

Summary of the
survey
of voting members
of governing boards
of Québec schools



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Foreword

The text that follows is a summary of the report of the survey published by the Groupe d'analyse politique de l'éducation (GAPE), which is affiliated with the Centre de recherche et d'intervention sur la réussite scolaire (CRIRES). It presents the main results of the survey. It is intended for a diverse audience that is interested in the way the governing boards operate. A number of statistical tables are presented in the appendix to this report, for readers who want more information concerning the results. For more detailed statistical analyses, readers are advised to obtain the full report published by the GAPE.

The survey, which was an initiative of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), is part of the ongoing effort to foster cooperation among the various groups who participate in the governing boards. The Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ), the Fédération des comités de parents de la province de Québec (FCPPQ) and the CRIRES agreed to collaborate with the CSQ in carrying out this project.


The objective of the survey is to describe the way the governing boards presently operate from the perspective of their voting members. It aims to provide information concerning the experience of the boards (quality of their implementation, the democratic and decision-making process, decisions made, effects on school life and on students, suggestions for improvement) and concerning their voting members (characteristics, reasons for participating, satisfaction with their board's decisions and assessment of their participation).

It may be useful to begin by recalling that the creation of the governing boards in public elementary and secondary schools in Québec was the result of amendments to the *Education Act*. In keeping with the changes, which came into force in 1998, certain powers were decentralized to the level of the school and these powers were vested in the governing board. The boards are composed of parents, teachers, non-teaching professionals, support and child-care staff and, where appropriate, community representatives, as well as, for schools offering Secondary IV and V, students from those levels. All of these partners are expected to work together and to respect each other's jurisdictions, in order to ensure that their decisions are the most appropriate ones for the students.



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Data collection

To obtain the data, 3612 questionnaires were sent to 1430 English- and French-language schools in Québec in late March 2001. They were addressed to the chair of each school's governing board. A letter presented the objective and guidelines of the research project and explained the procedures necessary to ensure the random distribution of the survey questionnaires. These procedures were to be carried out in the presence of all members of the board.

Two thirds of the schools that had received questionnaires (66 per cent) sent us at least one completed questionnaire: 65 per cent of the elementary schools and 69 per cent of the secondary schools in the French sector, and 65 per cent of schools in the English sector overall.

The response rate among voting members was slightly over 50 per cent. A total of 1819 people answered questionnaires: 893 staff members (644 teachers, 88 non-teaching professionals, 109 members of support staff and 32 child-care workers¹) and 926 parents. Of this total, 1362 were francophone and 457 were anglophone.

Structure of the summary


First of all, a summary presents general answers to questions, reflecting the major tendencies suggested by the data collected. This summary gives the reader an overall view of the operation of the governing boards at the present time. The questions are the following :

- Who are the people who serve as voting members on governing boards?
- How do the members assess their experience of participation in the governing board, the relations among members, and the decision-making process?
- How do the members assess the effect of their governing board on school life?
- How do the members see the future of the governing boards and what do they suggest to improve the operation of the boards?

Next, five chapters present the results of the survey, on which the answers to the questions above are based. Chapter 1 describes the characteristics of the respondents; Chapter 2, the functioning of the boards; Chapter 3, participation in the boards, relations within the boards and the decision-making process; Chapter 4, the influence of the boards on school life; and Chapter 5, the members' views on the future of the boards.

Some interesting results indicate differences with respect to characteristics and points of view among groups of respondents (parents, members of the various types of personnel), levels of instruction (elementary and secondary) and educational sectors (French and English).

1. Twenty people did not indicate the category of staff to which they belong.



It should be noted that the numbers of the tables and graphs indicated in parentheses throughout the summary refer to the appendix of statistical tables and graphs.

The survey, which is essentially descriptive, presents a number of ideas for further research and also suggests certain structural or functional adjustments. These suggestions for reflection are provided at the end of the summary.



Summary of the main results

The answers to the following questions convey a general idea of the functioning of the governing boards. The answers are based on the survey results, which are presented in the chapters of the summary.

Who are the people who serve as voting members on governing boards?

The first observation is that, overall, the people who serve on governing boards form quite a homogeneous population. The board members are mainly women, employed, educated and with a fairly high average family income, and they were born in Canada.

The members of the different categories of personnel (teachers, non-teaching professionals, support and child-care staff) are 44 years old, on average, and have collective agreements that determine their selection, tasks and income. Their sociodemographic profile differs very little from one level of instruction to another, nor does it vary from the French to the English sector.

The parents often have a university education, and are employed in an area of activity that is relatively close to that of education; their average age is 42 and they live with a partner. Taken together, these factors ensure that their average household income is higher than that of the parents they represent. Finally, their children are rarely enrolled in special education classes, but more often attend enriched classes.

Most of the people who sit on the boards have previous experience in participatory bodies in education. This considerable experience, which is reflected in the fact that many of the respondents are serving on their governing board for the third consecutive year, is especially the case for teachers and non-teaching professionals, and for parents of secondary school students in both the French and English sectors.

Parents and teachers in particular are likely to hold opposing positions on certain educational issues. It would appear that people with a more positive or negative vision of the changes under way in education tend to have a similar view of the governing boards in general and of their own board in particular. Thus, teachers are more inclined than parents to fear the effects of the decentralization of powers prescribed in the *Education Act*, to disagree with the introduction of competitive mechanisms in education, to feel that the changes being carried out in the education system are too rapid and to doubt that these changes will improve the quality of education. Parents and teachers agree on other education-related issues, such as the importance of increasing funding for education, of concerted effort to enable more students to succeed in school and of increased professional support for students with difficulties. However, there are differences between the members of boards in the English and French sectors on this subject.

Overall, staff members and parents take part in the activities of the governing board first of all in order to represent their membership group, and only secondly to participate in the governance of the school. There is thus a certain similarity between the reasons for participating cited by parents and school staff, a similarity that is closely associated with the nature of their respective mandates. Reasons for participating based on personal concerns, special situations or defensive positions were cited less often.



How do the members assess their experience of participation in the governing board, the relations among members, and the decision-making process?

In general, the respondents value their participation in the board and play an active role in it. They also maintain that they have a good understanding of the board's roles and powers, although certain issues (the powers of the boards relative to other decision-making bodies, interpretation of the *Education Act*) are less clear than others. They describe relations among the members of the board as "very good" or "satisfactory"; there is a sense of mutual understanding, and problems or conflicts are rare. They consider that the school principal and the chair of the board respect their mandates. They say they are generally satisfied with the decision-making process in their board. They display a high degree of satisfaction with decisions made by the board.

The parents greatly enjoy participating in board activities. The anglophone respondents are more likely than the francophones to have reservations concerning the relations among board members, but they also show greater satisfaction with the decision-making process in their boards.

There are certain tensions within the boards. One source of tension is the very strong influence of the school principals. In addition, the results show that there are sometimes power plays, generally pitting parents against teachers, with members of other types of staff acting as intermediaries. These tensions seem a bit more pronounced in the French sector (especially at the secondary school level) than in the English sector.

How do the members evaluate the effects of their governing board on school life?

The respondents felt that the introduction of governing boards has made some improvement in school life and the students' lives. Along these lines, the respondents mentioned the role of their board in finding innovative solutions, opening the school to the community and increasing parental participation in the school. They felt the board had less impact in areas like student behaviour or the recognition of professional competencies. The respondents also agreed that their board has made it possible to attain the major objectives sought through the creation of the governing boards. However, their responses varied according to the statements in the questionnaire. Thus, if the boards seem to be capable of lessening the gap between the processes of making and implementing decisions, they consider them less successful in developing closer links between the school and the community or increasing collaboration between service providers and consumers.

Whatever their membership group, the respondents considered that their board had less impact than they initially expected it would. First, parents have not been able to influence the climate in the school, students' educational success, their relations with the school principal and staff or their participation in the school as much as they would have wished. Second, those areas in which respondents had the lowest expectations concerning the influence of boards, such as student behaviour, the administration's management style and the recognition of professional competencies, were the ones in which there was the least difference between their expectations and their experience.



How do the members see the future of the governing boards and what do they suggest to improve their operation?

First of all, the vast majority of the respondents who answered the question on the boards' success or failure believe the governing boards will be successful. Moreover, they stated that they would participate in the activities of their board again if they were eligible.

Furthermore, more than half the respondents would allow secondary school students to vote,² half would give the right to vote to community representatives and one third would give school principals the right to vote.

As for suggested improvements, a majority of the respondents were of the opinion that it would be preferable for all board members to receive the same training, even though they also expressed a high level of satisfaction with the specific training they received.

As regards the respondents' perception of the distribution of powers, the teachers and non-teaching professionals tended merely to want the boards to retain their present powers. A large proportion of the parents felt otherwise: they want them to acquire additional powers. This demand for broader powers is also among the suggestions that the parents made for improving the effectiveness of the boards.

2. A bill was passed in the National Assembly granting the vote to students who sit on governing boards. This change in the *Education Act* came into force on December 18, 2001.



Characteristics of the respondents 1

This chapter of the summary is divided into six sections: the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, their prior experience in participatory bodies, their reasons for participating in the board, the training they received, their opinions on priorities for the Québec education system and on a series of educational issues.



1.1 Sociodemographic characteristics

Teachers and non-teaching professionals

In general, the teachers and non-teaching professionals share similar characteristics (average age of about 44, 17 to 18 years of professional experience, university degree, family income). There is greater variety at the secondary school level, and respondents in the English sector are more culturally heterogeneous than those in the French sector (Table 1).

Support and child-care staff

Support and child-care staff who participated in the survey do not form a very homogeneous group. Child-care staff, who are present only in elementary schools, are virtually all women. In addition, at the elementary school level in the French sector, they are young and relatively inexperienced. Finally, support and child-care staff in the English sector are more culturally heterogeneous than those in the French sector. The two personnel categories are nonetheless similar as regards training and family income (Table 2).

Parents

Parents who serve on the governing board are 42 years old, on average. They are fairly well educated and most of them are employed. A very high proportion of these parents—most of whom are mothers—live with partners and have an annual family income that is higher than that of the parents they represent.

It is also interesting to note that few of the children of these respondents attend special education classes (less than 5 per cent) and that more of them are enrolled in enriched classes. This phenomenon is even more pronounced in English-language secondary schools (50 per cent) than in secondary schools in the French sector (29 per cent) (Table 3).



1.2 Experience in participatory bodies

Teachers and non-teaching professionals

More than one out of five respondents in this category who participate in the boards of secondary schools in both the French and English sectors hold union positions in their school or school board.

Slightly over one quarter of respondents in the French sector received direct or indirect compensation for their participation in the board. In the English sector the situation was very different.

A fair proportion of the teachers and non-teaching professionals stressed that more than 50 per cent of the people they represent attended the general meeting that elected them. This high participation rate did not necessarily lead to an electoral process; only about a third of the respondents from French secondary schools indicated that there had been an election for their position on the board. A very large majority of teachers and non-teaching professionals in the English sector were elected by acclamation.

