a significant proportion of Indigenous students, face specific challenges when it comes to attracting, retaining and promoting loyalty among school staff, whether at the Cree School Board and Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the Naskapi School, schools in the Ministère's language-based network or schools in Indigenous communities not covered by an agreement.

As such, all the actions implemented under the Strategy will take into account, among other things, the linguistic, cultural and geographic realities of Indigenous communities. In addition, educational organizations will be encouraged to consider these issues.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development, understood as a process that begins during an individual's initial education, continues during their professional orientation, and extends throughout their career, is an important factor to consider for increasing school staff's job satisfaction and strengthening their sense of self-efficacy.

Along with the teacher, who plays a key role in the educational success of students, other staff members also play a significant role with students and have an impact on students' academic progress and learning, either directly or indirectly. It is therefore important to ensure that all school staff have the necessary opportunities for optimal professional development based on their needs. By focusing on the professional development of school staff, the Ministère recognizes and values their key role in the educational success of students and wants to give them the tools to reach their full potential.

ACTION 3

Support the professional development of school staff

Professional development is of paramount importance in maintaining a high level of expertise for members of all categories of school staff who are called upon to adjust their practices to the pace of the numerous and complex changes in today's society. Thus, since education, like all other disciplines, is constantly evolving, the most competent staff are those who keep their knowledge and expertise up to date for the benefit of the educational success of all students. Additionally, since professional development has a positive impact on the staff's sense of competence, it contributes to promoting their recognition. With this action, the Ministère wishes to support school service centres and school boards in their role of maintaining and developing the skills of school staff by allowing them to cover the costs of certain training sessions or those related to release time for staff participating in training, if applicable.

ACTION 4

Provide all school staff with access to a platform listing professional development opportunities

In line with the previous action, *Support the professional development of school staff*, this action will aim to consolidate the professional development opportunities for school staff in one place. As a result, a platform will be made available that will feature the training sessions offered by the Ministère as well as those offered by external organizations. The directory will be easy to use and adapted to the needs of staff. It will allow users to search by theme and find the training sessions that meet their needs.

ACTION 5

Update the competency framework for school administrators

Principals and directors act as a liaison between students, school teams and centre teams, parents, the school service centre or the school board, and this role has evolved considerably over the past few decades. In light of the fact that the tasks performed by school administrators have become increasingly complex and that they play an important role in the educational success of students in Québec, the document *Training in the Administration of an Educational Institution – Orientations and Professional Competencies*, published in 2008, will be updated to better support school administrators in carrying out their duties.

ACTION 6

Set up a project for reflection on the enrichment of initial teacher education

The recent ministerial orientations presented in the new *Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for Teachers*, the issues related to labour shortage and professional integration require a global reflection on the initial education of teachers. To meet this need, a project will be launched to, among other things, document the situation of initial teacher education based on the best practices resulting from research and to identify the priorities to be implemented to improve it, in collaboration with the partners concerned.

ACTION 7

Update the ministerial orientations for the practical education of teachers

The *Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for Teachers*, published in 2021, called for an update of the ministerial orientations for teacher education. Thus, in order to promote the importance of the support provided by associate teachers and to ensure high-quality practical education for students in teacher education programs, the document *Teacher Training – Orientations for Practicums in a School Setting* will be revised and updated.

ACTION 8

Improve the supervision of student teachers

In order to support the education of future teachers, the Ministère financially supports public schools in welcoming and supervising student teachers in educational institutions. This support aims to further recognize the expertise of associate teachers, and to better acknowledge their contribution to the training of the next generation of teachers. With this action, the Ministère wishes to improve this support to encourage the participation of a large number of associate teachers in the supervision of student teachers. This improvement will have a positive impact on the initial education of future teachers and thus foster the educational success of students.

ACTION 9

Implement a reference framework for the professional orientation of teachers

According to research data, one of the best ways to ensure a successful integration of new teachers into the workforce is to provide them with support through the implementation of orientation programs. This allows them to have a positive professional experience and promotes teacher retention. It is therefore relevant to guide educational organizations by defining ministerial orientations for the adoption, implementation, evaluation and updating of local teacher orientation programs and the mechanisms they combine. In this context, the Ministère will implement a reference framework for the professional orientation of teachers, which will provide educational institutions with guidelines for setting up a local professional orientation program or updating an existing program.

ACTION 10

Promote and encourage the professional development of teachers

The Ministère will devise a standardized program to support the development of training activities designed by professional teaching associations. The objectives of this program will be to support the development of quality opportunities for teachers, to promote the development of organized activities within professional associations and to help teachers become familiar with the *Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for Teachers*.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

All players in society must be called upon to fully recognize school staff, and, by extension, education. Conditions for recognizing and valuing school staff at the local and provincial levels must thus be put in place.

The perception of careers in education and the social prestige associated with them are strongly influenced by the information disseminated, particularly in the media, and by public discourse. As such, public recognition, defined as all communication activities aimed at promoting careers in education, increasing their standing and making school staff shine (e.g. promotional campaigns, awards for excellence or recognition, visibility of various job categories, media coverage of inspiring role models) can significantly contribute to the recognition of school staff.

The actions implemented in this area of intervention of the Strategy will therefore aim to promote a positive vision of school staff and careers in education among the general public. By increasing the visibility of careers in education, while highlighting their diversity, by fostering the remarkable contribution of school staff to the development of society and by demonstrating the key role played by staff in the educational progress of our students, the Ministère wishes to help reinforce the sense of accomplishment and pride of exceptional people who work toward the success of students and to influence career choices in education. It is in this spirit that the Ministère will implement strong actions related to public recognition.



