INFODOC Parents' Committee and Special Education Advisory Committee / S.E.A.C. WESTERN QUEBEC SCHOOL BOARD

The Context of Quebec's Parent's Committee

- The Parents' Committee is an advisory committee to the School Board. Each school within the Board's territory has a representative on the committee chosen from the parent members sitting on each Governing Board. A representative from the Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.) also sits on the Committee.

Role of the PARENTS COMMITTEE

- The Quebec Education Act defines the powers and responsibilities of the Parents' Committee.
- The Committee's major role consists of representing parents' interests within the School Board. The main responsibilities are:
  - to promote the participation of parents in School Board activities and committees,
  - advise the School Board on any matter the latter is required to submit to it,
  - advise the School Board on any matter conducive to the most efficient operation possible and,
  - to inform the School Board as to the needs identified by the parent representatives.
- The Parents' Committee is to work in a collegial manner.
- The Parents' Committee is to work in the students' best interests.
- The Parents' Committee encourages cooperation in the best interest of the school board.

The Composition of Parents' Committee

- Four Parent Commissioners, one for Elementary, one for Secondary, one for Kindergarten to 11 (K-11), and one from S.E.A.C. are elected from this Committee to sit on the Council of Commissioners. One Parent Commissioner is also elected to sit on other committees of the School Board, such as Executive, Transportation, S.E.A.C., Governance & Ethics, Audit, and Human Resources.
- Representation at the standing committee level is very important. It is at this level that many issues are raised, policies worked out and decisions taken for recommendation to the Council of Commissioners.

The Focus of the Parents' Committee:

- The Parents' Committee is to be consulted on the following matters:
  - the division, annexation or amalgamation of the territory of the school board
  - the School Board's strategic plan
  - the three-year plan of allocation and destination of the immovables of the School Board, the list of schools, and the deeds of establishment
  - the policy in respect to the "Continued operation or closing of schools"
  - the financial contribution policy
  - the distribution of educational services among the schools
  - the criteria referred to in section 239 for the enrollment of students in schools
  - the dedication of a school to a special project pursuant to sections 240 and the criteria for the enrollment of students in that school
  - the school calendar
  - the rules governing promotion from elementary school to secondary school or from the first cycle to the second cycle of the secondary level
  - the objectives and principles governing the allocation of subsidies, school tax proceeds and other revenues among educational institutions as well as the criteria pertaining thereto, and the objectives, principles and criteria used to determine the amount to be withheld by the School Board for its need and those of its committees
  - the learning activities established by the School Board and intended for parents.

The Context of Quebec's S.E.A.C. Committee

- S.E.A.C. is an advisory committee of the Western Québec School Board. Its mandate is to advise the school board regarding the Special Education Policy and the allocation of financial resources for delivery of services. It may also advise on the implementation of an individual student IEP (Individual Education Plan) and make recommendations to the board if needed.

The Composition of S.E.A.C. is outlined in the Education Act (s 185, 186)

- Parents of students with an IEP, representatives from the Management Team, School Board Administration, Professionals, and local health institutions make up the committee.

Voting Members:

- Parents of the students concerned (students with an IEP), designated by the Parents' Committee. [maximum of 11 parents as per WQSB procedures]
- 1 Teacher representative, designated by their Assoc
- 1 Non-teaching staff representative, designated by their Assoc
- 1 Support staff representative, designated by their Assoc.
- 1 School principal, designated by the Director General
- Up to 2 representatives of organizations which provide services to students with special needs, designated by Council.

Non-voting Members:

- The Director General or designate.
- A representative of the Council of Commissioners.

Rules of Internal Procedure (outlined in the Education Act s 185, 186,195)

- The Internal procedures adopted by the WQSB S.E.A.C. include:
  - The majority of the committee members must be parents. (up to 11 parents)
  - Internal procedures determine quorum to be 50% of the members with parent members in the majority. (8 members with 5 or more parents)
  - Must have quorum to hold an official meeting and vote on a resolution.

S.E.A.C. Meetings (outlined in the Education Act s 185, 186)

- Must have a minimum of 3 meetings per year.
- Meetings are not public unless specifically designated as such.
- Meetings must be held annually on the topics of: (1) The Organization of Services (Special Education policy), (2) the allocation of financial resources to the services intended for those students, and (3) the implementation of Individualized Education Plans.