The teachers and non-teaching professionals have considerable experience in school participatory bodies. Nearly half indicated that they had already participated in such bodies, mainly in a teachers' participation committee or in the school's orientation committee. The majority also said they had participated in their governing board for at least two years. This tendency was more pronounced in elementary schools in the French sector (Table 4).

Support and child-care staff

Some of the trends observed among teachers and non-teaching professionals apply to support and child-care staff as well. In this category too, many respondents in the English sector hold union positions, direct or indirect compensation for their participation was provided mainly in the French sector and the majority of respondents had participated in their governing board for at least two years. Thus nearly half the support and child-care staff in French-language elementary schools and in the English sector were participating in their board for the third consecutive year.

Fewer respondents in these personnel categories than among the teachers and non-teaching professionals stated that over 50 per cent of their members were present at the general meeting that elected them. Nonetheless, elections were often held: 40 per cent of the respondents from French-language secondary schools said there had been an election for the position they held on the board (Table 5).



Parents

The number of parents present at a general meeting of parents ranged anywhere from 2 to 500, depending on the size of the school. More than half the respondents in French elementary schools and in the English sector were elected to their governing board position. A larger proportion of respondents from French-language secondary schools were elected by acclamation.

The parents have previous experience in school representative bodies. Nearly two thirds of the respondents from secondary schools in the French sector and from the English sector had participated in some structure involving parents—usually the school parents’ committee—prior to the introduction of the governing boards. Also, over two thirds have participated in their board for at least two years.

A number of parents (20 per cent to 32 per cent) hold the position of chair on their boards (Table 6).




1.3 Reasons for serving on the governing board

In general, staff members and parents participate in their governing board primarily to represent the group to which they belong and to influence decisions in the school. The motivations of parents and staff members alike are closely associated with the nature of their mandate. Parents and staff also have a similar assessment of the openness of the public school to its social environment.

Questions bearing on more individual themes, special situations or more defensive positions elicited fewer answers. Similarly, few respondents stated that they serve on their governing board because no one else wanted to, or cited the role of religion in the school as a major factor in their decision to participate.

A special set of motives for participation exists at the elementary school level in the French sector. Parents in this category saw membership in a school participatory body as a way to keep up with and influence decisions, to improve educational success at their child’s school and to be involved socially. In fact, few of these parents participated in the board because no one else would and few did so to resolve a problem at the school, which tends to confirm the voluntary and civic-minded nature of their participation.

The desire to represent their occupational group, to raise the level of instructional success in the school and to influence decisions prompts staff members, and particularly teachers, to sit on the board. Their motives thus concern both representation and influence on the governance of the school. The members of this group are more likely than the parents to state that they wanted to solve a problem at the school or that they are participating in the board because no one else wanted to. However, a smaller proportion of them than of the parents linked their participation in the board with a desire for information.



The situation of respondents from secondary schools in the French sector is also particular. Contrary to the situation in French-sector elementary schools, there is very little difference between the principal motivations of staff members and parents. Both want to be aware of decisions made in the school, to contribute to educational success in the school and to represent their group. The only minor difference is that the staff members, especially those who oppose the changes under way in education, are more likely than the parents to report that they only participated in the board because no one else would.

There are differences between respondents from the English sector and the French sector. The former generally agreed more than the latter with the statements in the questionnaire, in particular those regarding the importance of balancing the power of the parents or that of the principal. This motive was expressed especially by anglophone staff members. The same difference exists with regard to statements about resolving a problem at the school and representing a particular category of students. Respondents from the English sector, especially parents, were more inclined to believe that their involvement would have an impact on decisions at the school and to encourage harmonious relations between parents and staff, and between the school and the community. Finally, a larger proportion of francophone than anglophone parents indicated either that they wanted to get involved socially or to acquire experience working in an organization. The anglophone parents had a greater tendency to say they thought that their personal and work experience could be an asset to the school and that they wanted their children to be proud of having parents who cared (Table 7).



1.4 Training and preparation

Training received

Training to prepare them to participate was given to 42 per cent of the respondents. The rate varied, however, depending on their number of years of participation in the governing board. Respondents who have been on their board for at least two years are more likely to have received such training. It seems that neither the school boards nor the Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) provided much training during the 2000-2001 school year, with the result that many new members of boards were unable to obtain training. Overall, more teachers and non-teaching professionals have received training than support and child-care staff.

Organizations that provided training

Most respondents received their training from their school board or union federation. Support and child-care staff and, in the English sector, parents, were more likely to receive training from their school board. Teachers and non-teaching professionals were mainly trained by their union federations in the French sector and by the organization representing them in the English sector. The Fédération des comités de parents de la province du Québec (FCPPQ) trained more than a third of the francophone parents who indicated they had received training (Table 8).



Satisfaction with the training received

Overall, the respondents were more than “somewhat satisfied” with their training. Very similar levels of satisfaction were expressed with the training provided by the MEQ, the CSQ, the APEQ and the FCPQ. There was less satisfaction with training provided by the school boards, other union organizations and other organizations (Table 9).



1.5

Opinions on the priorities of Québec’s education system


The respondents were asked to state what they feel should be the priorities of Québec’s education system. This question made it possible to contextualize the respondents’ opinions on educational issues (Graph 3). The opinions have been grouped in ten areas of priority:

- The quality of education (27 per cent)
- Educational success (15 per cent)
- Appropriate resources (15 per cent)
- Social development (11 per cent)
- The organization of instruction (9 per cent)
- Teaching practices (8 per cent)
- The climate in the school (5 per cent)
- Providing qualifications for young people (5 per cent)
- The teaching profession (4 per cent)
- Involving partners (2 per cent)

In terms of the degree of importance accorded to each area of priority, issues related to the quality of education are widely considered the most important, followed by educational success and appropriate resources. The comments on the quality of education mainly concerned refocusing on the basic subjects: 51 per cent of answers in this priority area stressed the need for solid education in French or English, reading and writing, and mathematics (Table 10).

The comments on educational success concerned, in order of importance, measures to help students with difficulties (33.7 per cent), motivating students (21.2 per cent), encouraging students to stay in school (19.2 per cent) and promoting equal opportunities in education (15.9 per cent) (Table 11).

On the issue of resources, there was a strong tendency to recommend increasing resources (39 per cent for additional resources and 30 per cent for more specialized services). There were also suggestions to reallocate existing resources (18 per cent for a change in the student-teacher ratio).



Comparison of these data reveals certain differences among the categories of respondents. Thus, parents called for education of a high quality more often than did the various categories of staff members, although all respondents agreed that this was a priority. Staff members generally placed greater emphasis on questions related to children's social development.

In addition, respondents from the English sector differed in certain respects from those from the French sector. Although their answers were more consistent with the general tendency to prioritize the quality of education, educational success and appropriate resources, respondents from the English sector placed more emphasis on appropriate resources and on issues related to the teaching profession, and less on socialization.

In addition, the following priorities were each mentioned by more than 90 respondents:

- Establishing a culture of planning (173 respondents)
- Increasing existing resources (156 respondents)
- Providing more special education services (120 respondents)
- Motivating students to become more involved in their studies (105 respondents)
- Educating young people in citizenship, and democratic and intercultural values (94 respondents)
- Creating closer ties between the school and the world of work (92 respondents)



1.6 Opinions on educational issues

Evaluation of the education system and the respondent's school

Overall, the respondents gave the Québec education system a "C." Respondents from the English sector gave the system a slightly lower mark than did those from the French sector. There was no difference in evaluation between parents and staff members.

Respondents have a more positive opinion of the schools of whose governing board they are voting members, and gave them a "B." Parents of students in French-sector elementary schools gave their schools the highest marks. Staff members of French secondary schools and English schools were slightly more severe. Teachers were slightly more severe than parents (Table 12).

Opinions on the quality of education and the need to refocus on basic subjects

With the exception of parents from secondary schools in the French sector and of staff members from the English sector, the majority of the respondents believe that in comparison with the education they received, the quality of education has improved or remained about the same (Table 13).

Anglophone staff members were more inclined than other respondents to maintain that the school is neglecting basic subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics. (Table 14).



The changes under way in education

The respondents agreed that the changes currently under way will improve the quality of education. Parents from the French sector were more inclined than others to express agreement with the statement. Of all staff members, teachers had the greatest reservations concerning this statement (Table 15).

The respondents tended to “agree somewhat” that the changes were being carried out too rapidly. It should be recalled that this survey was conducted during the 2000-2001 school year, at a time when some elementary schools were most likely experiencing considerable tension related to the implementation of the new curriculum.

Staff members (teachers in particular) of elementary schools were indeed the category of respondents most likely to criticize the rapidity of the changes (Table 16).

Possible effects of the decentralization of powers

The respondents tend to fear that the decentralization of powers will accentuate the differences among schools. This fear, shared by all staff members, was most strongly expressed by teachers. By contrast, parents, especially those from the French sector, were more divided on this question (Table 17).

The respondents hold a variety of opinions concerning decentralization and the differences among schools. Staff members in general, and teachers in particular, are the most inclined to fear this effect. The parents are rather less afraid that certain powers conferred on the governing boards could lead to students receiving a very different education from one school to another (Table 18).



Competition in education

The respondents reported that they “disagree somewhat” with the statement that the school should be evaluated on the basis of the educational performance of its students. However, francophone staff members (teachers in particular) said they “totally disagree” with this statement. Parents from the English sector were, on the contrary, likely to say they “agree somewhat.” In fact, respondents from the English sector were more likely than those from the French sector to agree with the idea of associating students’ performance with the evaluation of the school (Table 19).

The respondents “disagree somewhat” with the statement that competition among schools improves the quality of education. Staff members (francophone elementary school teachers in particular) expressed total disagreement with this statement. Parents from the English sector were the most likely to believe that competition in education could have favourable effects (Table 20).

This chapter is divided into six sections: preparation for meetings, attendance at meetings by members and principals, the agenda, the role of secretary during meetings, the consultation of members and the position of community representatives.



2.1 Preparation for meetings

A large proportion of the respondents consider themselves well prepared for each meeting (77 per cent).

Means used to prepare for each meeting

Nearly all respondents stated that, to prepare for a meeting, they reread the minutes of the previous meeting (90 per cent). The majority said they read the documents the board sends them (85 per cent) and several said they find out what subjects are on the agenda (62 per cent). Few of them said they consult the media, relevant Web sites or the *Education Act* (10 per cent). Very few said they do not prepare (2 per cent).

This high level of preparation was reported at all levels of education and in the English and French sectors alike. However, there were differences as to the nature of the preparation. Thus, the teachers and non-teaching professionals are more inclined than other respondents to prepare for board meetings by means of information obtained at the school. This seems to apply less to the support and child-care staff. The parents, lacking the advantage of on-site information, rely more on reading the documents sent by the governing board, consulting the media or rereading the *Education Act*.

Obstacles to preparation

The main obstacle to preparation reported by the respondents was a lack of time. More than half of the respondents mentioned this problem (52 per cent). Other constraints included a lack of information (27 per cent), the fact that documents are only distributed on the day of the meeting, which was cited by nearly a quarter of respondents, and an excessive workload. Finally, some respondents maintained there were no particular obstacles to their preparation (23 per cent).

