



Commission scolaire
English-Montréal

English Montreal
School Board

Training Session on Governing Boards

August 2008

Governing Boards

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

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

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

The **Governing Board** has an important role to play in interpreting and achieving school success through the school's **educational project** and its **success plan**.

Composition and Operation of the Governing Board

1. Governing Boards must be composed of no more than 20 members:

- At least 4 parents
- At least 4 school staff members (2 must be teachers)
- 1 daycare representative (elementary level)
- 2 students (high school level)
- 2 community representatives
(article 42)

The **Principal** acts as a resource person.

He/she ensures that the proposals required are prepared and submitted to the Governing Board and that the GB is provided all necessary information before making decisions.

2. The composition of the governing board is **determined by the School Board** (article 43)

3. The total number of seats for staff representatives **must be equal** to those for parents' representatives. (article 43)

- ❖ Representatives from one employment group cannot fill a vacancy created by another group's inability to elect a representative unless they follow the process below:

- ❖ Requests for change in composition:
 - a. must be made in writing to the Board
 - b. must be approved by the Council of Commissioners
 - c. must be made in May or June for the following year

Election of Governing Board members

ALL representatives must be elected by September 30th

- ❖ The general assembly of parents:
 - elects parent representatives (article 47)
 - elects delegate and alternate to the regional parents' committee (article 47)
 - decides if it wishes to form a PPO, decides on the number of members and elects them (article 96)

- ❖ Staff members hold meetings in September to elect their representatives (articles 48, 49, 50)

- ❖ Students are appointed by the students' council or the association representing the students; if they do not exist, students meet in September to elect their representatives (article 51)

<p>4. The term of office for parent representatives is two years; the term for representatives from other groups is one year. (article 54)</p>

*The Chairperson is elected at the first meeting of the governing board by **all** the voting members.*

The community representatives are appointed by the elected members; therefore, they are not included in the September 30th timeline.

Substitution

5. A governing board member **cannot be temporarily replaced by a substitute** (article 54)

- ❖ A member is replaced only when there is a vacancy created by a resignation
- ❖ A vacancy resulting from the departure of a parent representative is filled by a parent appointed by the other parent representatives (article 55)

Commissioners

- ❖ Commissioners are not members of the governing board (section 45)

6. Commissioners **can take part** in meetings if authorized by the governing board, but **are not entitled to vote** (article 45)

Observers

- ❖ do not take part in governing board meetings
- ❖ are given an opportunity to ask questions during question period

Quorum

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

Example

A governing board consists of 13 members:

- 6 parents
- 4 teachers
- 1 member of the support staff
- 1 day care worker
- 1 community representative

A quorum consists of 7 members:

- 3 parents (half)
- 2 teachers
- 1 day care worker
- 1 community representative

Governing Board Decisions

8. The decisions of the Governing Board are made by a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote (section 63)

Role of the Chairperson

- ❖ Presides over meetings of the governing board. (article 59)
- ❖ Has the deciding or casting vote in the event of a tie. (article 63)
- ❖ Is free to vote for or against the motion, regardless of the way he or she voted previously.

9. What Constitutes a Good Chair

- ❖ Is well prepared for the meeting.
- ❖ Respects the rules of internal procedure; keeps a speaker list, keeps order and ensures speakers remain on topic.
- ❖ Listens attentively and encourages **all** members to speak up and explain their views
- ❖ Clarifies interventions and summarizes the various opinions.
- ❖ Speaks no more than is necessary, but helps to clarify and gives information.
- ❖ Starts and ends meetings on time.

Rules of Internal Management

10. The governing board establishes its own rules of internal management

The rules of internal management should reflect your needs as a member of the GB and should be reviewed every year.

11. Must provide for at least 5 meetings.

- ❖ Must provide the principles and procedures for the management of the operating budget that belongs to the GB.
- ❖ Include procedures for calling regular and special meetings:
 - Number of days required to send notice of meetings;
 - Who sends the notice (e.g.: chair, principal, etc. ...);
 - By which means (e.g.: mail, e-mail ...);
 - What should be sent (notice, agenda, relevant documentation ...).
- ❖ Procedural rules for the meeting
 - Location, schedule and duration of meeting, discussion process.

12. Rules for questions from the public must be determined by members of the GB and be included in the rules of internal management.

