

SUMMARY

RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL FEES



The public consultation on school fees was held from January 7 to 25, 2019, on the website of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. A total of 33 324 people took part in this consultation and provided **36 895 recommendations**.

HIGHLIGHTS

Profile of the respondents

- **33 324** people participated in the online consultation
- **89.1%** of them replied to the French questionnaire and **10.9%** responded to the English questionnaire
- **83.1%** are parents with at least one child who attends public school
- **27%** of the respondents work in the school system and nearly **15%** of the total number of respondents are teachers

Level of respondents' satisfaction with the current division of school fees between the school and parents

- More than half of the respondents (56.3%) are very or somewhat satisfied with the current division of school fees between the school and parents.
- Parents with children attending school have a higher level of satisfaction (60.2%) than respondents who do not have children at school (37.4%).



Results

For each of the **15 statements** in the questionnaire, respondents had to choose a maximum of two principles from among the following:

- a) All students must have access.
 - b) The decision must be made by the school.
 - c) Negative impacts on the environment must be reduced and wastefulness must be avoided.
 - d) Fees must be as low as possible and cover the actual cost of the service or item.
 - e) This must be applied in the same way in all public schools.
 - f) This service or item could result in some fees being charged.
 - g) An administrative operation must not result in any fees being charged.
- For the **15 statements** as a whole, the principle of accessibility (“All students must have access”) was one of the two principles that were selected most often, varying from **17%** for school transportation at lunch hour to **39.7%** for items associated with safety.
 - In general, respondents were in agreement that the fees must be as low as possible and cover the actual cost.
 - Concerning school registration fees for children, a larger proportion of respondents replied that an administrative operation must not result in any fees being charged (18.3% in favour of this option versus 15.1% for the option that the fees must be as low as possible).
 - On the subject of activities and field trips during school hours, **39%** of the respondents were of the opinion that these services could result in some fees being charged. The fees must be in line with the actual costs.
 - With regard to the statement about school transportation at lunch hour, **39%** of the respondents agreed that this service could result in some fees being charged.

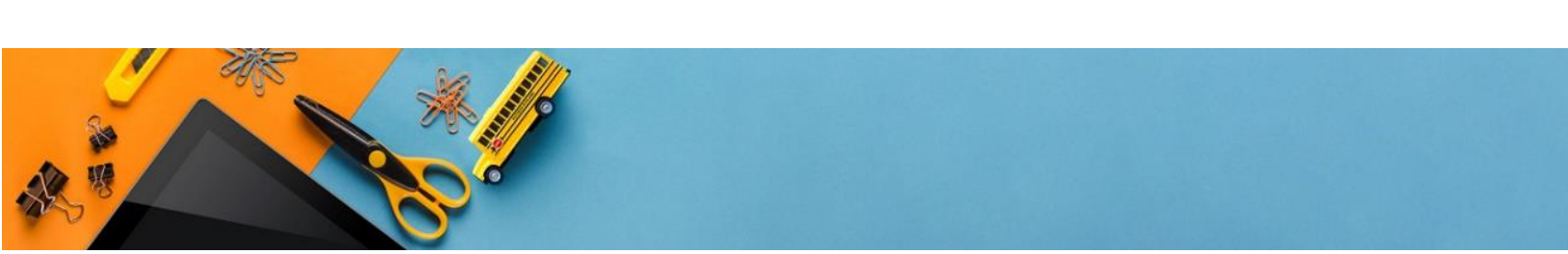


Main recommendations and comments provided by respondents

- Out of the **36 895 recommendations** on school fees provided by the 33 324 respondents:
 - **A greater proportion** was generally in favour of certain fees being charged for education.

It was observed that these recommendations were detailed and often proposed compensatory measures for families with lower incomes. Several of these recommendations emphasized that these fees should not be an obstacle to getting an education.
 - **A significant proportion** was generally in favour of free and accessible education.

Most of these recommendations stated that education is an investment for society.
 - **Several** were generally in favour of a more uniform management of school fees.
- From the recommendations, it appears that free education is important to the respondents. Nevertheless, the recommendations reveal that these services do not have to be entirely free of charge. A large number of respondents felt that parents could be charged some school fees:
 - **49%** were in favour of some fees for school supplies
 - **66.2%** were in favour of some fees for school field trips and activities
 - **67.3%** are in favour of some fees for specific pedagogical projects (e.g. Sports-études and Arts-études)
- More than a quarter (26.7%) of the recommendations on school supplies were focused on reducing waste (return of unused materials at the end of the school year or using electronic resources instead of paper).

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- More than half of the recommendations (57.9%) concerning school daycare services and school transportation tended to be in favour of these services being provided at no charge. The study suggests that most of these recommendations are more specifically in favour of free lunch hour supervision of students in elementary school.

CONCLUSION

The results of the public consultation have been amalgamated with the comments made by the partners of the school system* during consultation meetings held in December 2018 and January 2019. Here is a summary of the three main findings stemming from the consultations:

- There is a consensus in favour of maintaining free access to education, but with the understanding that certain fees could be charged for items or services beyond those normally provided in a school. It is generally accepted that there are limits to the principle of free items and services, and that some school fees should be assumed by parents under certain conditions.
- The recommendations and opinions expressed demonstrate a clear desire to keep the projects and activities that have been developed in the schools, and are currently chosen locally, as long as there are guidelines for the fees that could be associated with them. These guidelines should not, however, limit the school's flexibility and should ensure that the fees are as low as possible.
- Although field trips and school activities are recognized as being important, there is an insistence on the need for clarification with regard to the costs toward which parents might be asked to make a financial contribution.

* Representatives of teachers' federations and unions, school boards, associations of school administrators, groups of parents' committees and the Association québécoise de la garde scolaire.