Teachers and non-teaching professionals were the most likely to cite a lack of time or an excessive workload. The parents were more inclined to mention a lack of information or to say there were no problems.



2.2 Attendance at meetings

All the partners who sit on the governing boards have an excellent attendance record. The chair of the board and the school principal are almost never absent. Teachers and parents also attend meetings regularly. Although the non-teaching professionals (at least those from elementary schools) and support and child-care staff also attend meetings regularly, they have a somewhat greater tendency to be absent. This also describes the attendance of Secondary Cycle Two students. The community representatives are absent more frequently than the other groups. Although members of the public may attend board meetings, none are usually present. With the exception of the chair, the principal and the teachers, attendance at board meetings is considerably higher in the French sector than in the English sector (Table 21).



2.3 The agenda

Parents and the various categories of personnel did not always agree on how items on the agenda should be dealt with, although the agenda was rather favourably assessed in general. Parents tend to want to prolong meetings to discuss certain points at greater length, whereas teachers and non-teaching professionals tend to want to cut off discussion on certain points.

Despite this difference in perspective, the two groups have similar points of view concerning which items on the agenda should take the most time. Among these items are those related directly to the exercise of power by the boards, such as questions concerning educational services, material and financial resources, and the general functions and powers of the governing boards. Items that respondents felt should take less time include questions that are not the responsibility of the board or information from the principal. Support and day-care staff considered that questions that concern them directly should be discussed at greater length.

According to the information collected, it does not seem that certain items on the agenda are often postponed or that the boards waste a lot of time discussing what is or is not the board's responsibility (Table 22).



2.4 The role of secretary during meetings

As prescribed in the *Education Act*, the minutes of the governing board meetings are supposed to be recorded in a register kept by the school principal or a person designated by him or her. A voting member is often chosen as secretary by the other members of the board. This tendency is more pronounced in the English sector (62 per cent) and at the elementary level (50 per cent) than at the secondary level in the French sector (36 per cent), where this role is often filled by a school secretary (Table 23).



2.5 Consultation

Staff members

Almost half the respondents representing the different categories of personnel answered that they rarely consult the members they represent on questions relating to the board (48 per cent). A third said they consult their members often and a fifth said they never do so. Teachers in general and respondents from the French sector are more likely to consult their members regularly. However, the amount of consultation seems to depend, among other factors, on the size of schools, as professional and support staff members may be the only staff in their category in the case of a small school. It is larger staff categories, such as teachers, who consult their members most often.

Parents

A fair proportion of parents from the English sector indicated that they often consult the other parents of their school (47 per cent). There is much less consultation in the French sector in general and French-language secondary schools in the French sector in particular. In fact, one third of the parents from French-language elementary schools and more than half the parents from French secondary schools reported that they do not practise this type of consultation.

This difference in behaviour with regard to consultation seems primarily to reflect different cultures of parental participation in the French and English sectors. There would appear to be a stronger culture of participation in the English sector. Even among the French-language schools there are differences, with more parental participation in some and less in others. This seems to be related to the size of the schools, as it is easier to reach and consult the parents in small schools than in large schools.

With regard to the creation of a parent participation organization (PPO),³ two thirds of the parents said that such an organization had been formed in their schools (67 per cent). Three quarters of the parents from French-language elementary schools and from the English sector and half the parents from French-language secondary schools reported that there is a PPO in their school.

More than three quarters of the parents who answered that a PPO had been formed in their school indicated that this organization is consulted by the parents who serve on the governing board (77 per cent). The anglophone respondents are more likely than the francophones to consider this consultation process effective. Parents from French-language secondary schools were more likely than other parents to indicate that consultation does not occur (32 per cent). Just over half the parents who answered believe the PPO improves the operation of their governing board (51 per cent). Over a third answered that it makes no difference at all (36 per cent).

3. According to the *Education Act*, a parent participation organization may be established for each building or for each level of instruction. The purpose of such an organization is to promote parents' collaboration in the development, implementation and periodic evaluation of their school's educational project and to encourage participation in fostering their child's educational success.



2.6 Community representatives

The situation of community representatives seems somewhat unclear at present. Thus, slightly over a third of the respondents indicated that the two community representative positions were filled on their board (37 per cent), a third reported that only one position was filled (33 per cent) and nearly a third said that neither position was filled (30 per cent). This means that 70 per cent of the boards have filled at least one of the positions for representatives of the community. This is the case at all levels of instruction and in both the French and English sectors.

Participation in the governing board, interpersonal dynamics and the decision-making process 3

This chapter is divided into seven sections. It deals with the participation of the members, their understanding of the board's functions and powers, the interpersonal dynamics, the roles of the school principal and the chair of the board, the decision-making process, decisions made and the influence of the board members.



3.1 Participation of the members

The first major finding is that the respondents highly value their experience of participation in the board's activities. Few respondents said their participation demanded too much energy and fewer still that they were bored or felt they were wasting their time. They seemed to enjoy the meetings. This enthusiasm was also shown in the fact that a large majority of the respondents felt they played an active role in their board.

Parents were very enthusiastic about participating in the board, even more so than members from the different categories of staff, who were also enthusiastic. Finally, respondents from secondary schools in the French sector tended to be more positive than those in the English sector (Table 24).



3.2 Understanding of the board's functions and powers

The respondents tended to "agree somewhat" with the statements concerning their understanding of the governing board's functions and powers, showing that in general they feel they are quite capable of understanding these functions and powers.

On the whole the respondents felt they had a very good understanding of the functioning of their governing board and of its functions and powers.⁴ However, a relatively large proportion of them said they had some difficulty interpreting the *Education Act* or distinguishing the powers of the governing board from those of other bodies, or that their knowledge of the legislative and administrative documents referred to in meetings was limited.⁵

Those respondents who had been sitting on the board longest tended to feel most strongly that they had a good understanding of the functions and powers of the governing board. In addition, those who had received training felt they had a better understanding of these functions and powers. Thus, experienced respondents who had received training had the best understanding of the board's functions and powers. On the other hand, respondents who had no training and were new on the board seemed to have the most difficulties (Table 25).

4. The averages were 1.63 and 1.80 respectively, on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 being equivalent to "Agree completely" and 4 to "Disagree completely").

5. The averages were 2.84, 2.87 and 2.11 respectively, on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 being equivalent to "Agree completely" and 4 to "Disagree completely").



3.3 Interpersonal dynamics within the board

Assessment of relations among members

All the respondents were in agreement in describing relations among the members of the board as “very good” or “satisfactory.” This positive judgment was shared by parents and members from the different categories of staff, in both elementary and secondary schools, in both the French and English sectors (Table 26).

Harmony on the board

The results of the survey show that there is a climate of harmony within the governing boards. The respondents from both levels of instruction and both sectors felt that conditions were favourable to democratic process. In particular, there is respect for the members’ right to speak. The board meetings are well organized. There is also good team spirit on the board. Some more contentious points should be noted: it is sometimes difficult to obtain consensus and minority points of view are not always taken into consideration.

It should be added that more parents than teachers tended to “totally agree” with statements that there is harmony within the board (Table 27).

Tensions within the board

As stated above, the respondents value their participation in the activities of the board and feel that the climate is in general very satisfactory and that there is consensus. Thus the respondents mainly disagreed with the statements suggesting that there are tensions within the board. They did not feel that statements about difficulties in making their point of view heard or about some members of their board using incomprehensible jargon or pursuing their own interests and not working as a real group were applicable.

It should be noted that staff in the English sector were slightly more likely to agree with such statements than those from elementary schools in the French sector (Table 28).

The limits of participation

In keeping with other findings showing the harmony and the democratic nature of relations within governing boards, situations in which the operation of the board is compromised by members overstepping their mandate appear to be very unusual. A single such situation was sometimes observed: that of a parent bringing up matters concerning his or her own child. This situation occurred slightly more frequently in French secondary schools (Table 29).



3.4 Assessment of the roles played by the school principal and the chair of the board

Role of the principal

The respondents felt that principals often or even always exercise the role assigned to them and respect their proper jurisdiction and powers. They said the principals very often follow up on the board's decisions and that they explain the school's functioning clearly and communicate their vision of the school. The only slightly negative aspect cited was that principals did not always facilitate the board's work by providing support and advice. The assessment of consistency between the principal's actual and assigned roles was even higher in the French sector than the English sector. Parents and staff expressed similar views on this (Table 30).

Role of the chair of the board

The respondents felt that board chairs very often exercise the role assigned to them and respect their jurisdiction and powers. Their assessment of the application of the formal framework of the meetings (agenda, right to speak, respect for partners) was slightly higher than that of the actual chairing, of which their assessment was also high. The parents' assessment of the consistency of the role exercised with the role assigned was particularly high. It should be recalled that some of the respondents were themselves chairs of boards, and were thus assessing their own performance (Table 31).



3.5 Decision-making process

The respondents generally "agree[d] somewhat" with the statement that the decision-making process within their boards respects the applicable rules. Each member's opinion seems to be taken into consideration in the board's discussions and the members are informed of the concrete results of their decisions. The respondents also said they are satisfied with the decision-making process in their boards and that it respects the abilities of the individual members. They felt, as a group at least, that they have the ability to influence the decisions made at board meetings; this was especially true for those in the English sector (Table 32).



3.6 Decisions made by the board

Decisions made

It seems that, in the year preceding the survey, the boards made decisions in the majority of areas listed in the *Education Act* with respect to governing boards. Among the areas most often mentioned were the budget and the school's educational project (84 and 80 per cent respectively). The implementation of complementary and special services programs and the obligation to report on the quality of the school's services were the areas in which the fewest decisions were made (44 and 48 per cent respectively) (Table 33).

It should be stressed that governing boards in the French sector seem to have made more decisions than those in the English sector. The areas in which this difference was most obvious were the student supervision policy, the subject-time allocation, the solicitation of financial contributions, the use of school premises and the implementation of complementary services programs.

Satisfaction with decisions made

The respondents tended to be extremely satisfied with decisions made by the board. This high degree of satisfaction applied to the decisions in general and mainly concerned areas only indirectly related to the work of teachers and non-teaching professionals (programming of educational activities requiring scheduling changes or travel outside the school, use of school premises, framing of rules of conduct and safety measures, solicitation of financial contributions). There was a lower level of satisfaction, although still very high, with respect to decisions on subjects more directly related to the work of teachers and non-teaching professionals (application of the Basic school regulation, the obligation to report on the quality of services provided by the school, general orientations on the enrichment and adaptation of programs). Finally, it should be noted that the areas in which the level of satisfaction was lowest were those in which the fewest decisions were made (subject-time allocation, implementation of complementary and special services programs) (Table 34).



3.7 Influence of board members

Current influence of members

The survey findings clearly showed that all members of governing boards in the French sector exercised some influence.

