BY-LAW TITLE:	BY-LAW 1: Rules of Governance for Commissioners and Committees of the Western Québec School Board Council
Date of Coming Into Force	November 29, 2023
Origin: Governance and Ethics Committee	

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

QUÉBEC EDUCATION ACT (AS IT APPLIES TO THE ENGLISH SCHOOL BOARDS)

2. APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE

The Council of Commissioners (hereinafter described as the "Council") shall administer the Western Québec School Board (hereinafter described as the "Board") in a style characterized by outward vision, principled decision-making, strategic and proactive leadership, and respect for diversity in viewpoints. Consequently, the Council shall:

2.1 Focus chiefly on expected long term outcomes for Board performance.

2.2 Monitor, analyse and support the performance of the Board, with regard to its short and long-term goals.

2.3 Inspire, direct and control the Board through the careful establishment and systematic monitoring of policies dealing with Board values and perspectives.

2.4 Require of itself and of the commissioners the self-discipline needed to govern with excellence. This will include respect for roles, for decisions of the Board, and for principles of governance.

2.5 Be accountable for the accomplishment of its obligations to:

a) The students, the parents and the community at large;
b) The internal organization of the School Board;
c) The Minister of Education of Québec;
d) Other relevant government agencies.

2.6 Involve students, parents, the staff, and the community in monitoring current performance and setting future direction.

2.7 Ensure the continuity of its governance capability by training and developing its members. Continuous development will include orientation of new members in the Council's governance process and discussion of process improvement.

2.8 Be responsible for identifying the information and resources it needs to formulate and monitor policies.

2.9 Recognise the expertise of individual commissioners to enhance the ability of Council and will not substitute individual values for the Board's values.

2.10 Be an initiator of policy as well as receiving and considering staff initiatives.

3. ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The chair shall protect the integrity of the Board's process, represent the Board to outside parties, and speak on behalf of the Board. Consequently, the chair shall:

3.1 Ensure that Council meeting agendas and discussions are limited to those issues which, according to policy, are clearly in the Council's jurisdiction.

3.2 Keep deliberations timely, fair, orderly, thorough, efficient, and limited to time and to the point.

3.3 Facilitate the vice-chair fulfilling the duties of the chair in his absence.

4. STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

In addition to the board committees established by the Education Act, Council **may** establish **additional** standing **and ad hoc** committees **(hereinafter referred to as committees)**, which are empowered to make recommendations to Council in order to expedite the conduct of Council business.

4.1 Committees prepare work and make recommendations as mandated by Council, which are consistent with Council's functions and powers as well as its long and short-term goals.

4.2 Council shall establish the structure, number of representatives and terms of the representatives for its standing committees at the first meeting or meetings of its mandate. However, Council may review the structure of its standing committees at any time.

4.3 Each committee shall establish its own operating procedures.

4.4 In the event of a vacancy occurring on a committee, this position will be filled at the earliest regular meeting of the Council. In the event of a vacancy resulting from a departure of a commissioner from the Board, the position will be filled at the earliest regular meeting following an election, to replace that commissioner.

4.5 Once Council has established a committee's structure, its mandate, composition and operational procedures will be published.

5. JOINT OR PARITY COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

The Council has representation on a number of committees and associations that are established under collective agreements or by association policies or by-laws. The role of the Council representative is to attend and participate in all meetings, guarding the interests of the Board and providing the Board's perspective to the committee or association. The representative is also expected to make regular reports.

6. MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

All board meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

6.1 Procedures for regular meetings

A week before the scheduled regular meeting of the Council, the chair and secretary general will notify commissioners and invite them to submit to them, any proposed agenda items and draft resolutions for consideration, with a copy to the administrative officer. Before all regular meetings, the secretary general, in consultation with the director general and the chair, will prepare the agenda and notice of meeting.

Only adopted minutes of committee meetings will be included in the meeting kit. Chairs of all committees must submit to the chair of Council, adopted minutes for inclusion in the Council kit, with a copy to the secretary general and administrative officer.

The Council kit shall be forwarded to all commissioners no later than the Friday prior to the Council meeting.

The order of business at all regular meetings, unless changed by resolution, will be as follows:

a) Before starting a meeting, the presiding officer (chair or vice-chair) will ensure that a quorum is present. A majority of the members entitled to vote constitutes a quorum of the council of commissioners. (s. 160, Ed Act). Members are asked to notify the chair, secretary general and administrative officer without delay should they be unable to attend the meeting. If a quorum has not been made within a ½ hour of the appointed starting time, the meeting will be adjourned until the next regular meeting date, or until another meeting is called.

b) If a quorum is present, the presiding officer will call the meeting to order.

c) The agenda will be adopted. A change to the prescribed order of business may be proposed by any commissioner or the director general and will require majority approval, without debate.

d) Unless changes to the prescribed order of business are approved, the following will be addressed:

- Public participation

- Approval of minutes of previous meeting
- Chairman's remarks
- Director general's report
- Committee reports
- Correspondence
- Business Arising

6.2 Adjournment

All meetings will be adjourned **3** hours after they start unless a resolution is passed by a two-thirds majority to extend the time of adjournment.

6.3 Procedures for public participation

All individuals or groups wishing to ask questions and/or make statements during this period are asked to submit a request to the secretary general.

Those who have officially submitted a request to speak are summoned to do so by the chair. These individuals or groups must address the chair.

The chair may respond with a brief answer or direct the questions to another Board member.

The chair may decline to comment if:

a) It pertains to a case whose outcome is pending in the courts (or in another organization with a judicial capacity) or to a case that is being investigated.

b) It refers to the works of the Board or one of its committees that has not yet been submitted to the Council.

c) It pertains to a private or confidential matter.

d) Responding to the presentation requires a professional opinion.

The public participation period should not lead to a debate. Any issues requiring further discussion may be placed on the agenda of a future board meeting by the commissioners, the director general or the secretary general.

During the public participation period, it is expected that all interactions will take place in a calm, orderly, and respectful manner.

The public will not be allowed to raise issues before or after the public participation period.

Any person or group wishing to submit documents to the Council of Commissioners may do so during the public participation period.

5.4 Hybrid Meetings (In-person and Virtual Meeting Options for Commissioners)

Commissioners may opt to attend meetings virtually or in person unless a special meeting is called that requires in-person attendance. Further details can be found in Annex 2 – Hybrid Meetings.