Appointment of S.E.A.C. Members by Parent Committee / S.E.A.C.

- The parent members of S.E.A.C. are designated by The Parent Committee at the first meeting of the school year. (typically in October)
- Effective the 2016-17 school year, the process to be followed for the selection of S.E.A.C. parent members will be:
  - Any parent of a student with an IEP, who is interested in becoming a member of S.E.A.C., must submit his/her name at the General Assembly of their child's school. (held before the end of September)
  - The Governing Boards will submit the names of parents, who are interested in becoming members of S.E.A.C., to the Parent Committee.
  - The parents, whose names were submitted, will be invited to introduce themselves (in person or in writing) at the 1st Parent Committee in the event that 12 or more parents have expressed interest and elections must be held.
  - The Parent Committee members will designate the parent members who will be named to S.E.A.C.. (up to a maximum of 11 parents).
  - The (maximum 11) parent members of S.E.A.C. will be named to the Director of Complementary Services who will then invite all S.E.A.C. members to the 1st S.E.A.C. meeting.
  - The parent members will serve a 1 year mandate.

Selection of the Chair of S.E.A.C.

- The position of the Chair of S.E.A.C. must be held by 1 of the parent members. The position will be voted on by all of the S.E.A.C. members at the 1st meeting. The Chair will serve a 1 year mandate.

Selection of the EHDAA Parent Commissioner

- The position of the EHDAA Commissioner must be filled by 1 of the parent members of S.E.A.C..
- The position will be voted on by the S.E.A.C. parent members only and the name of the successful candidate will be submitted to the Parent Committee who will then advise Council.
- The EHDAA Parent Commissioner will serve a 2 year mandate on Council. Selection of the S.E.A.C. Parent Committee representative. One of the parent members of S.E.A.C. will be selected as the S.E.A.C. Parent Committee representative.

Quebec Education Act
PARENTS COMMITTEE
189. A parents' committee composed of the following persons shall be established for each school board:
(1) one representative from each school, elected by the meeting of parents pursuant to the second paragraph of section 47;
(2) one representative of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, designated by and from among the parents who are members of that committee.
A representative from a school whose child no longer attends the school may remain on the parents' committee.
The parents who are members of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities may designate a second representative as a substitute to attend and vote at meetings of the parents' committee when their representative is unable to do so.
1988, c. 84, s. 189; 1989, c. 36, s. 263; 1997, c. 47, s. 12; 1997, c. 96, s. 34.

190. Each year, before 31 October, the chair of the parents' committee or, in his absence, the secretary general of the school board shall call a meeting of the parents' committee to elect the chair of the parents' committee.
1988, c. 84, s. 190; 2008, c. 29, s. 34.

192. The functions of the parents' committee are
(1) to promote parents' participation in the activities of the school board and, for such purpose, to designate parents who shall take part in the various committees established by the school board;
(2) to give advice on any matter conducive to the most efficient operation possible of the school board;
(3) to inform the school board of the needs of parents as identified by the school representatives and by the representative of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities;
(4) to give its opinion to the school board on any matter the latter is required to submit to it.
1988, c. 84, s. 192; 1990, c. 78, s. 54; 1997, c. 96, s. 36.

193. The parents' committee shall be consulted on the following matters:
(1) the division, annexation or amalgamation of the territory of the school board;
(1.1) the school board's strategic plan and any updated version of the strategic plan;
(2) the three-year plan of allocation and destination of the immovables of the school board, the list of schools and the deeds of establishment;
(3) the policy adopted under section 212 on the continued operation or closure of schools and on other changes made to the educational services provided in a school;
(3.1) the financial contributions policy adopted under section 212.1;
(4) *(paragraph repealed)*;
(5) the distribution of educational services among the schools;
(6) the criteria referred to in section 239 for the enrollment of students in schools;
(6.1) the dedication of a school to a special project pursuant to section 240 and the criteria for the enrollment of students in that school;
(7) the school calendar;
(8) the rules governing promotion from elementary school to secondary school or from the first cycle to the second cycle of the secondary level;
(9) the objectives and principles governing the allocation of subsidies, school tax proceeds and other revenues among educational institutions as well as the criteria pertaining thereto, and the objectives, principles and criteria used to determine the amount to be withheld by the school board for its needs and those of its committees;
(10) the learning activities established by the school board and intended for parents.
1988, c. 84, s. 193; 1990, c. 8, s. 17; 1990, c. 78, s. 54; 1997, c. 47, s. 14; 1997, c. 96, s. 37; 2002, c. 63, s. 23; 2005, c. 16, s. 8; 2006, c. 51, s. 97.