It appears that the principal exercised the greatest influence and that teachers also had considerable influence. The influence of the board chair was also relatively important, while that of parents was only moderate. There was an important difference in perspective concerning the parents' influence: parents attributed less influence to themselves than was attributed to them by members from the different categories of staff. Non-teaching professionals and child-care staff had little influence, while support staff, students and community representatives had even less (Table 35).


Other interesting findings were:

- Respondents had different assessments of the influence of parents. While the various categories of staff felt parents have enough influence, the parents themselves did not feel they had that much influence.
- The respondents from elementary schools attributed more influence to the chair than those from secondary schools.
- It was felt that non-teaching professionals in secondary schools had more influence than those in elementary schools.
- The influence of support staff was assessed differently by the different categories of respondents. Teachers and non-teaching professionals attributed less influence to them than did parents or child-care staff. Support staff themselves felt their influence is weak.

Influence members should exercise

Principals were considered by all respondents to exercise more influence than they should. Teachers as a group were felt to exercise the appropriate degree of influence. Most respondents (except teachers) felt parents should have more influence, and that the board chair, non-teaching professionals and support and child-care staff exercise the appropriate degree of influence, even though, generally speaking, they tend to demand more.

Finally, all respondents, especially parents, felt that student and community representatives should have significantly more influence than they do, but teachers felt this to a lesser degree. In addition, respondents from the English sector were less likely than those from the French sector to feel the community representatives should have more influence.



The opposing perspectives tend to give rise to alliances within governing boards. Thus, parents who demand more influence seem to have the support of some categories of staff other than teachers, while teachers, fearing that parents will gain more influence than they now have, seem to want to ally themselves with other categories of staff. Finally, all respondents agreed, although in different proportions, that principals should have less influence (Table 36).

Influence of governing boards on school life 4

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, it examines respondents' expectations of how the governing board would affect different aspects of school life and the students' lives before they became involved in the board. Then it looks at how they assessed the effects of the establishment of the governing board in light of their experience of the current year. Finally, it looks at respondents' views on whether the main objectives sought through the creation of governing boards have been attained.



4.1 Expectations concerning the influence of governing boards

Before becoming involved in their governing boards, the respondents had a strong tendency to feel the board would have a positive influence on various aspects of school life. The governing board was thus viewed mainly as promoting innovative practices and fostering understanding among the partners in the school.

A large majority of respondents had expected that the board would help the school find innovative solutions to certain problems. A large majority had also expected the board to help open the school up to the community, to encourage relationships between parents and principals and between parents and staff, and to promote parents' participation in the school.

The tendency to expect the board to have a positive influence on school life and the students' lives was shown by all groups, but it was more pronounced among parents than among the different categories of staff (Table 37).




4.2 Assessment of the board's influence

On the whole, respondents felt the establishment of a governing board had improved school life and the students' lives, at least to some extent.

The governing board was primarily seen as having improved the school's ability to find innovative solutions, opened the school up to the community and increased parents' participation in the school. It was seen as having had a lesser impact on student behaviour, the recognition of professional competencies, the operation of the school administration or the principal's management style.

Respondents from the French sector, especially parents, were the most likely to assess the impact of the establishment of the governing board positively.

Teachers and non-teaching professionals tended to assess it less positively. Support and child-care staff tended to take a middle view.



This difference in perspectives once again concerns areas more directly related to the teachers' role and to everyday life in school. Aspects such as student behaviour, educational success, support for students in difficulty, the climate in the school and relations between parents and principals were thus assessed very differently by the different groups (Table 38).



4.3 Attainment of the objectives of the boards

On the whole, respondents "agreed somewhat" with the statement that their governing board attained the main objectives sought through the creation of the governing boards. However, while the boards bring the making and implementation of decisions closer together, they were seen as somewhat less successful in creating closer links between the school and the community or increasing collaboration between people providing services and those receiving them.

Respondents from the English sector were more severe than those from the French sector in judging how well their boards met the main objectives sought through the creation of the governing boards.

Teachers and non-teaching professionals were more severe than parents, and support and child-care staff took a position similar to that of parents (Table 39).

Perceptions concerning the future of governing boards 5

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, it looks at the question of training for members of governing boards. Then it looks at perceptions of the distribution of powers on the board and of the right to vote of the members of the board. Finally, it looks at suggestions made by the respondents for improving their boards' operations.

Concerning the future of governing boards, 80 per cent of respondents felt governing boards would prove a success and said they would take part again in the activities of their board if they were eligible.



5.1 Training

Two general questions were asked about the respondents' perceptions of the training that should be given to new board members, one regarding the type of training and, the other, the subjects that should be included in initial or ongoing training.

Shared training or specific training


If only a single training activity was to be provided for all respondents, a large majority of them would opt for shared training (72 per cent). This choice was especially popular among parents and staff other than teachers. It was slightly more popular in the English sector than in French elementary or secondary schools.

This strong support for shared training seems to be based on the existing situation. Thus, members who were trained by their school boards were more likely to choose that type of training (81 per cent). Similarly, those people who were more directly targeted by the training provided by school boards also tended to choose the same type of training. On the other hand, teachers trained by their union and parents trained by their federation tended to be the ones in their respective groups who least favoured shared training. It should be noted, however, for perspective, that the respondents were still satisfied with the training they received.

Initial training and ongoing training

The survey also covered the nature of the respondents' training needs. According to the data gathered, the main subjects that should be covered were, in order of importance:

- Chairing a meeting
- Functions and powers within the governing board
- Roles of the different members and their limits
- Rules of operation and procedures in governing boards
- Comparison of the functions and powers of governing boards and those of other bodies involved in schools



The main subjects proposed for inclusion in ongoing training were, in order of importance:

- Success plans
- Educational services
- The educational project
- Interpersonal relations and group dynamics
- The education reform

Finally, subjects proposed for inclusion in both initial and ongoing training were, in order of importance:

- The education reform
- Interpretation of the *Education Act*



5.2 Distribution of powers

To highlight expectations concerning the development of governing boards, respondents were asked for their perceptions of certain powers given to governing boards by the *Education Act* and of other powers not given to the boards.

On the whole, respondents wanted their boards to have more powers than they do. Teachers and non-teaching professionals tended to feel the current powers of their boards should be maintained. However, one third of parents felt their boards should have somewhat greater powers than they currently have. Support and child-care staff fell in between the latter two groups. This divergence is particularly apparent with respect to educational services and the functions and powers associated with them, and it marked the entire section.

It should be stressed that teachers and non-teaching professionals tended to want to remove certain powers currently vested in the board (choice of textbooks and instructional materials, subject-time allocation). However, parents wanted the boards to extend their powers to areas that are not currently under their authority (evaluation of school staff, selection criteria for school staff) (Table 40).



5.3 Voting rights

The respondents' opinions concerning governing board participants who do not currently have voting rights (students, principals and community representatives) were also explored (Table 41).

Voting rights for students⁶

More than half of respondents from both elementary and secondary schools would give voting rights to students in Secondary Cycle Two (57 per cent). More than two thirds of respondents from secondary schools agreed with giving voting rights to students on the governing boards (66 per cent).

More respondents from the French sector, particularly those from secondary schools, tended to be in favour of voting rights for students. However, respondents from the English sector tended to be opposed. Non-teaching professionals, followed by support staff and parents, tended to feel most strongly that voting rights should be given to students. Fewer teachers tended to feel that this right should be given to students.

Voting rights for community representatives

Respondents were divided as to whether they would give voting rights to community representatives (50 per cent).

Slightly more respondents from the French sector, in both elementary and secondary schools, were in favour of voting rights for community representatives than were opposed. However, the majority of respondents from the English sector were opposed.

Parents tended to feel more strongly than teachers that community representatives should be given this right.

While more parents from the French sector than from the English sector would give voting rights to community representatives, staff in both the French and English sectors tended to share the opinion of parents in the English sector.

Voting rights for principals

Slightly more than a third of respondents would give voting rights to principals (34 per cent). Staff from the English sector, more than any other group, tended to agree with giving voting rights to principals. Staff from elementary schools in the French sector felt the same. On the other hand, parents from the French sector and staff from secondary schools in the French sector tended not to want to give them this right.

6. At the Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse (Québec Youth Summit), the Minister of Education promised to give the right to vote to students in Secondary Cycle Two. A bill was recently adopted giving students this right.



5.4 Suggestions for the future

A qualitative section was included in the survey, in which respondents were asked to give suggestions for improving the operation of governing boards. In this section, respondents could express their views without having to choose from answers provided.

The suggestions made concerned broadening certain decision-making powers, improving preparation for meetings and encouraging greater participation by parents. These recommendations came mainly from parents. Parents and staff made suggestions on training to be provided, the operation of the boards and the climate of relations within the boards (Table 42).



General conclusion

If there is a principal conclusion to be drawn from the survey, it is that the governing boards have got off to a good start.

The vast majority of respondents felt that the governing boards will be a success and said they would take part again in the activities of their boards if they were eligible.

In general, then, the governing boards are well established. People involved in them generally said they value their participation and understand the functions and powers given to the boards and their members. Board chairs and principals respect their mandates. The decision-making process respects the members' abilities and responsibilities and the members are more than somewhat satisfied with the decisions. The voting members attend meetings regularly. Respondents feel they are well prepared to participate and do so in various ways. Finally, the agendas for meetings are followed with little controversy.


There were, however, some reservations. There seems to have been little training provided in the course of the year in which the survey was done. Certain obstacles to good preparation were cited. Lack of time and too much work were the ones mainly given by teachers and non-teaching professionals. A relatively large proportion of respondents said they lacked information or criticized the fact that documents were distributed the day of the meeting.

There are elements specific to the establishment and operation of governing boards in **elementary** schools in the **French** sector. These schools have few non-teaching professionals, and those they do have possess little experience in local school participatory bodies, receive little training, and can rarely consult their peers. Parents from elementary schools have easier access to help from a parent participation organization (PPO) and, particularly in the case of small schools, can consult their peers more easily than those from secondary schools.

A unique aspect of **secondary** schools in the **French** sector, beyond their composition and some elements of their operation, is that the parents, who are often "experts" in participation, rarely consult the other parents or obtain the support of their PPO.

A unique aspect of the **English** schools is their tradition of involvement and school democracy, which takes a more consultative form. While this may be true for parents, it is less so for the different categories of staff. It should be remembered, however, that the English schools are often small and that consultation among the staff may be less important.

Two other tendencies were also noted. The first was that respondents could rate operations, relations or processes highly without necessarily feeling that these contribute to the attainment of the objectives sought through the creation of governing boards or significantly improve various aspects of school life and students' lives. Thus, while respondents (parents in particular) observed certain positive effects, these effects were nonetheless below the expectations they had when the boards were created. The second trend concerns the existence of different views on educational questions, struggles for influence and different visions of the purpose of the boards, which testify to the relative newness of the governing boards and the precarious balance within them.



This balance should be consolidated, in the hope that vigilance and further reflection will ensure that the real progress that has been made is not compromised. Other elements, positive⁷ or more negative,⁸ of the current and future situation of the boards could be cited. However, this general assessment cannot, and should not, be too ambitious, given that this new model of governance has just begun to be implemented and has already proven promising.

