

■ Section 4 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Responsibilities of the Principal/Centre Director

The principal/centre director is the academic and administrative director of the school/centre and sees that the decisions of the governing board are implemented.

Formation of the Governing Board

In schools, the governing board chairperson, or, if there is none, the principal, calls a general assembly of parents to elect parent members to the governing board and the Sector Parents' Committee,. ([s. 47](#))

In continuing education centres, the centre director will establish procedures by which students and parents are elected to the governing board. ([s. 102](#))

The staff and, in the case of secondary schools and continuing education centres, student groups elect their representatives. Should the staff and student groups fail to elect members according to the procedures for their organizations, the principal determines the procedure to elect staff members and students after consulting each group. ([s. 48 – s. 51](#), [s. 102](#))

In schools, if the general assembly fails to elect the required number of parents to the governing board, the principal exercises the functions and powers of the governing board ([s. 52](#)).

Operation of the Governing Board

The governing board is unable to hold a meeting for lack of quorum, after three consecutive notices have been sent, the principal may exercise the functions and powers of the governing board for a period of time as determined by the school board. ([s. 62](#), [s. 108](#))

The principal countersigns the minutes of the governing principal/centre director takes part in meetings but is not entitled to vote. ([s. 46](#), [s. 105](#))

He/she presides over the governing board until the chair is elected. ([s. 57](#), [s. 108](#))

If the board meetings and he/she or his/her delegate maintains a register of the minutes ([s. 69](#), [s. 108](#)).

Functions and Powers

General Functions and Powers

As stipulated in [section 96.13](#) and [section 110.10](#) of the [Education Act](#), the principal/centre director assists the governing board in the exercise of its functions and powers, and for that purpose:

- coordinates the analysis of the school's/centre's success plan and the development, implementation and, in schools, evaluation of the educational project.
- every year, shall agree with the school board, within the scope of a management and educational success agreement, on the measures required to achieve goals and measurable objectives set out in the partnership agreement between the school board and the Minister ([s. 209.2](#)).
- ensures that proposals with regard to educational services and student services are prepared and submitted to the governing board for approval

- ensures that governing boards are provided with all information necessary to approve proposals([s. 96.13](#), [s. 110.10](#)).
- encourages concerted action between parents, students, staff, community and enterprise representatives, their participation in the life of the school and their collaboration in fostering academic success, as appropriate.
- informs the governing board on the proposals approved by the principal/centre director.
- the principal, with the collaboration of the teachers, is responsible for proposing to the governing board the principles for determining the cost of consumable materials and the list of materials to be charged to parents ([s. 77.1](#)).
- for schools, informs the staff and the governing board annually about the extra-curricular activity and field trip policy and its application as per [Policy 3.8 – Extra-Curricular Activities And Field Trip Policy](#), [s. 4.1](#).
- with the collaboration of the school staff, is responsible for proposing to the governing board the success plan and, for elementary and secondary schools, the rules of conduct and safety measures for students ([s. 75](#), [s. 76](#)).

Educational Services

The principal/centre director is responsible for ensuring that the educational services provided by the school meet the proper standards of quality.

As appropriate for the level of school/centre they manage, and as stipulated in sections [84](#), [85](#), [86](#), [87](#), [88](#), [89](#) and [110.9](#) of the [Education Act](#), the principal/centre director, develops, in collaboration with the teachers and/or other school staff, and proposes the following to the governing board for approval:

- the approach for the implementation of the [Basic School Regulation](#) (*Régime pédagogique*)
- the approach for the enrichment or adaptation of the objectives and suggested content of the programs of study
- the time allocation for each compulsory and elective subject ([s. 86](#))
- the programming of educational activities which entail changes in the students' regular schedule or which entails taking students off the school premises ([s. 87](#))
- the approach for the implementation of programs of student and special education services as required by the Basic School Regulation ([s. 88](#)).

Approval of Proposals of the Teachers and Other School Staff ([s. 96.15](#))

The principal/centre director approves the following, on the proposal of the teachers and/or other staff concerned, and after consulting with the governing board:

- local programs of study developed to meet the special needs of students
- textbooks and instructional material (based on the principles established by the governing board).
- the standards and procedures for the evaluation of student achievement, in particular, how parents are to be informed of the academic progress of their children

Physical and Financial Resources

The principal/centre director:

- proposes the use of the premises placed at the disposal of the school to the governing board for its approval. ([s. 93](#))
- after consulting with the governing board, informs the school board of the school's needs for material resources. ([s. 96.22](#), [s. 110.13](#))

- prepares the school's annual budget and submits it to the governing board for adoption. He/she administers the budget and renders an account of the budget to the governing board ([s. 96.24](#), [s. 110.13](#)).

The Responsibilities of the School Board

School boards provide leadership and support to schools and ensure that there is equal educational opportunity for all students in the system. The school board is required to consult with governing boards and parents' committees on a wide variety of topics.