❖ Agenda

- Who is responsible for drafting and distributing the agenda, number of days required to send the agenda (and receive feedback), content: priorities in the choice of items, time allocation and nature of the discussion should be indicated beside each item.

❖ Minutes

- Who is responsible for drafting and distributing them, content, who should receive the minutes (other than the members of the GB).

Following approval, the minutes must be signed by the chairperson and countersigned by the principal or the person appointed by the principal. The minutes must be kept by the principal or a person appointed by the principal (article 69). They are open to the public.

❖ Other

- Specify role of the chairperson;
- Establish an action plan based on a timeline calendar of subjects for discussion;
- Specify role of the GB itself;
- Specify role of the GB member.

Role of the Governing Board

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- ❖ The Education Act divides the powers and responsibilities of the school between the governing board and principal.
- ❖ The GB powers are defined in the Education Act (art.74-95) while those of the principal are formulated in more general terms (art. 96.12-96.26).
- ❖ The GB is the focal point for decisions that affect the life of the school.
- ❖ The GB acts within the scope of its functions and powers with care, prudence, diligence, honesty and loyalty.
- ❖ The GB members represent the opinions of their groups.
- ❖ The GB discusses general orientations.
- ❖ The GB recognizes the collective power of the teaching staff regarding questions of a pedagogical nature and respects the teacher's professional autonomy to select their own instructional methods.

- ❖ The GB works in a collegial manner.
- ❖ The GB works in the students' best interests.
- ❖ The GB encourages cooperation among people having an interest in the school.

“Governance” and “Management”

- ❖ **Governing** is setting goals
- ❖ **Governing boards govern**; they do not manage
- ❖ **Managing** is taking action to ensure that these goals are met and ensuring that the decisions of the Governing Board are implemented.
- ❖ **School administrators manage** and serve as resources to help guide you in setting goals.
- ❖ **Governing boards** determine what the school should achieve through the educational project;
- ❖ **School administrators** ensure that the objectives of the educational project are achieved; they coordinate the analysis of the school situation and the work related to the educational project.
- ❖ **School administrators** are the **academic** and **administrative** directors of the school; they ensure that the decisions of the governing board are implemented.
- ❖ **Teachers** carry out educational activities based on the school’s objectives.

Different Nature (or Types) of Power

Different Nature (or Types) of Power

Decision

The GB has certain responsibilities (obligations) that it should assume and on which it should make a decision without necessarily having received a proposal.

Adoption

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

Approval

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

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

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

Consultation

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

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

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

Information

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

Other GB Powers

The GB should agree with the school board on the manner in which some services will be organized.

Examples of Different Powers of the Governing Board

Decision	Adoption	Approval	Consultation	Information	Other
Encourage information, concerted action and participation in the educational project. (art. 74)	Educational project. (art. 36.1, 37, 74)	Success plan. (art. 75)	Is consulted on the amendment or revocation of the deed of establishment. (art. 79)	Local program of studies. (art. 96.15)	Conditions related to lunchtime supervision. (art. 292)
Analyze the situation prevailing in the school. (art. 74)	School budget. (art. 95)	Approach for implementing the basic school regulation. (art. 84)	Is consulted by the school board on the criteria to select the school principal. (art. 79)		Conditions related to day care services. (art. 256)
Prepare an annual report about the GB's activities for the school board. (art. 82)	School's annual report. (art. 82)	Programming of the educational activities (e.g.: field trips). (art. 87)	Is consulted by the principal on the choice of textbooks and instructional material. (art. 96.15)	Rules governing the placement of students. (art. 96.15)	Principles for determining the costs of materials charged to parents or students. (art. 77.1)
Inform parents and the community about the services offered by the school and report on their quality. (art. 83)		Implementation of student and special education services. (art. 88)	Is consulted on the needs of the school in goods and services, as well as needs related to premises or buildings. (art. 96.22)	Criteria for the introduction of new instructional methods. (art. 96.15)	
Prepare a document for parents and staff to explain the educational project and report on how the success plan is being evaluated. (art. 83)		Overall approach for the enrichment or adaptation of the objectives and suggested content of the programs. (art. 85)	May advise the school board on any matter likely to facilitate the operation of the school and improve the organization of the services provided by the school board. (art. 78)	Criteria for enrolment of students. (art. 239)	