7. Examples of positive elements are motivation to participate that corresponds to what is expected of the partners, satisfaction with the training provided, recognition of good work by the chair, etc.

8. Examples of more negative elements are unwanted effects of the selection process for members, the fragility of the mechanism of democratic representation, etc.



Suggestions for further reflection

The following suggestions by the researchers involved in the survey are based on respect for the quality of this joint endeavour and the benefits of collaboration with the partners in the survey.

Look at the situation from various angles

- Future assessments of the operation and impacts of governing boards should use a method that combines a subjective approach (opinions and perceptions of respondents, etc.) with objective observation (reading of meeting agendas, etc.), i.e. observation of aspects that are the result of objective conditions and social representations.

Look at ways to promote greater representation of various populations


- How can we encourage participation by the new generation of teachers and non-teaching professionals?
- How can we encourage participation by groups that are underrepresented on boards, such as parents from disadvantaged areas, single parents, cultural minorities and fathers?
- How can we reach parents of children who have difficulties in school?
- The relationship between elected parents and parents who are members of the PPO needs to be improved, particularly because the contribution of this organization, especially in secondary schools in the French sector, has proven difficult to pinpoint (not to mention the fact that these organizations do not exist in all Québec schools). The improvement of this political relationship is clearly a key way of alleviating the problem of representation discussed above.

Identify areas for action and actions to be taken to help boards work better and attain the objectives sought through their creation

- There is still progress to be made in increasing the impact of governing boards on various aspects of school life and students' lives. To this end, all players should agree on the nature of the real powers of the boards and on measures to be taken so that they may exercise these powers in the most effective and efficient way possible (understanding and updating their mandate).

Train in order to instruct but also to provide support for the implementation and consolidation of the boards

- It is important to ensure that all new members of boards are provided with initial training that gives them a good understanding of the functions and powers of governing boards. There is a high level of satisfaction with the training already given (especially that provided by the CSQ, the FCPPQ and the MEQ).
- The training should certainly focus on the meaning and scope (limits) of the mandate of a governing board. But it should also include other elements such as the connection between the creation of the governing boards and the basic orientations of the education reform, the use of hypothetical situations to learn to solve various organizational problems, the resolution of differences or conflicts among partners and the development of a culture of political participation (understanding the mandate, consulting other people, representing the interests of one's group, etc.).

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- We cannot overemphasize the importance of the role played by principals and, to a lesser extent, board chairs. In addition, we believe it would be useful to consider specific training covering various topics (detailed roles and functions, chairing a meeting) and including hypothetical situations and skill-sharing sessions.

Tighten up operating procedures


- While the majority of respondents felt they were well prepared for the meetings, that the members attended the meetings regularly and that the agendas for the meetings were generally followed, certain more problematic situations were also discussed. These included insufficient preparation for meetings, lack of time, heaviness of the workload, lack of information, late distribution of documents and too much documentation. Participants from the education community should look at concrete ways (planning of meetings, calendar of tasks and deadlines) to overcome these problems and improve the effectiveness of meetings. However, care should be taken in interpreting the various factors. For example, the difficulty of reconciling the criticism that a lack of information hinders the smooth running of meetings with the concern about too much documentation or lack of time suggests that there is a problem in distinguishing what is essential from what is secondary within time constraints.
- This difficulty distinguishing what is essential from what is secondary also seems to affect certain respondents' assessments of the agendas for the meetings. In addition, it is important that all members ensure that meetings are used for the exercise of the board's decision-making powers and that they not go beyond this or pay too much attention to unrelated areas.

Think about roles and expectations related to the position of community representative

- The situation of the community representatives seems rather uncertain (seats filled, partly filled or not yet filled). In addition, there is a need to clarify their role, define their function and provide means to ensure that this function is well understood and valued.

Accept the fact that there can be tensions

- Various tensions exist among the members of boards. For example, respondents are in agreement that the influence of principals should be reduced. Similarly, parents and teachers both feel they themselves should have more influence and the other should have less; this tendency, and the accompanying tensions, is more marked in the French sector than the English sector. Similar tensions are reflected in views concerning voting rights for student and community representatives.
- Progress still needs to be made in the areas of student behaviour and professional recognition. However, it seems obvious that there will always be differences of opinion between front-line players such as teachers, and parents. For example, parents would like to exercise more power over the school's educational services, an area teachers perceive as part of their professional autonomy.

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- It seems illusory to think that these tensions and oppositions could be eliminated or that there could be perfect harmony in the aims of the various members. The governing boards, like any space of political participation, are the site of many interests, and the balance among them must constantly be renegotiated. However, at this time, they appear to favour the development of healthy relations among players in the world of education, allowing the gradual implementation of a new form of school governance and guaranteeing the balance of the system. This is no small achievement, even though a certain refocusing on the attainment of the objectives of the boards seems called for (full deployment of boards' powers, adoption of measures necessary to attain the performance objectives sought).

Remain responsive to the needs, aspirations and suggestions of members

- Contrary to certain fears that have been circulating, respondents were very sensitive to the importance of promoting educational success for the greatest possible number of students. The emphasis all respondents placed on the shortage of resources (specifically, those allocated for students with special needs), the management of the school, the quality of education and the problem of failure in school suggests that these issues are priorities and that they require increased attention.
- The open question asking for suggestions provided a wealth of information on possible improvements to the operation of governing boards. We urge everyone in the education system to take these suggestions into consideration, especially because they reiterate solutions proposed in previous research projects.

Continue doing research

- This survey provides a glimpse of possible ways the data gathered could be used for research or pedagogical purposes (masters' or doctoral theses). In all humility, the researchers would like to express two wishes: that further research be undertaken on the operation and impact of governing boards and that the data gathered in this survey be used primarily for the advancement of knowledge and the democratization of educational success.



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The Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation:

- <http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca>

The Ministère de l'Éducation Web site on governing boards:

- <http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/boards>

STATISTICAL TABLES AND GRAPHS



1 Characteristics of the respondents

Sociodemographic characteristics

Graph 1: Number of respondents by group, level of instruction and sector

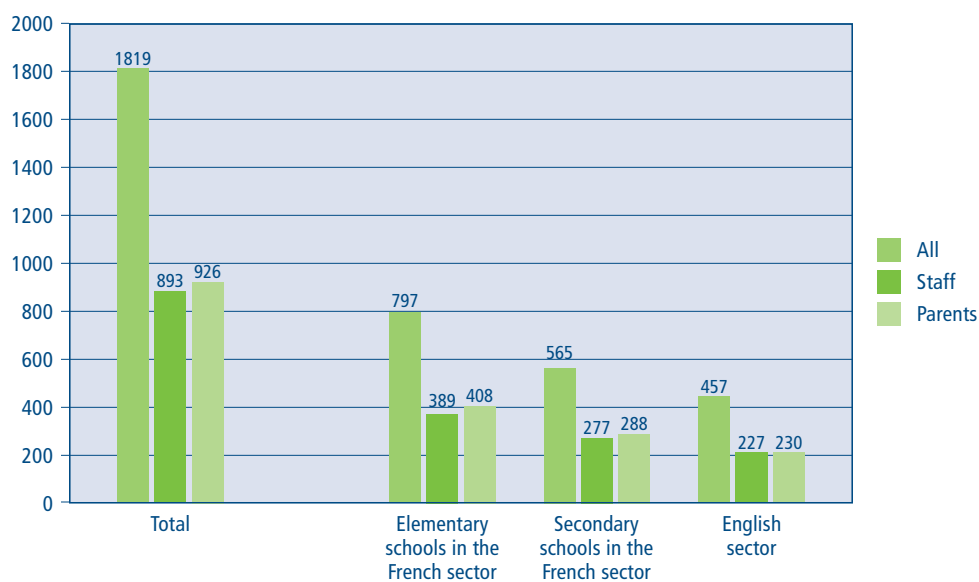


Table 1. Teachers and non-teaching professionals

	French elementary	Number of respondents	French secondary	Number of respondents	English sector	Number of respondents
Average age	43.7 years	300	43.8 years	227	43.7 years	178
Average number of years of professional experience	18.5 years	299	17.4 years	228	17.3 years	182
Female respondents	84.2%	310	49.6%	230	79.0%	186
Respondents with a university-level degree	99.3%	300	98.7%	223	98.4%	185
Respondents not born in Canada	1.0%	311	3.0%	231	15.8%	190
Respondents whose mother tongue is neither French nor English	—	310	0.9%	230	11.3%	186
Respondents with a family income (before deductions) over \$60 000	64.7%	295	65.5%	223	62.4%	170

Table 2. Support and child-care staff

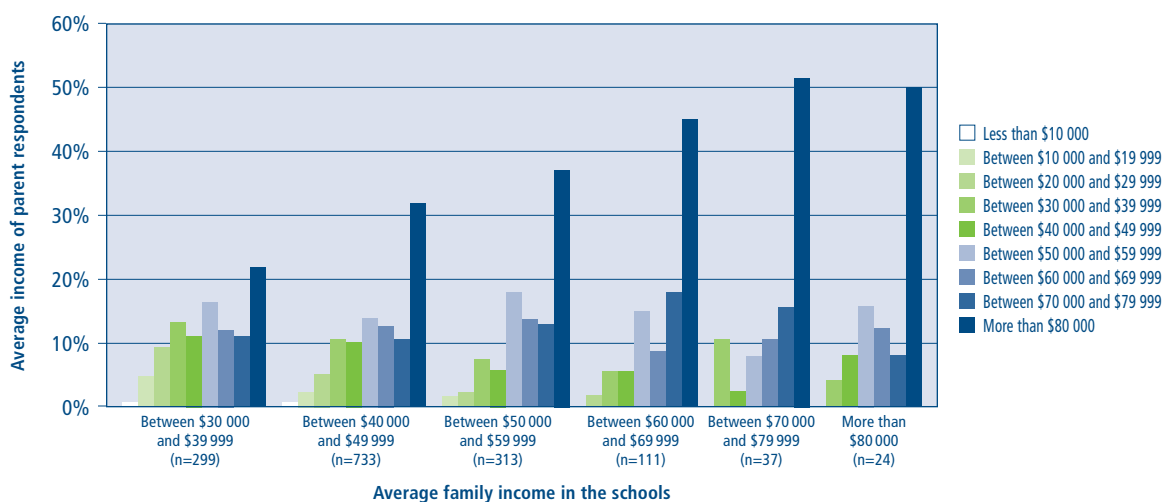
	French elementary	Number of respondents	French secondary	Number of respondents	English sector	Number of respondents
Average age	42.3 years	67	44.3 years	43	45.1 years	29
Average number of years of professional experience	13.7 years	67	18.1 years	43	15.3 years	30
Female respondents	88.2 %	68	67.4 %	43	83.3 %	30
Respondents with a university-level degree	24.2 %	66	29.3 %	41	23.1 %	26
Respondents not born in Canada	—	68	4.7 %	43	23.3 %	30
Respondents whose mother tongue is neither French nor English	—	68	2.3 %	43	6.7 %	30
Respondents with a family income (before deductions) over \$60 000	43.8 %	64	52.4 %	42	39.3 %	28

