



THE EDUCATION REFORM

The Changes Under Way

Preschool • Elementary • Secondary Education



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Secteur de l'éducation préscolaire et
de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

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Introduction

The education reform involves a set of elements that profoundly change Québec schools.

Initiated in order to shape the school of the 21st century, the reform contains some elements that have been implemented at different times since 1997, others that are currently being implemented and still others that will be carried out progressively until the 2009-2010 school year.

THESE ELEMENTS MAY BE GROUPED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A CURRICULUM FOR QUÉBEC SCHOOLS:

- subject-specific programs using a competency-based approach
- development of competencies in broad areas of learning
- development of cross-curricular competencies, which are common to the subject-specific programs

2. A NEW BASIC SCHOOL REGULATION FEATURING:

- a renewed curriculum
- a new subject-time allocation
- a new system of certification of studies
- new types of written reports for students and parents

3. A NEW POLICY ON THE EVALUATION OF LEARNING

4. A NEW POLICY ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

5. A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

6. A NEW, MORE RELEVANT SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

7. A VARIED AND CREATIVE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

This material is presented in the following pages under the heading "The Changes Under Way," without regard for the relative weight of each element in relation to the importance of the change itself.

The reader will also find three appendixes, which provide further information. Appendix 1 deals with the organization of individualized paths for learning in secondary school; Appendix 2 with teachers' understanding of and adjustment to change; and Appendix 3 with the mandate and composition of the Table de pilotage du nouveau programme pédagogique.

The Québec Education Program (QEP)

- The subject-specific programs of study reflect the school's mission to provide instruction, socialize students and provide qualifications.
- Students acquire knowledge, which they learn to use properly and in the appropriate context (definition of a subject-specific competency).
- The subject-specific program content and other activities at school allow students to develop cross-curricular competencies such as the ability to use information, solve problems or adopt effective work methods.
- Students carry out learning activities in broad areas of learning that represent major areas of a citizen's life (media literacy, health and well-being, environmental awareness and consumer rights and responsibilities, etc.).

- Students receive a balanced education organized in five subject areas:
 - languages (language of instruction, second language)
 - mathematics, science and technology
 - social sciences (history and citizenship education, geography)
 - personal development (physical education and health, ethics and religious culture)
 - arts education

The Basic School Regulation

- The time generally allotted to teaching-learning in the subject-specific programs is as follows:
 - an elementary level of education consisting of three two-year cycles
 - a secondary level of education consisting of two cycles, the first lasting two years and the second, three years
 - the subject-specific programs in elementary school are designed to cover the two years of each of the cycles; the same is true for the first cycle of secondary school
 - the subject-specific programs in the second cycle of secondary school are designed to last a year
 - the subject-specific content of a program belongs to a specific level of education and a specific cycle
- The continuity of subject-specific learning is given greater emphasis in students' education.

The following compulsory subjects are taught from the first year of elementary school until the end of secondary school:

- language of instruction and second language
- mathematics
- arts education
- physical education and health
- ethics and religious culture¹

The following compulsory subjects are taught from the third year of elementary school to the fourth year of secondary school:

- science and technology
- history and citizenship education

Geography is taught from the third year of elementary school to the second year of secondary school.

- Arts education must take place continuously in one of the arts disciplines shown in the subject-time allocation through the three cycles of elementary school.
- Teaching time is increased by 90 minutes a week in elementary school, starting in 2006-2007, in order to allow sufficient time for the teaching of physical education and health, arts education and the second language.
- In 2006-2007, the teaching of English as a second language will begin in the first year of elementary school.
- The time devoted to French as the language of instruction goes from 150 to 200 hours a year in each of the first three years of secondary school.
- The time devoted to French as a second language goes from 100 to 150 hours a year in each of the first three years of secondary school.
- Three paths are established in the second cycle of secondary school:
 - general education or applied general education
 - work-oriented training
- The level of the requirements for the secondary school diploma will gradually be raised.