Examples of Different Powers of the Governing Board

Decision	Adoption	Approval	Consultation	Information	Other
Organize educational services other than those prescribed in the basic school regulation and contract with a person or body to that effect. (art. 90.91)		Time allocation for subjects. (art. 86)			
Pool services and activities with other educational institutions within the school board. (art. 80)		Rules of conduct and safety. (art. 76)			
		Use of premises. (art. 93)			
		List of consumable material charged to parents or students. (art. 77.1, 7)			
		Procedures and standards to evaluate student achievement. (art. 96.15)			

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

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

Conclusion

- ❖ Providing guidance and positive influence is the governing board's principal function.
- ❖ The exchange of information and expertise helps to break down barriers.
- ❖ Teamwork is the key to a successful operation of the GB.

Teamwork can't be legislated; it can only be built!

EXAMPLE

_____ GOVERNING BOARD (school name)

RULES OF INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

A governing board is a legally established body, mandated by Section 42 of the Quebec Education Act. Furthermore, it is also mandated by Section 67 that rules for the internal management of the governing board shall be adopted and Sections 70 and 71 establish a standard to be followed by members of a governing board.

1. **Composition** The governing board is composed of:
(Section 42, EA)
 - ___ parents who are not members of the school staff
 - ___ members of the school staff
 - ___ daycare representative (elementary level)
 - ___ students of the second cycle (secondary only)
 - ___ members of the community

2. **Term of Office** – The term of office of the parent representatives is two years and the term of office of the representatives of the other groups is one year.

3. **Chair**
 - **Election of Chair** – The chair is elected by the governing board from amongst the parents’ representatives who are members of the personnel of the school board. (Section 56, EA)
 - **Term of Office** – The term of office of the chair is one year. (Section 58, EA)
 - **Meetings** – The chair presides at the meetings of the governing board (S59, EA)
 - **Substitute Chair** – Should the chair be absent or unable to act, the governing board will designate a person from among the eligible members for office to chair that meeting. (Section 60, EA)

▪ **Role of the Chair**

- The Chair prepares the agenda in collaboration with the school principal and ensures that meetings unfold in accordance with the rules of procedure that are in place.
- The Chair maintains order and decorum at meetings. The Chair is the official spokesperson for the governing board.

4. **Quorum** – A quorum is the majority of the members in office, including at least half of the parents’ representatives.

5. **Vote** - Decisions of the governing board are made by majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote. If the vote is equally divided, the chair has a casting vote. Every decision must be made in the best interest of the students. (Sections 63 & 64, EA)

6. **Meetings**

- ✓ Meetings are held on the school premises. (Section 64, EA)
- ✓ Regular meetings are held _____ (must be at least 5) times per year (or once a month) from _____ p.m. to _____ p.m. and may be extended by 10 (or 15, etc) minutes by resolution.
- ✓ The annual calendar of meetings is adopted at the October meeting and is distributed to all parents.
- ✓ A meeting may be adjourned to a specific date and time if it appears that important business will not be concluded within the time limit or a regular meeting.
- ✓ A special meeting may be called to consider a matter that cannot wait until the next regular meeting. A notice shall go out to the GB members and parents 4 days prior to the special meeting. If the GB is unable to hold a special meeting within the time required to consider the **urgent topic**, all members will be contacted by email or telephone to state their opinions on the urgent matter. The topic **must be voted on** at the next regular meeting of the governing board. Members cannot vote by email. *Decisions of the governing board are made by*

a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote. (Section 63, EA)

- ✓ In order to provide a welcoming atmosphere for the public, the members of the governing board will have name cards placed in alphabetical order. The tables will be set up in a u-shape in order so that all members are facing the public.

7. **Closed Session Meetings** – The meetings of the governing board are public may move into closed session if the matter to be discussed may cause injury to a person. This is done by resolution. (Section 68, EA).
8. **Public Question Period** – A public question period is included on the agenda at the beginning or at the end of the meeting. The period will not exceed 10 minutes and is for questions to be addressed to the Chair of the governing board only. Persons interested in making a presentation must make a request to the school principal at least one week prior to the meeting.
9. **Rules of Decorum** – Members of the GB and of the public must:
 - Be recognized by the Chair for the right to speak
 - Address the chair when speaking
 - Show respect for the points of view of others
 - Respect the right to speak of others
 - Refrain from speaking out of turn
 - Refrain from using profanity
 - Maintain a respectful tone at all times
10. **Reports**
Oral reports from the principal, commissioner or regional delegate will be permitted and the GB sets aside 5 (or 10, etc.) minutes for each report.
11. **Agenda**
 - The agenda is sent to the members one week prior to the meeting (by email, etc.) and is posted in the school.