Table 3. Parents

	French elementary	Number of respondents	French secondary	Number of respondents	English sector	Number of respondents
Average age	39.6 years	405	45.1 years	278	41.8 years	218
Female respondents	74.0%	407	68.7%	284	74.1%	228
Respondents who are employed ⁹	83.6%	396	84.7%	274	87.0%	223
Respondents with a university-level degree	45.2%	389	32.6%	273	45.5%	222
Respondents with a family income (before deductions) above \$60 000	52.7%	389	50.2%	277	66.2%	213
Respondents not born in Canada	2.7%	403	4.2%	285	14.5%	227
Respondents whose mother tongue is neither French nor English	1.2%	405	1.0%	287	15.2%	224
Respondents who are married or live with a partner	92.1%	403	91.6%	284	91.7%	227
Children enrolled in enriched classes	4.6%	374	29.3%	269	23.0%	207

9. Work full-time or part-time or are unemployed and looking for work.

Graph 2: Comparison of the average family income of parent respondents with that of parents in the schools they represent



Experience in participatory bodies

Table 4. Experience of teachers and non-teaching professionals in participatory bodies

	French elementary	Number of respondents	French secondary	Number of respondents	English sector	Number of respondents
Respondents holding union positions	11.9%	310	22.5%	231	21.3%	188
Respondents who receive compensation for their participation in their board	27.3%	308	25.4%	228	4.8%	187
Respondents who stated that over 50 per cent of their members were present at the general meeting that elected them	75.1%	253	80.3%	223	76.4%	170
Respondents indicating there was an election for the position they hold on the board	18.0%	310	36.0%	231	9.0%	188
Respondents who were members of another school representative body during the year prior to the introduction of the governing board	50.0 %	282	47.0%	221	49.0%	160
Respondents who have participated in their governing board for at least two years	70.2 %	309	58.4%	231	61.2%	188

Table 5. Experience of support and child-care staff in participatory bodies

	French elementary	Number of respondents	French secondary	Number of respondents	English sector	Number of respondents
Respondents holding union positions	14.7%	68	17.1%	41	24.1%	29
Respondents who receive compensation for their participation	19.4%	67	16.3%	43	3.30%	30
Respondents who stated that over 50 per cent of their members were present at the general meeting that elected them	45.7%	46	57.1%	42	51.7%	29
Respondents indicating there was an election for the position they held on the board	17.0%	66	40.0%	43	23.0%	30
Respondents who were members of another school representative body during the year prior to the introduction of the governing board	31.0%	64	19.0%	42	35.0%	26
Respondents who have participated in their governing board for at least two years	80.6%	67	62.8%	43	63.3%	30

Table 6. Experience of parents in participatory bodies

	French elementary	Number of respondents	French secondary	Number of respondents	English sector	Number of respondents
Average number of people present at the meeting that elected them	40	391	48	276	41	223
Respondents indicating there was an election for the position they held on the board	56.0%	408	45.0%	286	63.0%	229
Respondents who were members of another school representative body involving parents prior to the introduction of the governing board	41.0%	408	67.0%	288	65.0%	230
Respondents who have participated in their governing board for at least two years	69.8%	404	72.9%	284	71.2%	229
Respondents who hold the position of chair on their boards	32.1%	408	25.8%	287	19.6%	230

Reasons for participating

Table 7. Reasons for serving on the governing board

Indicate your degree of agreement with each of the following statements.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Average Staff	Average Parents	Average Staff	Average Parents	Average Staff	Average Parents
I wanted to be informed of decisions made in the school	1.42	1.15	1.29	1.12	1.18	1.07
I wanted to ensure that my professional group was represented	1.48	–	1.46	–	1.39	–
I wanted to ensure that the staff in general were represented	1.33	–	1.27	–	1.32	–
I wanted to improve achievement in the school	1.43	1.43	1.39	1.44	1.5	1.59
I wanted to ensure that parents were represented	–	1.59	–	1.44	–	1.41
I wanted to have an influence on decision making in the school	1.67	1.58	1.51	1.56	1.42	1.36
I think my personal and professional experience can be an asset to the school	–	1.69	–	1.68	–	1.53
I like to get involved socially	–	1.54	–	1.51	–	2.22
I wanted to build stronger ties between staff and parents	1.85	1.73	1.85	1.73	1.65	1.54
I wanted to build stronger ties between the school and the community	2.02	2.03	2.03	2.06	1.73	1.76
I wanted my child to feel proud about having parents who cared	–	2.32	–	2.28	–	2.04
I wanted to see my child do better in school	–	2.31	–	2.17	–	2.64
I wanted to acquire experience working in an organization	–	2.35	–	2.40	–	2.69
I wanted to protect my working conditions	2.71	–	2.67	–	2.69	–
I wanted to balance the power of parents	3.03	–	3.06	–	2.31	–
Nobody else was interested	2.69	3.30	2.80	3.02	2.57	3.42

Table 7. Reasons for serving on the governing board

Indicate your degree of agreement with each of the following statements.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Average Staff	Average Parents	Average Staff	Average Parents	Average Staff	Average Parents
I wanted to solve a problem in the school	3.42	3.13	3.02	3.03	2.48	2.47
I wanted to balance the power of the administration	3.34	–	3.02	–	2.61	–
I wanted to ensure that a particular category of students was represented (e.g. students with handicaps)	–	3.42	–	3.22	–	2.8
I was concerned with the role of religion in the school	3.58	3.27	3.38	3.24	3.31	3.03
I wanted to solve a problem my child was having	–	3.66	–	3.58	–	3.64

On a scale of 1 to 4, 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally. A dash indicates that a statement does not apply to the group in question.

Training and preparation

Table 8. Organizations that provide training

	Total (n=689)	Teachers and non-teaching professionals (n=307)	Support and child-care staff (n=39)	Parents (n=343)
The Ministère de l'Éducation (n=29)	4.2%	2.6%	2.6%	5.8%
The school board (n=224)	32.5%	17.3%	51.3%	44.0%
The Centrale des syndicats du Québec or affiliated organizations (n=165)	23.9%	50.8%	23.1%	–
Another union organization (n=25)	3.6%	6.5%	12.8%	–
The Québec Provincial Association of Teachers (APEQ) (n=61)	8.9%	19.5%	2.6%	–
The Federation of Parents' Committees of Québec (FCPPQ) (n=106)	15.4%	–	–	30.9%
Other (n=79)	11.5%	3.3%	7.7%	19.3%
Total (n=689)	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9. Satisfaction with the training received

	Total (n=689)	Teachers and non-teaching professionals (n=307)	Support and child-care staff (n=39)	Parents (n=343)
The Ministère de l'Éducation (n=29)	1.69	1.75	1.00	1.70
The school board (n=223)	1.93	1.92	1.80	1.95
The Centrale des syndicats du Québec or affiliated organizations (n=164)	1.66	1.66	1.67	–
Another union organization (n=25)	1.96	1.95	2.00	–
The Association provinciale des enseignants et enseignantes du Québec (APEQ) (n=61)	1.67	1.67	2.00	–
The Federation of Parents' Committees of Québec (FCPPQ) (n=105)	1.67	–	–	1.67
Other (n=77)	1.82	2.11	2.00	1.77
Total (n=684)	1.78	1.74	1.79	1.81

Satisfaction rating from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Very satisfied, 2 to Somewhat satisfied, 3 to Somewhat dissatisfied and 4 to Very dissatisfied.

Opinions on the priorities of Québec's education system

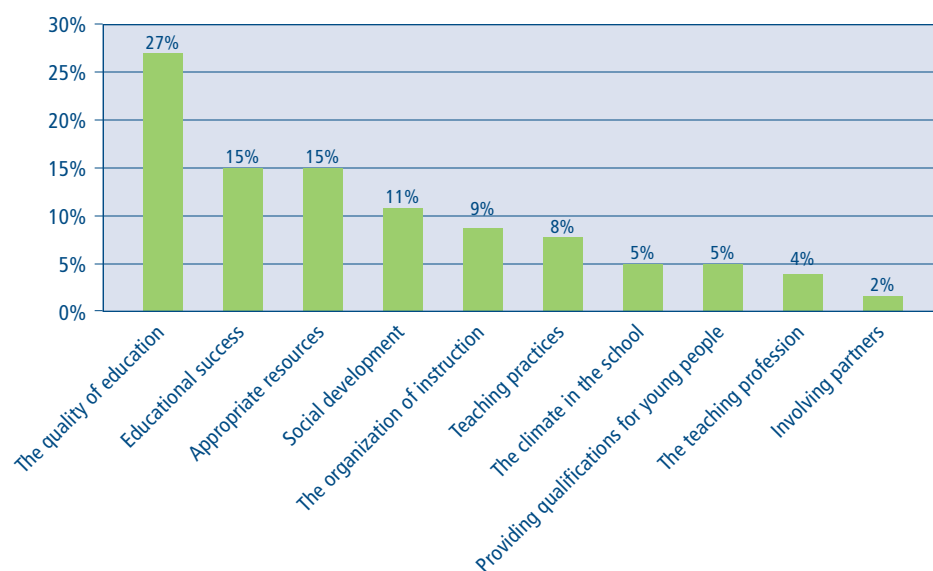
Table 10. Opinions on the priorities of Québec's education system regarding the quality of education

	All	Staff	Parents
Provide a solid education in French or English, reading and writing and mathematics	51%	44%	55%
Make the students' needs the main priority	10%	15%	7%
Develop young people's know-how and competencies	6%	8%	4%
Raise academic standards	6%	9%	4%
Introduce a special education curriculum	5%	6%	4%
Ensure that students receive an education that enables them to acquire different types of learning (history and economics; the arts and music; technical and computer-related, etc.)	5%	4%	5%
Provide a balanced education	4%	6%	3%
Favour excellence (measures for gifted students)	4%	2%	5%
Strengthen bilingualism (instruction in English and French as a second language)	4%	0%	7%
Provide manual education courses beginning in elementary school	1%	1%	0%
Stabilize the programs of study (less reform)	1%	2%	1%
Give music and physical education an important role	1%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 11. Opinions on the priorities of Québec's education system regarding educational success

	All	Staff	Parents
Reinforce measures to help students with social maladjustments and learning difficulties	33.7%	35.6%	31.7%
Motivate students to succeed in school	21.2%	23.1%	19.2%
Encourage students to stay in school	19.2%	13.5%	25.0%
Promote equal opportunities in education (increase the chances of students from disadvantaged backgrounds)	15.9%	16.3%	15.4%
Reinforce measures to help students with behavioural difficulties	4.3%	5.8%	2.9%
Promote programs to reduce the incidence of academic failure	2.9%	1.9%	3.8%
Promote programs that help students with their homework	2.4%	2.9%	1.9%
Better integrate students with handicaps	0.5%	1.0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Graph 3: Percentage of respondents who mentioned each priority
(Number of Respondents = 1704; total number of priorities mentioned = 3164)



Opinions on educational issues

Table 12. Evaluation of the Québec education system and the school on whose governing board the respondents sit

	Average	Standard deviation	Number of respondents
Evaluation of the education system	3.02	0.77	1804
Evaluation of the school on whose governing board I sit	2.27	0.76	1804

Marking scale from A to E: A has been coded as the equivalent of 1, and E as 5.