Composition of the Governing Board

The school board determines the number of parent members and staff representatives after consulting with each group ([s. 43](#)). At Lester B. Pearson School Board, the practice is that if a governing board wishes to modify its composition, they must make a formal request in writing to the school board. Such requests are normally considered in the spring of each year.

Operation

The school board allocates financial resources to the governing board. ([s. 275](#))

The school board assumes the defence of any governing board member prosecuted for an act done in the exercise of governing board functions.

Functions and Powers

General Functions and Powers

The school board:

- shall agree every year with the principal/centre director, within the scope of a management and educational success agreement, on the measures required to achieve goals and measurable objectives set out in the partnership agreement between the school board and the Minister; a draft of the management and educational success agreement must be submitted to the governing board for approval after consultation with the personnel of the institution ([s. 209.2](#))
- consults the governing boards and the school board committees on those matters on which they must be consulted and hold the public consultations prescribed in the [Education Act](#) ([s. 217](#))
- consults the governing board on the deed of establishment and the selection criteria for the appointment of the principal/director (appoints the school principal or centre director in accordance with the selection criteria established after consulting with the governing board) ([s. 96.8](#), [s.110.1](#)).

Physical and Financial Resources

The school board:

- establishes a 3-year plan of allocation and destination of its immovables and draws up deeds of establishment. Where two or more educational institutions are established in the same premises or immovables, the school board shall determine the allocation of the premises or immovables, or the allocation of the use of such premises or immovables among such educational institutions. In that situation, the school board may, at the request of the governing boards concerned, establish a coordinating committee composed of representatives of the governing boards and determine the distribution of powers and functions between the governing boards and the coordinating committee, as well as the administrative and operating rules applicable to the coordinating committee. ([s. 211](#))

- allocates funds to its schools ([s. 275](#)), including amounts for the operation of governing boards, and approves each school's annual budget.
- must consult with the governing boards on modifying the deed of establishment and the selection criteria for the appointment of the principal ([s. 79](#), [s. 110.1](#)).

For more information regarding the school board's budget, please see the information available on the LBPSB website, available here: <http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/financial/indexV2.asp>

Varia

For the youth sector, the school board:

- establishes criteria for student enrolment after consulting the parents' committee. Following adoption by the board, a copy of the enrolment criteria is sent to each governing board at least 15 days before the beginning of the student enrolment period. ([s. 239](#))
- ensures lunchtime supervision of students who stay at school in a manner agreed to with the governing board ([s. 292](#))
- provides daycare for preschool and elementary students at the request of the governing board ([s. 256](#)).

The Responsibilities of the Members of the Governing Board

Members of the governing board represent their peer groups in their school community. They must be prepared to work cooperatively as a group and deal with common issues rather than personal ones.

Members must be prepared to commit themselves to:

- regularly attend the meetings
- arrive on time
- respect the code of conduct
- participate in the discussions
- be well informed before making decisions
- work as part of a team.

Conflict of Interest

A member of the governing board who has a direct or indirect interest in an enterprise that puts that member in conflict with the interest of the school must disclose the interest in writing to the principal or centre director.

An example of this is a person who has an interest in the food services supplied to the school.

The member must abstain from voting on any matter concerning the enterprise and avoid influencing the decision. In fact, the member must withdraw from a meeting while the matter is discussed or voted on.

Having a conflict of interest is not prohibited; but not declaring it could lead to forfeiture of office ([s. 70](#)).

Code of Ethics

The governing board has the responsibility to ensure that every decision it makes is in the best interests of the students.

[Section 71](#) of the [Education Act](#) (referred to in [section 108](#) for Adult and Vocational Centres) specifically states:

"The members of the governing board must act within the scope of the functions and powers conferred on them, and exercise the care, prudence and diligence that a reasonable person would

exercise in similar circumstances; they must also act with honesty and loyalty and in the interest of the school, the students, the parents, the school staff and the community."

Governing boards should develop their own internal rules of management as to how they want members to conduct themselves. If everyone understands what is expected of them and acts accordingly, meetings will be more productive and the work of the governing board will be more easily accomplished in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. Once guidelines are developed, they should be reviewed each year at the first meeting of the governing board. [Addendum J](#) contains a generic template for an internal rules of management document, including examples of some of the rules of conduct a governing board may wish to establish.

The Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson:

- prepares the agenda with the principal (see [Addendum F](#))
- calls the meeting to order
- ensures that the meeting follows the agenda and discussions do not get off track
- ensures that internal procedures are respected
- ensures that information required for the meeting is available
- states each motion before it is debated and again before it is voted on
- casts a vote in case of a tie
- oversees the voting process and declares the results of the vote.