S.E.A.C. AND PARENTS COMMITTE BUDGET
197. The parents' committee and the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities shall adopt their annual operating budget, see to its administration and give an account thereof to the school board.

The budget shall maintain a balance between the expenditures of each committee on the one hand and the financial resources allocated to each committee by the school board and each committee's own other revenues, on the other.

PARENT COMMISSIONERS + S.E.A.C. ELECTIONS

145. Every two years, before the first Sunday in November, the chair of the parents' committee or, in the chair's absence, the secretary general of the school board shall convene the members of the parents' committee or of the parents' central committee, as the case may be, to elect from among their members a commissioner for each of the positions provided for in paragraph 2 of section 143.

However, the commissioner representing the parents of handicapped students or students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities is elected from among the parents who are members of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

A member of the personnel of the school board may not be elected as a representative under this section.

The representative shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present.

The elected representative shall take office on the first Sunday in November following his election. His term of office shall be two years.

Within 35 days from taking office, every elected representative shall swear before the director general, or the person designated by him, to fulfill his duties faithfully and to the best of his judgment and ability.

An entry of the oath shall be made in the Minutes of Proceedings of the school board.

1988, c. 84, s. 145; 1989, c. 36, s. 261; 1997, c. 96, s. 18; 2006, c. 51, s. 93; 2008, c. 29, s. 12.

147. A commissioner representing the parents' committee whose child no longer attends a school of the school board may remain on the council of commissioners until the expiry of the commissioner's term of office.

The office of the commissioner representing the parents' committee becomes vacant in the same cases as those provided for commissioners elected under the Act respecting school elections (chapter E-2.3).

Such vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the procedure prescribed in section 145, but only for the unexpired portion of the term.

1988, c. 84, s. 147; 1997, c. 96, s. 19; 1997, c. 47, s. 7.

148. Every co-opted commissioner or commissioner representing the parents' committee shall have the same rights, powers and obligations as those prescribed for the other commissioners.

However, subject to paragraph 3 of section 143 and the third paragraph of section 143.2, the commissioner is not entitled to vote at meetings of the council of commissioners or of the executive committee, or to be appointed vice-chair of the school board.

1988, c. 84, s. 148; 1997, c. 47, s. 8; 2008, c. 29, s. 13.

2006, c. 51, a. 13.

PARENT COMMISSIONER ELIGIBILITY

20. Every person who is entitled to have his name entered on the list of electors of a school board and who, on polling day, has been domiciled in the territory of the school board for six months or more may be elected as a commissioner for that school board.

1989, c. 36, s. 20.

21. The following persons are disqualified for election to the office of school commissioner:

(1) Members of the National Assembly;

(2) Members of the Parliament of Canada;

(3) justices of any court of justice;

(3.1) the chief electoral officer and the other members of the Commission de la représentation;

(3.2) public servants, except employees within the meaning of the Labour Code (chapter C-27), of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport or of any other department who are assigned to the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport on a permanent basis;

(4) an employee of the school board;

(4.1) election officers of the school board;

(5) a person sentenced to imprisonment.

Disqualification under subparagraph 5 applies for the term of the sentence but ceases if the person obtains a pardon for the offence committed.
Employees of the Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal are disqualified for election to the office of school commissioner of any school board on the island of Montréal.
1989, c. 36, s. 21; 1990, c. 35, s. 5; 1997, c. 47, s. 60; 2002, c. 10, s. 7; 2002, c. 75, s. 33; 2005, c. 28, s. 195.

21.1. Any candidate at a previous election whose financial report or return of election expenses required under any of sections 206.10, 206.13, 209, 209.3 and 209.4 has not been transmitted within the prescribed time is ineligible until the report or return is transmitted.
2002, c. 10, s. 8.

21.2. Any candidate at a previous election who has not paid in full the debts arising from his election expenses in accordance with section 206.56 is ineligible for four years from his default.
Notwithstanding the foregoing, the ineligibility affecting an elected candidate shall cease on the day of the transmission of the financial report establishing that the debts have been paid in full where the transmission occurs before the expiry of the four-year period.
2002, c. 10, s. 8.