1. This program is not offered in Secondary III.

- The following conditions will be added to the existing certification requirements (Secondary V English as the language of instruction and French as a second language and Secondary IV history):
 - **In May 2007:**
 - Secondary IV mathematics
 - Secondary IV science
 - **In May 2010:**
 - Secondary IV arts education
 - Secondary V physical education and health or ethics and religious culture
- There are eight written reports to parents per cycle in elementary school and in the first cycle of secondary school, of which five are report cards and the last one is a competency report. In Cycle Two of secondary school, there are four reports per school year, of which two are report cards and the final one is a competency report.
- The student's result in each subject is recorded in the form of a mark in the competency report in the last three years of secondary school (compulsory) or in the form of a mark or other symbol (such as a letter) in the other written reports in both elementary and secondary school.

Policy on the Evaluation of Learning

- Evaluation consists, first of all, in measuring the learning accomplished by the student: gathering information by various means (observation of the performance of a task, examination, exercise, etc.) and processing this information, for example, by using scales of competency levels.
- Next, the teacher must exercise judgment with regard to the learning accomplished by the student, using the information gathered, processed and assessed.

- The teacher thus gathers information, processes this information, exercises his or her judgment, makes a decision and records the result in a written report for the student and parents.

Policy on Special Education

- The aim of the Policy is to help students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities to succeed in terms of instruction, socialization and qualifications. It stresses the prevention of difficulties and the adaptation and organization of educational services to meet the specific needs of each student.
- Differentiated practices are used in teaching and evaluation in order to allow all students to learn and to demonstrate their competencies in the most favourable conditions. For example, in evaluation, while the requirements are the same for all students, the conditions of evaluation are adapted to take into account the specific situation of certain students.

Framework for the Organization of Complementary Educational Services

- In accordance with the *Basic School Regulation*, school boards must establish four types of complementary educational services to be implemented in the schools: support services, student life services, assistance services and promotion and prevention services.
 - All the activities of these services, whether they involve resolving problems experienced by students, helping them integrate into the school or providing academic guidance, are rooted in the broad areas of learning and in various ways promote the development of students' competencies.
- diversification of paths in Cycle Two of secondary school
 - › There are a variety of school organizational models and ways of organizing teachers' work:
 - co-teaching
 - multi-year cycles of instruction (a teacher works with a class of students for two years)
 - multi-level classes
 - the so-called traditional model (one homeroom teacher assigned to each class in elementary school or one teacher per speciality in secondary school)

School Organization

- A series of measures has been adopted to promote success for the greatest possible number of students:
 - full-time preschool
 - reduction of the average number of students per class in preschool and Cycle One of elementary school
 - continuous progression of students' learning
 - extension of attendance in elementary school for a seventh year, if necessary
 - special organizational models (e.g.: individualized paths for learning for students with difficulties or delays in secondary school)
- The time teachers spend in the school is increased from 27 to 32 hours a week, favouring cooperative work among teachers.
- The school has greater power and more responsibilities in the area of pedagogy:
 - choice of textbooks
 - form and distribution dates of written reports to parents
 - adaptation and enrichment of instruction
 - rules for promotion from one cycle to the next in elementary school and from one year to the next in Cycle Two of secondary school
 - choice of organizational models for classes
 - choice of certain subject-specific programs
 - choice of the number of hours allotted to each subject-specific program

Teaching-Learning Process

- Greater recognition is accorded to the professional autonomy of teachers:
 - choice of teaching tools
 - choice of teaching methods
 - choice of methods of evaluation of students' learning
 - use of some pedagogical days
 - increased compulsory participation by teachers in the assignment of teaching tasks
 - increased participation by teachers with regard to the use of the professional development budget, including the establishment of local monitoring committees
- Teachers are invited, in cycle teams or with professionals from complementary educational services, to take part in various activities: professional development, planning of their teaching, harmonization of their actions, exchange of information concerning their common students.
- The Policy on the Evaluation of Learning presents a concept of evaluation that is applicable to general education in both the youth and adult sectors as well as to vocational training. Evaluation is a process that consists in making a judgment about students' learning on the basis of information that has been gathered, analyzed and interpreted, in order to make pedagogical and administrative decisions.
- The QEP calls for active participation by students, but it allows teachers to choose their pedagogical approaches according to the situation, the nature of the learning to be accomplished or the students' characteristics:
 - lecturing
 - explicit instruction
 - project-based teaching
 - inductive teaching
 - strategic instruction
 - cooperative learning
 - etc.