Table 13. Opinion on the quality of education

Compared to the education that you had, do you believe that the quality of education has improved, deteriorated or is pretty much the same?	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
"The quality of education has deteriorated"	43.4%	38.8%	48.7%	52.1%	55.0%	49.3%
"The quality of education is pretty much the same"	28.3%	30.1%	33.8%	26.4%	21.4%	23.8%
"The quality of education has improved"	28.3%	31.1%	17.5%	21.5%	23.6%	26.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 14. Opinion on the need to refocus on basic subjects

The school has strayed too far from the basics, like reading, writing and arithmetic.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	21.7%	19.0%	19.3%	26.6%	31.5%	22.1%
Agree somewhat	25.1%	27.3%	27.3%	30.4%	33.3%	35.4%
Disagree somewhat	32.4%	38.4%	40.0%	32.5%	21.6%	24.3%
Disagree totally	20.9%	15.3%	13.5%	10.5%	13.5%	18.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 15. Opinions on the changes under way

All the changes currently taking place will improve the quality of education.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	9.4%	13.4%	4.8%	14.4%	9.9%	15.6%
Agree somewhat	48.3%	57.6%	52.4%	58.1%	39.5%	48.4%
Disagree somewhat	33.5%	24.5%	35.4%	23.2%	35.4%	24.4%
Disagree totally	8.8%	4.5%	7.4%	4.2%	15.2%	11.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 16. Opinion on the rapidity of the changes under way in education

Recent changes in the education system have occurred too rapidly.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	49.2%	27.1%	38.5%	22.5%	53.1%	43.1%
Agree somewhat	36.1%	37.9%	40.3%	39.6%	34.8% 3	7.8%
Disagree somewhat	11.6%	30.5%	18.3%	34.0%	10.7%	15.6%
Disagree totally	3.2%	4.4%	2.9%	3.9%	1.3%	3.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 17. Opinion on the decentralization of powers

The current decentralization will accentuate the differences among schools.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	34.5%	16.1%	27.9%	10.9%	27.8%	16.0%
Agree somewhat	44.6%	31.0%	44.1%	44.5%	50.5%	45.1%
Disagree somewhat	16.0%	41.3% 2	2.1%	36.1%	16.2%	30.0%
Disagree totally	4.9%	11.6%	5.9%	8.4%	5.6%	8.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 18. Opinion on the risk of a discrepancy in the education provided from one school to another

Some of the powers of the governing boards could result in too great a discrepancy in the education offered from one school to another.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	27.7%	7.0%	18.8%	7.4%	18.8%	9.1%
Agree somewhat	38.0%	29.6%	39.0%	28.8%	44.5%	32.0%
Disagree somewhat	28.5%	48.2%	33.8%	50.5%	30.7%	43.8%
Disagree totally	5.9%	15.1%	8.5%	13.3%	6.0%	15.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 19. Opinion on evaluating the school on the basis of the educational performance of its students

The school should be evaluated on the basis of how its students perform.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	4.2%	12.1%	2.6%	17.5%	7.2%	22.4%
Agree somewhat	9.7%	32.8%	9.2%	28.3%	33.2%	44.8%
Disagree somewhat	30.3%	36.3%	37.6%	32.9%	29.1%	20.6%
Disagree totally	55.8%	18.8%	50.6%	21.3%	30.5%	12.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 20. Opinion on competition among schools

Competition among schools improves the quality of education.	French elementary		French secondary		English sector	
	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents	Staff	Parents
Totally agree	1.3%	7.2%	5.1%	11.2%	3.2%	9.7%
Agree somewhat	12.9%	22.5%	16.9%	26.2%	24.9%	38.1%
Disagree somewhat	32.0%	38.3%	36.0%	34.6%	29.9%	30.5%
Disagree totally	53.8%	32.1%	41.9%	28.0%	42.1%	21.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The functioning of the boards 2

Table 21. Attendance at meetings of the governing board

	All (average)	French elementary (average)	French secondary (average)	English sector (average)
The principal	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.04
The chair	1.08	1.07	1.10	1.07
Teachers	1.44	1.41	1.49	1.42
Parents	1.67	1.63	1.65	1.78
Child-care staff	1.82	1.74	–	2.02
Support staff	1.83	1.87	1.74	1.90
Non-teaching professionals	1.85	1.97	1.61	2.01
Students from Secondary Cycle Two	1.95	–	1.92	2.07
Community representatives	2.39	2.31	2.40	2.50
The public	3.34	3.33	3.51	3.16

Scale of frequency from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Always, 2 to Often 3 to Sometimes and 4 to Never.

Table 22. Estimation of the time spent on various agenda items

For each of the following possible agenda items, indicate your opinion of the time spent on each item.	All (average)	Teachers and non-teaching professionals (average)	Support and child-care staff (average)	Parents (average)
1- Adoption of the agenda	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.02
2- Reading and adoption of the minutes and business arising from the minutes	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.04
3- Correspondence and communications	0.06	0.16	0.13	-0.03
4- Report from the principal	0.09	0.13	0.06	0.06
5- Report from the chair	0.02	0.07	0.06	-0.02
6- Questions on general functions and powers (educational project, supervision policy, rules of conduct, advice to the school board, annual report, etc.)	-0.16	-0.08	-0.09	-0.23
7- Questions on educational matters (Basic school regulations, compulsory subjects, educational activities, complementary services, etc.)	-0.22	-0.16	-0.29	-0.07
8- Questions on extra-curricular services (instructional services outside teaching periods, provision of goods and services, etc.)	-0.17	-0.09	-0.09	-0.25
9- Questions on material and financial resources (budget, premises, donations, grants, etc.)	-0.13	-0.05	-0.12	-0.19
10- Public question period	-0.09	-0.05	-0.03	-0.13
11- Miscellany	0.01	0.06	0.00	-0.03
12- Matters beyond the mandate of the governing board	0.28	0.45	0.24	0.15
Total	-0.03	0.03	0.01	-0.08

Times scale – 1 to +1: -1 corresponds to Not enough time, 0 to Enough time and 1 to Too much time.

Table 23. The role of secretary during meetings of the governing board

Who serves as secretary on your governing board?	French elementary	French secondary	English sector
A voting member of the board chosen by the other members	50.2%	35.8%	61.7%
The principal	14.8%	17.1%	5.0%
The responsibility rotates among the members of the board	13.6%	6.2%	11.6%
A school secretary	9.1%	26.0%	5.9%
A person hired by the governing board	4.6%	4.0%	8.2%
A person representing support staff on the governing board	4.1%	3.6%	3.9%
A person designated by the school principal	3.7%	7.3%	3.6%

Participation in the governing board, interpersonal dynamics and the decision-making process 3

Participation

Table 24. Statements regarding members' participation

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
I feel I play an active role on the board	1.81	0.76	1798
I enjoy attending meetings	1.81	0.79	1795
The board requires too much energy	3.19	0.81	1804
Most of the time, I find board meetings boring	3.29	0.82	1806
I feel I'm wasting my time on the governing board	3.30	0.85	1796
Total	1.77	0.60	1809

Scale of agreement from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally.

Understanding of roles and powers

Table 25. Statements regarding members' understanding of roles and powers

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
I have a clear understanding of how my board operates	1.63	0.63	1806
I have a clear understanding of the roles and powers within my board	1.80	0.71	1809
I have a good understanding of the legislative and administrative documents referred to in meetings	2.11	0.74	1805
I have difficulty understanding the <i>Education Act</i>	2.84	0.86	1799
I have trouble separating the governing board's responsibilities from those of other groups (principal, school board, parent participation organization, etc.)	2.87	0.93	1803
Total	1.96	0.57	1814

Scale of agreement from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally.

Interpersonal dynamics within the board

Table 26. Assessment of relations between members of the board

How would you describe the relations between the following people on your governing board?	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Relations between the chair and the parents	1.36	0.52	1804
Relations between the chair and the principal	1.38	0.57	1806
Relations between the chair and the members in general	1.41	0.54	1798
Relations between parents and staff	1.46	0.57	1806
Relations between the principal and the members in general	1.49	0.59	1801
Relations between the chair and the staff	1.49	0.58	1800
Relations between the parents and the principal	1.50	0.65	1806
Relations between staff and the principal	1.59	0.66	1796
Total	1.46	0.45	1792

Scale of quality from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Very good, 2 to Satisfactory, 3 to Not very good, and 4 to Very bad.

Table 27. Harmony on the board

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Everyone's right to speak is respected at my board	1.45	0.68	1809
Meetings of my board are well organized	1.57	0.68	1814
There is a good team spirit on my governing board	1.68	0.79	1810
My board finds it easy to reach a consensus	1.80	0.75	1808
My board respects minority points of view	1.90	0.75	1789
Total	1.68	0.52	1813

Scale of agreement from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally.

Table 28. Tensions within the board

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
I have trouble expressing my point of view at board meetings	3.45	0.76	1803
Certain members of my board use jargon that other members find difficult to understand	3.37	0.80	1808
I am often afraid of making wrong decisions	3.36	0.76	1806
Relations among members of my board are strained	3.33	0.85	1804
I have the impression that the members of my board are always working for their own interests rather than those of the group	3.17	0.88	1805
Total	3.34	0.54	1809

Scale of agreement from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally.

Table 29. Limits of mandate

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
The parent members of my board bring up matters concerning their own children which are not within the mandate of the governing board	3.12	0.72	1809
The parent members of my board use the time at meetings to discuss matters concerning human resources which are not within the mandate of the governing board (problems with staff, teacher evaluations, etc.).	3.55	0.62	1807
The staff uses the time at meetings to discuss labour relations, which are not within the mandate of the governing board	3.66	0.57	1811
The staff uses the time at meetings to discuss aspects of their own workload, which are not within the mandate of the governing board	3.68	0.54	1810
Total	3.50	0.46	1815

Scale of frequency from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Always, 2 to Often, 3 to Sometimes and 4 to Never.

Assessment of the roles played by the school principal and the chair of the board

Table 30. Assessment of the role of the school principal

During governing board meetings, the principal	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Follows up on decisions made by the board	1.48	0.64	1793
Is able to explain clearly to members of the board how the school functions	1.49	0.66	1800
Is able to communicate his or her vision of the school	1.54	0.71	1800
Informs members of the procedures followed for developing the proposals to the governing board	1.64	0.77	1794
Encourages members of the board to participate in discussion	1.69	0.79	1789
Makes the work of board members easier by providing support and advice	1.83	0.78	1781
Runs the governing board instead of the chair	3.34	0.85	1789
Proposes motions that have not been developed with the participation of staff or teachers where this is required by the <i>Education Act</i> .	3.49	0.73	1773
Total	1.60	0.51	1802

Scale of frequency from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Always, 2 to Often, 3 to Rarely and 4 to Never.