21.3. A person is ineligible for office as a member of the council of commissioners if he holds office as member of the council of another school board or if he is a candidate for such an office.
Any person who is already holding an office on the council of commissioners is also ineligible for office as a member of the council, except in the event of an election at which the office held by the person is open for nominations or ceases to exist.
2002, c. 10, s. 8.

21.4. A person is ineligible for office as a member of the council of commissioners if, following a judgment that has become *res judicata*, he is disqualified under section 176 of the Education Act (chapter I-13.3)

ELECTION PROCESS (PARENT + S.E.A.C. COMMISSIONERS)

1) Designation of S.E.A.C. members by the Parents Committee (deposit of the list of members)
2) Designation of a representative of S.E.A.C., by and from among the parents who are members of that committee to the Parents Committee (has a right to vote for the S.E.A.C. and all Parent Commissioners).
3) Election of parent (3) + S.E.A.C. (1) commissioners (before the first Sunday in November)
    - the chair of the parents' committee or, in the chair's absence, the secretary general of the school board shall convene the members of the parents' committee to elect from among their members a commissioner for each of the positions

Quebec Education Act
S.E.A.C. COMMITTEE
185. Every school board shall establish an advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.
The committee shall be composed of
(1) parents of the students concerned, designated by the parents' committee;
(2) representatives of the teachers, of the members of the non-teaching professional staff and of the members of the support staff, designated by the associations which represent them in their dealings with the school board and elected from among the persons who provide services to the students concerned;
(3) representatives of bodies which provide services to handicapped students or to students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, designated by the council of commissioners after consulting with those bodies;
(4) a school principal designated by the director general.
The director general or his representative shall take part in the sittings of the committee but he is not entitled to vote.
1988, c. 84, s. 185; 1990, c. 8, s. 16.

186. The council of commissioners shall determine the number of representatives from each group.

The representatives of the parents shall constitute the majority of the members of the committee.
1988, c. 84, s. 186.

187. The functions of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities are
(1) to advise the school board on a policy for the organization of educational services to handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities;
(2) to advise the school board on the allocation of financial resources to the services intended for those students.
The committee may also advise the school board on the implementation of an individualized education plan for a handicapped student or a student with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.
1988, c. 84, s. 187; 1990, c. 78, s. 37, s. 54; 1997, c. 96, s. 33.

187.1. Each year, the school board shall inform the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities of the amount of the financial resources available for services intended for those students and of the allocation of those resources in light of the policies defined by the Minister.
The school board shall report each year to the committee and the Minister on requests for reconsideration made under section 9 relating to services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.
2005, c. 43, s. 43.

Appendix 1
SUGGESTIONS FOR RULES OF INTERNAL MANAGEMENT for SCHOOLS

According to section 42 of the Education Act, a governing board is established for each school. Sections 42 to 95 of the Education Act (Appendix 1) outline the legal requirements with respect to the composition, the formation, the operation as well as the functions and powers of the governing board.

Furthermore, section 67 of the Education Act states that the governing board shall establish rules for its internal management. To this end, the (name of school) governing board has adopted the following rules:

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

2. Meetings
All meetings are conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order (see Appendix 2).*

- Regular meetings are held (must be at least 5) times per year (or once per month) from p.m. to p.m. and may be extended by resolution.
- The annual calendar of meetings is adopted with the plan of action and is distributed to all parents.
- A meeting may be adjourned to a specific date and time if it appears that important business will not be concluded within the time limit of a regular meeting.
- A special meeting may be called to consider a matter that cannot wait until the next regular meeting. A notice shall go out to the governing board members and parents 48 hours prior to the special meeting. If the governing board is unable to hold a special meeting within the time required to consider the **urgent topic**, all members will be contacted by email or telephone to state their opinions on the urgent matter. The topic **must be voted on** at the next regular meeting of the governing board. Members cannot vote by email.
- In order to provide a welcoming atmosphere for the public, the members of the governing board will have name cards placed in alphabetical order. The tables will be set up so that all members are facing the public.

3. Public Question Period
A public question period is included on the agenda at the beginning or at the end of every meeting. The period will not exceed 15 minutes and is for questions to be addressed to the Chair of the governing board only. Persons interested in making a presentation must make a request to the school principal prior to the meeting.