- The items are listed on the Agenda by order of priority
Decisional items first
Consultation items second
Information items, third
- Items can be added to the agenda at the meeting subject to approval by the members.

12. **Minutes of the governing board**

- The minutes of the proceedings of the GB must be sent to the members with the documents for the following meeting.
- The minutes of a meeting are approved at the beginning of the following meeting and will be modified if they are inaccurate.
- After being approved by the GB, the minutes should be signed by the chair that adopted them and countersigned by the principal or a person designated by the principal, who keeps them in the register of the minutes.
- The principal or a person designated by the principal is responsible for the registers and documents of the GB.

13. **Modifications to the Rules of Internal Management** – The Rules of Internal Management are reviewed in October of each school year and any modifications deemed necessary are proposed at that time. Proposals for changes to the rules must be approved by the members.

Example School X GB Action Plan 2005-2006

Main Topics

- October:** Selection of the chairperson and the secretary; approval of the calendar meetings; selection of community representatives; adoption of the GB's budget; approval of the programming of educational activities, review of internal rules.
- November:** Decision about fund-raising activities for the year; follow-up on the annual school budget; approval of the use of premises.
- December:** First revision of the educational project.
- January:** Approval of the rules of conduct and safety measures; discussion on the possibility of organizing extra-curricular activities in the school for the next school year.
- February:** Approval of time allocation for compulsory and elective subjects; final revision of the educational project.
- March:** Decision on the organization of extra-curricular activities for the next school year; consultation on textbooks and instructional materials.
- April:** Review current budget; discussion on the content of the annual report for the school board; discuss the method and the content of the information to be given to the community about the services offered by the school.
- May:** Presentation of the school's annual budget for the following year; decision on the information to be given to the community; prepare the annual report for the school board.
- June:** Adopt the school budget for the following year; approval of the approach for the implementation of student services; approval of the year end financial report.

The discussion about the content and the time line of the action plan should be done, if possible, at the first meeting, understanding that it could be modified over the course of the year.

**Example
Agenda
Woodward School Governing Board
Wednesday, January 18th, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.**

1. Call to Order: 7:30 p.m.
 2. Public Question Period (5 minutes)
 3. Adoption of Agenda – D (5 minutes)
 4. Adoption of the Minutes from the previous meeting – D (5 minutes)
 5. Rules of Conduct and Safety – D (30 minutes)
 6. Criteria to select the principal – C (30 minutes)
 7. Proposal approved by the principal on the evaluation of learning – I
(10 minutes)
 8. Correspondence – I (10 minutes)
 9. Reports – I (15 minutes)
 10. Public Question Period (5 minutes)
 11. Adjournment – D
-

* The initials following agenda items indicate if these items are for Decision, Information or Consultation.

Example Meeting Evaluation

Date of Governing Board Meeting: _____

	Yes	No
We discussed general orientation rather than details related to day-to-day management.		
The chairperson guided the meeting, following the rules of internal procedure established by the Governing Board.		
Materials relevant to the discussions were sent in advance.		
Members were prepared to discuss materials they received in advance.		
Reports were clear, concise, well-prepared and provided adequate information.		
Printed materials the board received were easy to understand and use.		
Discussion was confined to agenda items only.		
The agenda was well balanced and included positive issues as well as problems.		
The meeting was business-like, results-oriented, and we functioned as a team.		
We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to come up with solutions acceptable to all members.		
All members contributed to the discussion (not dominated by only a few members).		
Members were in attendance and on time, and the meeting began and ended on time.		

This form could be filled out after each meeting, or even after every two or three meetings. It could be filled out by the group together at the end of the meeting or on an individual basis. If it is on an individual basis, the chairperson could wrap-up the results and make a presentation at the following meeting to allow discussion, if need be, on the aspects that need to be improved in order to have efficient meetings.

P.S. Include the procedure to evaluate the meetings in your rules of internal management (suggestion).