Table 31. Assessment of the role of the chair

During governing board meetings, the chair	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Respects the agenda	1.31	0.51	1810
Ensures that all the members feel they can speak freely	1.32	0.54	1807
Assumes his or her responsibilities on the board	1.35	0.57	1803
Ensures that an atmosphere of respect prevails at meetings of the board	1.37	0.60	1805
Ensures that all members have the opportunity to speak	1.43	0.64	1800
Provides or arranges for others to provide information on each matter	1.52	0.67	1802
Shows dynamic leadership	1.73	0.78	1803
Total	1.43	0.47	1801

Scale of frequency from 1 to 4, 1 corresponds to Always, 2 to Often, 3 to Rarely and 4 to Never.

Table 32. The decision-making process

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Everyone's opinion is considered during discussions at the board	1.56	0.67	1811
Members are informed of the concrete results of all decisions that are made	1.63	0.70	1806
Everyone's abilities and responsibilities are respected in the procedure for making decisions	1.70	0.68	1802
I am satisfied with the procedure for making decisions on my governing board	1.71	0.72	1806
I feel I can influence decisions at meetings of my board	1.93	0.74	1808
Total	1.70	0.56	1814

Scale of agreement from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally.

Decisions made by the board

Table 33. Decisions made by the governing board

Check the subjects on which your governing board has made a decision.	Number of respondents indicating that their governing board made a decision on this theme	Percentage of respondents mentioning decisions on this theme ¹⁰
The school budget	1519	84%
Programming of educational activities requiring a change in the arrival or departure time of students or the leaving of the school premises	1452	80%
The educational project	1432	79%
The rules of conduct and safety	1386	76%
The student supervision policy	1335	73%
The solicitation of donations or other financial contributions	1303	72%
The time allocations for each subject	1242	68%
The use of the premises	1184	65%
The implementation of the Basic school regulation	1071	59%
The general orientations regarding the enrichment and the adaptation of programs	931	51%
The obligation to report on the quality of services offered by the school	870	48%
The implementation of complementary services (formerly student services) programs	802	44%

10. In other words, 84% of all respondents reported that their board made a decision concerning the school budget (for example). The total number of respondents is 1819.

Table 34. Satisfaction with the decisions made

Indicate your degree of satisfaction with the decisions made.	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Programming of educational activities requiring a change in the arrival or departure time of students or the leaving of the school premises	1.50	0.66	1435
The use of the premises	1.60	0.71	1174
The rules of conduct and safety	1.61	0.71	1370
The solicitation of donations or other financial contributions	1.65	0.70	1285
The student supervision policy	1.67	0.70	1317
The educational project	1.71	0.75	1410
The implementation of the Basic school regulation	1.75	0.70	1058
The obligation to report on the quality of services offered by the school	1.76	0.78	855
The general orientations regarding the enrichment and the adaptation of programs	1.79	0.76	921
The school budget	1.81	0.74	1496
The time allocations for each subject	1.81	0.80	1226
The implementation of complementary services (formerly student services) programs	1.86	0.86	793
Scale total	1.69	0.56	620

Scale of satisfaction from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Very satisfied, 2 to Somewhat satisfied, 3 to Somewhat dissatisfied, and 4 to Very dissatisfied.

Contribution of various actors to the work of the board

Table 35. Influence of various actors

What is your opinion about the influence of the following people on the governing board?	Average	Standard deviation	Number
The principal	0.65	0.52	1347
The teachers	0.29	0.58	1339
The chair	0.13	0.65	1349
The parents	0.05	0.65	1343
Non-teaching professionals	-0.12	0.64	1066
The child-care staff	-0.20	0.65	519
The support staff	-0.33	0.63	1124
The students	-0.47	0.62	455
Community representatives	-0.49	0.59	957
Total ¹¹	0.14	0.37	1346

Scale of assessment of influence, from -1 to 1: -1 corresponds to Little influence, 0 to Enough influence and 1 to Too much influence.

11. This scale does not take into account the influence of the following actors: the child-care staff, student and community representatives.

Table 36. Influence the various actors should have

What is your opinion of the influence each of the following people should have on the governing board?	Average	Standard deviation	Number
The principal	-0.13	0.50	1797
The teachers	0.11	0.48	1804
The chair	0.13	0.47	1807
The child-care staff	0.14	0.49	841
The non-teaching professionals	0.19	0.48	1466
The support staff	0.19	0.51	1574
The parents	0.24	0.57	1326
The students	0.25	0.54	1804
The community representatives	0.42	0.58	846
Total	0.15	0.25	1810

Scale of assessment of influence, from -1 to 1: -1 corresponds to Little influence , 0 to Enough influence and 1 to Too much influence.

4 Influence of the governing boards on school life

Table 37. Expectations concerning the influence of governing boards

Before you became a member, did you believe that the governing board would have an impact on the following?	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Ability to devise innovative solutions	0.73	0.48	1778
Openness of the school to the community	0.70	0.48	1778
Relations between parents and the administration (the principal)	0.68	0.54	1772
Parent participation in the school	0.67	0.59	1788
Relations between parents and staff	0.64	0.60	1779
The use of available resources	0.58	0.53	1774
Community participation	0.57	0.54	1778
Academic achievement of students	0.55	0.51	1792
The school's autonomy	0.54	0.62	1781
Climate in the school	0.53	0.57	1780
Functioning of the school administration	0.47	0.59	1777
Support for students with difficulties	0.47	0.51	1778
Recognition of professional competence	0.42	0.55	1767
The (school principal) administration's management style	0.41	0.56	1775
Behaviour of students	0.31	0.48	1781
Total	0.55	0.34	1769

Scale of influence from -1 to +1: -1 corresponds to Would have a negative influence, 0 to Would have no influence and +1 to Would have a positive influence on school.

12. This scale does not take into account the influence of the following actors: the child-care staff, students and community representatives.

Table 38. Assessment of the board's influence based on the members' experience

Based on your experience, how would you evaluate the effect governing boards have had on students and school life?	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Ability to devise innovative solutions	0.48	0.53	1775
Openness of the school to its community	0.41	0.52	1773
Parent participation in the school	0.35	0.60	1782
Relations between parents and staff	0.32	0.56	1780
Community participation	0.31	0.52	1778
Relations between parents and the administration (school principal)	0.30	0.57	1778
The use of available resources	0.28	0.49	1774
The school's autonomy	0.27	0.51	1770
Support for students with difficulties	0.24	0.49	1778
Academic achievement of students	0.22	0.45	1767
Climate in the school	0.21	0.51	1778
The (school principal) administration's management style	0.20	0.49	1766
Functioning of the school administration	0.20	0.48	1766
Recognition of professional competence	0.18	0.43	1769
Behaviour of students	0.15	0.41	1772
Total	0.27	0.31	1749

Scale of change from -1 to +1: -1 corresponds to Has deteriorated, 0 to No change and +1 to Has improved.

Table 39. Attainment of the objectives of the boards

My governing board allows	Average	Standard deviation	Number
Closer contact between the processes of making and implementing decisions	2.07	0.76	1789
Greater parent participation in school life	2.16	0.85	1788
Greater student achievement	2.20	0.83	1788
Greater cooperation between service providers and consumers	2.23	0.79	1775
Development of stronger links with the community	2.24	0.82	1786
Total	2.18	0.66	1784

Scale of agreement from 1 to 4: 1 corresponds to Totally agree, 2 to Agree somewhat, 3 to Disagree somewhat and 4 to Disagree totally.

5 Perceptions concerning the future of governing boards

Distribution of powers

Table 40. Perception of the distribution of powers

Would you like your governing board to have more power, less power or the same power concerning the following?	Current power (Education Act)	More power	The same power	Less power
Functions and general powers				
Evaluation of school staff	No power	-0.07	0.13	0.54
Criteria for the selection of the school staff	No power	-0.04	0.16	0.55
Criteria for the selection of the principal	Is consulted	0.08	0.23	0.49
The student supervision policy	Approves	0.02	0.17	0.3
The educational project	Adopts, implements and evaluates	-0.04	0.09	0.2
Modification or revocation of deed of establishment	Is consulted	0.08	0.14	0.32
The rules of conduct and safety	Approves	0.06	0.22	0.29
Information to the community on the quality of services offered by the school	Informs and accounts for	0.14	0.19	0.17
Educational services				
Choice of textbooks and teaching materials	Is consulted	-0.31	0.08	0.28
The time allocation for each subject	Approves	-0.19	0.11	0.33
Standards and procedures for the evaluation of students	Is informed	-0.10	0.12	0.36
General orientations for the enrichment or adaptation of programs of study	Approves	-0.08	0.17	0.34
Rules for the placement of students and the passage from one cycle to the next	Is informed	-0.09	0.06	0.28
Procedures for the implementation of the Basic school regulation	Approves	-0.07	0.14	0.29
The implementation of complementary services (formerly student services)	Approves	-0.02	0.17	0.28
Programming of educational activities requiring a change in students' arrival or departure time or the leaving of the school premises	Approves	-0.14	0.02	0.16
Local programs of study	Is informed	0.06	0.14	0.33
Criteria for the enrollment of students	Is informed	0	0.07	0.26
Material and financial resources				
The use of the premises	Approves	-0.05	0.12	0.2
Annual school budget	Adopts	0.04	0.16	0.26
Needs of the school with regard to goods and services and premises	Is consulted	0.13	0.21	0.33
Gifts and donations	May solicit and receive	0.07	0.12	0.14
Total		-0.02	0.13	0.30

Scale of power from -1 to +1: -1 corresponds to Less power, 0 to The same power and 1 to More power.

Voting rights

Table 41. Right to vote for persons who do not currently have this right

Number of respondents who mentioned that these groups should have the right to vote	Number of respondents	Percentage
Secondary Cycle Two students	1745	57.5%
Community representatives	1790	49.6%
The school principal	1793	33.6%

Suggestions for the future

Table 42. Suggestions (Total of 1 296 suggestions)

Suggestions	All (992 suggestions)	Staff (453 suggestions)	Parents (539 suggestions)
Increase the members' power to decide on the budget, evaluation of students and teachers, discipline, etc.	130	41	89
Send members the agenda in advance of the next meeting and provide the necessary documentation	118	39	79
Offer common training for all participants	103	56	47
Encourage parents to participate actively in decision making	92	31	61
Establish a climate of mutual respect and understanding among members	45	20	25
Limit discussion of questions related to the functioning of the school and the members' respective jurisdictions	45	21	24
Train all new members	41	17	24
Foster team spirit	40	30	10
Encourage various groups to participate in the boards	37	16	21
Focus the board's activities on educational success and the quality of the school	36	12	24
Provide monetary compensation for board members	36	26	10
Increase the number of parents who participate	32	11	21
Meet more frequently	27	12	15
Provide the boards with operating resources	26	10	16
Train the chair for his or her responsibility	26	19	7
Redefine clearly the role of each member	25	10	15