4. Rules of Decorum
Members of the governing board and of the public must:

- Be recognized by the Chair for the right to speak
- Address the Chair when speaking
- Show respect for the points of view of others
- Respect the right to speak of others
- Refrain from speaking out of turn
- Refrain from using profanity
- Maintain a respectful tone at all times

5. Reports
Oral reports from the school principal, commissioner or other persons will be permitted and the governing board sets aside 5 (or 10, etc.) minutes for each report.

6. Agenda

- The agenda is sent to the members (Specify delay) prior to the meeting

(by email, etc.) and is posted in the school.

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

7. Minutes of the governing board

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

8. Modifications to the Rules of Internal Management

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

APPENDIX 2
ROBERT'S RULES OR ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. Copies of these rules are available at most bookstores and can be found online.

Below are the basic elements of *Robert's Rules of Order*, used by most organizations:

1. ***Motion:*** To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action. A motion can be made by any group member ("I move that....."), not necessarily a voting member. Usually, a second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it."). After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. In most cases, a majority vote is required for the motion to pass.
2. ***To Postpone Indefinitely:*** This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed, the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone a motion under consideration.
3. ***To Amend:*** This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.
4. ***To Commit (or To Refer to a Committee):*** This is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must rule to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.
5. ***To Question (or Call for a Vote or To Limit Debate):*** To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call the question for a vote") and needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.
6. ***To Table:*** To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item being discussed.
7. ***To Adjourn:*** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

Note: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided. In smaller or more informal meetings, like a committee meeting, often only four motions are commonly used:

- To introduce (motion.)
- To change a motion (amend.)
- To adopt (accept a report without discussion.)
- To adjourn (end the meeting.)

These rules are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. They should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.

Some Tips in Parliamentary Procedure:

The following summary contains some tips on how to use ***Robert's Rules of Order:***

- **A main motion must be moved, seconded, and stated by the Chair before it is discussed.**
- **If you want to move, second, or speak to a motion,** *address the Chair.*
- **If you approve a motion as is**, *vote for it*.
- **If you disapprove a motion**, *vote against it*.
- **If you approve the idea of a motion but want to change it**, *move to amend it.*
- **If you want advice or information to help you make your decision**, *move to refer the motion to an appropriate person or committee with instructions to report back.*
- **If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly**, *move to refer the motion to an appropriate person or committee with power to act*.

- **If you feel that there the pending question(s) should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered**, *move to lay the motion on the table*.
- **If you want time to think the motion over**, *move that consideration be deferred to a certain time or date (to table)*.
- **If you think that further discussion is unnecessary**, *move to call the question for a vote*.
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a**
- **person or committee**, *move the motion be recalled*.
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted**
- **upon**, *move that it be reconsidered*.
- **If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers**, *you can move a time limit on such speeches*.
- **If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts**, *move to divide the motion*.

IN THE MEETING:

TO INTRODUCE A MOTION, when no one else has the floor, address the Chair and wait to be recognized.

- Now that you have the floor and can proceed with your motion say "I move that...". State your motion clearly.
- Another member may second your motion. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he/she is in favor of the motion.
- If there is no second, the Chair says, "The motion is not before you at this time." The motion is not lost, as there has been no vote taken.
- If there is a second, the Chair states the question by saying "It has been moved and seconded that (state the motion...), is there any discussion?"

DEBATE OR DISCUSSING THE MOTION:

- The member who made the motion is entitled to speak first.
- Every member has the right to speak in debate.
- The Chair should alternate between those "for" the motion and those "against" the motion.
- The discussion should be related to the pending motion.
- Avoid using a person's name in debate.
- All questions should be directed to the Chair.
- Unless there is a special rule providing otherwise, a member is limited to speak once to a motion.
- Asking a question or a brief suggestion is not counted in debate.
- A person may speak a second time in debate with permission.

VOTING ON A MOTION:

- Before a vote is taken, the Chair puts the question to the assembly. After the vote, the Chair states either "The motion is carried." or "The motion is denied."
- If a member is in doubt about the vote, she/he may call out "division." A division is a demand for a standing vote.
- A majority vote is more than half of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote.
- A 2/3 vote means at least 2/3 of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote.
- A tie vote is a lost vote, since it is not a majority.