Appendix 1

MAINTENANCE OF INDIVIDUALIZED PATHS FOR LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

- The Ministère recognizes that individualized paths for learning constitute an organizational model that is not inconsistent with the education reform or the Policy on Special Education.
- The Ministère considers individualized paths for learning a measure that can still be implemented for students with difficulties or learning delays in order to promote success for the greatest number.

Appendix 2

The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) recognizes the fact that teachers must truly take ownership of the education reform in order for its implementation to be a success.

The March 2005 progress report to the Table de pilotage, *État de l'implantation de la réforme du curriculum dans les écoles secondaires* [State of the implementation of the curriculum reform in the secondary schools], states the following:

The implementation of the curriculum reform in secondary school cannot be seen only as a series of dates in the calendar. There is no "D-day" for the implementation of a reform of this importance, nor a uniform progression that may be observed in all schools. [Translation]

From this perspective, the following conditions should be met in order to ensure that teachers take ownership of the reform within the time frame proposed for its implementation:

- All teachers must be able to familiarize themselves with the QEP and develop their professional competencies with respect to it at their own rate.
- For teachers, understanding the subject-specific programs (subject-specific content) is a fundamental step toward mastering the QEP.
- Understanding the QEP leads to a recognition of certain needs on the part of teachers: time and resources to support learning, guidance and joint action among peers.
- In the application of the QEP, the professional autonomy of teachers in the choice of pedagogical methods and approaches to be used (lecturing, explicit instruction, teaching by objectives, inductive teaching, project-based teaching, cooperative learning, strategic instruction, etc.) continues to be recognized.

The Ministère also recognizes that the 2005-2006 year in elementary schools will have to be a time of consolidation—which does not mean moving backward or failing to act. This time should be used to analyze situations, reflect, validate certain elements of the reform and make adjustments that are deemed appropriate. Consequently, the objective during this time will be not to add any new processes or programs of new activities that could compromise this process of consolidation.

The Ministère will make any adjustments to the education reform it deems appropriate in light of the work of the committees on the reform at the elementary level (assessment of the situation, particularly as concerns the effects on students' learning) and on the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning, after the Table de pilotage has made known its views on some recommendations in this regard.

Appendix 3

THE EDUCATION REFORM: *TABLE DE PILOTAGE*

MANDATE

- To identify issues related to the implementation of the changes and any obstacles to these changes, in particular with regard to initial training and continuous professional development for teachers
- To make recommendations to the Minister regarding appropriate strategies and actions to ensure implementation through shared responsibility
- To periodically assess the implementation of the changes and propose adjustments where necessary
- In light of information collected in previous stages, to periodically assess the education reform itself and propose new avenues for reflection
- To develop mechanisms for ongoing evaluation, monitoring and adjustment of the implementation of the changes in elementary and secondary school
- To carry out any other mandate assigned by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports

The Table de pilotage may also assign some aspects of its mandate to subcommittees of the partners concerned.

COMPOSITION

Chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports

- Association des directeurs généraux des commissions scolaires (ADIGECS)
- Association des directeurs généraux des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec
- Québec English School Boards Association (QESBA)
- Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec (FCSQ)
- The associations and the federation of school principals (AQPDE, FQDE, AMDES)
- Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés
- Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE)
- Association provinciale des enseignants et enseignantes du Québec (APEQ)
- Fédération des comités de parents du Québec (FCPO)
- Association des cadres scolaires du Québec
- MELS-universities table
- MELS