ACTION 11

Shine a spotlight on school staff and careers in education

A communications strategy will be implemented to promote the recognition of school staff in general education in the youth sector, adult general education and vocational training. By focusing on the great skills and unique expertise of this large and diverse staff, and by introducing the general public to the people who are doing great work with students, the actions deployed will aim to raise awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Through the creation of a liaison group, among other things, that will be in direct contact with the various school communities, the Ministère will be able to promote the efforts of individuals and teams who have a positive impact on students' lives on a daily basis. This action in the Strategy will also showcase the range of careers in education available to young people and to those who wish to reorient their career in the school system. In short, this action will help showcase school staff, highlight their successes and shed light on education-related trades and professions.

To achieve this objective, the Ministère intends to use various promotional tools and participate in various education and job fairs. In addition, digital platforms will be used, such as websites and social media. Lastly, promotional activities will be tailored to the different target audiences (e.g. young people, parents, Indigenous communities, immigrant populations).

ACTION 12

Promote and showcase inspiring role models

The education community is witness to the daily commitment of school staff members who inspire students through their exciting projects and support them in their schooling with a real concern for their success and well-being. Some contribute in other ways and help improve the Québec education system through their actions or through their research for the benefit of society as a whole. To recognize and encourage these role models to pursue their work, the Strategy will highlight the Order of Excellence in Education, a unique distinction created in 2018 through which the government directly recognizes the merits of certain stakeholders in the Québec education or higher education systems.

ACTION 13

Hold a school staff appreciation day

In order to recognize the exceptional work carried out every day by school staff and to raise public awareness of the key role that they play within society and with our students, the Ministère wishes to establish an annual day for the recognition of school staff. This day will be an opportunity, both locally and provincially, to highlight the importance of these individuals who contribute with sensitivity, passion and creativity to the educational success of students in Québec.

Order of Excellence

in Education

The Order of Excellence in Education: a few figures

- Three levels of membership: member, distinguished member and emeritus member
- Since its creation, in 2018, three calls for nominations
- 216 nominations reviewed by the members of the Order of Excellence Council
- 108 men and women received into the Order to date

Strong actions to promote those who make a difference in education

In order to recognize the merits of individuals who, in their own way, are making a difference in the education system, in all sectors, honours will be awarded to new members joining the Order and a ceremony will be held annually. In addition, recognition and promotional activities will be carried out.

FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

To understand the impact of the Strategy's actions and to guide its future actions related to the recognition of school staff, the Ministère wishes to rely on the research-based best practices as well as on current practices in the field. To do so, it will create discussion forums with the education system where school staff will have a chance to speak. The general public will also be able to express their views through surveys. In addition, the Ministère will support the development of scientific knowledge on careers in education and on the recognition of school staff. Backed by reliable and concrete information gathered over time, the Ministère will remain proactive and attentive to the needs of the education system in the various files aimed at recognizing school staff and addressing labour shortages.

ACTION 14

Measure public perception of careers in education

The actions implemented as part of the Strategy aim, among other things, to improve public perception of careers in education, which can have a significant impact on the appeal of these careers and on the professional commitment of those who hold these jobs. To this end, the Ministère wishes to assess the impact of the Strategy by measuring public perception of careers in education through a survey of a representative sample of the population.

ACTION 15

Measure the degree of job satisfaction among school staff

Through concrete and targeted actions, the Strategy aims to improve school staff's degree of job satisfaction, strengthen their professional commitment and thus promote the recognition of their jobs and their contribution to student success. Job satisfaction and the various factors that influence it can provide major clues about the actions that should be prioritized and the best ways to intervene in order to attract and retain staff. In order to document this phenomenon in schools, a survey on job satisfaction will be conducted among school staff.

ACTION 16

Support the development of scientific knowledge in promoting the recognition of school staff

To continue the development of scientific knowledge and educational practices based on empirical findings, a research program on the recognition of school staff and the principles underlying it, including attraction and retention, will be implemented. Researchers wishing to participate in this program will be invited to pay particular attention to support staff, professionals and administrators, who are currently under-represented in research. This research program will lead, on the one hand, to the development of a new field of expertise in Québec, and, on the other hand, to concrete spin-offs in terms of promoting the recognition of all school staff.

In addition to these initiatives, the Ministère will follow up on and evaluate various measures of the Strategy in order to assess its contribution to the recognition of school staff.

CONCLUSION

The Québec education system can count on competent and committed school staff who contribute to the well-being and overall development of the students who interact with them on a daily basis, who support student perseverance and foster educational success. This staff plays a key role in our schools and centres, but also, more broadly, in our society. Every day, these staff members contribute to moving Québec society forward. In the *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff*, the Ministère is taking significant steps to formally recognize the exceptional contribution to the educational mission of each person working within the school system.

The actions implemented in the Strategy highlight the skills of school staff and give the communities the latitude required to implement means tailored to their needs. These actions will focus on professional development and public recognition and will make it possible for the Ministère to take an informed look at the evidence and realities experienced in the field. The *Strategy to Promote the Recognition of School Staff* is part of a major movement to promote the recognition of education. This Strategy builds on the work already underway and will be followed by other important ministerial actions with the same objective.