A good chairperson:

- is well prepared for the meeting
- gives each member a chance to speak
- tactfully keeps speakers on the subject
- listens well
- speaks no more than necessary but helps to clarify and gives information
- elicits input from all members
- is fair and impartial
- is flexible
- ensures that matters to be voted on are understood by all members
- makes an effort to keep the meeting to the agreed upon timeframe.

The Role of the Secretary

While not required by law, the governing board could appoint or hire a secretary. The secretary keeps an accurate record of the meetings. Only what is done, not what is said, is recorded. In other words, the motion and the vote are recorded, but not who said what during the discussion prior to the vote. See [Section 5 – The Minutes](#) (p.24) and [Addendum G](#).

The secretary may also assist the chairperson in handling correspondence, notifying members of meetings, preparing and distributing agendas, etc.

The Role of the Treasurer

While not required by law, the governing board could appoint a treasurer. The treasurer keeps track of the operating budget allocated to the governing board by the school board ([s. 66](#), [s. 108](#)). This allocation is included in the school's budget and identified by an account code.

At the beginning of each year, the governing board should decide how the budget will be used. The allocation is intended for **operating** expenses, such as: postage, photocopying, meeting refreshments, training materials, etc.

Participation on a governing board is of a voluntary nature. However, a governing board may decide to defray some baby-sitting or transportation costs if the need arises. This is a decision of the governing board and should be discussed early in the year. It is important that all members understand what expenses will be covered by this operating budget in order to avoid any misunderstanding later.

The treasurer must oversee the claims for operating expenses and keep a record of these. A report should be given at each meeting of the governing board. The principal is responsible for disbursing the funds from the school's accounts. The treasurer has no signing authority over school funds.

The governing board should submit an annual expense report along with its annual report in September to the school board. A sample report can be found in [Addendum D](#).

Note: The treasurer is also responsible for keeping account of any monies received through its solicitation of donations as outlined in [section 94](#) and [section 110.4](#) of the Education Act. This fund is supervised by the governing board, but managed by the school board.

Note About the Regional Parent Representative (Youth Sector)

The representative (and/or substitute) to the Regional Parents' Committee (RPC) is elected by the parents at the annual general meeting and represents his/her school at all meetings of this committee. The delegate acts as a liaison between the parents of the school and the Regional Parents' Committee and should attend the meetings regularly.

It is suggested that the representative (or substitute, if applicable) give a report on the business of the RPC to the governing board.

Power of the Vote – Responsibility of the Voter

The decision-taking process specified for governing boards in the Education Act ([s. 63](#), [s. 108](#)) is by majority vote. Since governing boards may be composed of a maximum of eighteen voting members (youth sector) or 20 voting members (continuing education sector), each vote carries much weight. For example, each vote on an eighteen member board is worth 6% of the total number of voices. In this case, ten votes in favour are required to approve any issue under consideration. The quorum for the smallest possible composition of a governing board (4 parents, 4 staff) is 5. When only these 5 voting members are present, one vote equals 20% of the voices. Any matter being considered must receive 3 votes in favour to be approved or adopted!

The power to make decisions on behalf of the groups represented on the governing board is granted in conjunction with the responsibilities of becoming informed on the issue under consideration, understanding the voting process and taking a position when a vote is called.

As representatives of their respective peer group, each voting member must make every effort to inform themselves on the matters under consideration and to attempt to reflect the attitude of their peers through their vote. For example, if voting on the principal's proposal of school fees for the year, governing board members should understand how the school fees are being spent. If voting in favour or opposition of a field trip, members should understand the nature of the trip, the pedagogical value, the cost, the supervision and all other aspects of the proposed venture. Since this is a democratic process, the voting members should participate in discussions prior to the vote and feel free to state their voting intention and to influence the other members. This is the very reason that the power to vote is accorded only to those voting members who are present at the meeting.

The Education Act states that *the decisions of the governing board are made by a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote* ([s. 63](#), [s. 108](#)). This requirement – as opposed to aiming for consensus – was specified to ensure that there is a tangible level of support for the issues under consideration which can be recorded in the minutes.

Votes are usually referred to as being in favour of or in opposition to a proposal, a motion or a resolution. A member may abstain from voting if they feel they are in conflict of interest, don't feel sufficiently informed on the matter or if they feel the matter under consideration is not within their mandate. Abstentions should not be used because a voting member does not want to be seen as voting for or against an issue. Each vote is valuable and every opinion is valid. All members should be free from any repercussions that are based on their vote.

The [Education Act](#) states that *if votes are equally divided, the chair has a casting vote* ([s. 63](#), [s. 108](#)). When there is an even number of members voting on a matter, the chairperson has a second vote which serves to break a tie in the original vote. This additional power is accorded to the chairperson to ensure that no issues are left unresolved. The chair is under no obligation to vote the same way as he did initially. Consideration should be given to the cause of the tie and whether there is sufficient cause to approve the matter in these circumstances.