COMMISSION SCOLAIRE CENTRAL QUÉBEC
CENTRAL QUÉBEC SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY ON INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO DEMOCRACY
(Adopted April 12, 2013)

1. Objectives of the Policy

   The purpose of this policy is to promote the concept of democracy for all students, to promote, support and reinforce the importance of student participation in activities related to democracy in the schools and centre.

2. Legal References

   Sections 42, 51, 96.5, 96.6, 96.7, 102 and 211.1 of the Education Act. (R.S.Q, ch. I-13.3)

3. Application

   This policy is intended for all students in the schools and centre with the support of school and centre staff.

4. Usage of the masculine gender

   The masculine gender is used in this policy without any discrimination and for the sole purpose of simplifying the text.

5. Principles

   5.1 To promote the development of specific competencies and qualities, such as a sense of responsibility, autonomy, belonging, respect, commitment, critical thinking and creativity;

   5.2 To educate students on the roles and responsibilities of the schools and centre and the School Board;

   5.3 To generate a desire among Central Québec students to play an active role in the democratic processes that exist within their schools and centre and to become involved in the decision-making that directly affects them;

   5.4 To develop ties and promote dialogue between students and the Council of Commissioners;

   5.5 To promote the development of students' interpersonal, social and political skills in order to help them become socially responsible citizens and to engage them in the democratic life of their school or centre.

6. <u>Introducing Students to Democracy in Schools and Centres</u>

The purpose of this section is to express the expectations of the School Board with respect to introducing students to democracy in our schools and centre, taking into consideration the students' age level and level of instruction.

6.1 *Elementary Level*

Elementary schools are encouraged to elect a student committee or council. Positive leadership skills, a sense of individual and collective responsibility and an awareness and understanding of how democracy works can begin to be developed at an early age. The interaction of school life and the community served by the school plays an important role in defining elementary students' view of a democratic society.

Schools may identify other opportunities in order to encourage more students to participate, become involved in the decision-making process and develop leadership abilities. A few examples of areas where students could be involved are: nutrition, the environment, graduation planning, entrepreneurship, behaviour issues.

6.2 *Secondary Level*

The Education Act stipulates that every secondary school is required to have a student committee or council for students in the second cycle. The School Board encourages secondary schools to include students from both cycles in the student committee or council. The existence of a student committee or council provides opportunities for students to assume leadership roles, to experience the results of positive action and to understand the consequences of inaction.

The student committee or council represents the link between students and school administration, school staff and the governing board. It provides an opportunity for students to learn how to initiate projects, debate ideas, respect the opinions of others, choose strategies and experience each step of the decision making process. In addition, students will learn to negotiate, collaborate and compromise, and acquire leadership skills.

6.3 *Adult and Vocational Education*

The School Board encourages the Eastern Québec Learning Centre to elect a student committee or council. The benefits outlined above apply to the Learning Centre.

7.   <u>Introduction to Democracy at the School Board</u>

The purpose of this section is to set out how the School Board will encourage student participation in the democratic process at the School Board level.

7.1   *Participation*

The members of the Council of Commissioners welcome the opportunity to hear directly from the students and encourage students to attend regular meetings and to participate.

To this end, the agenda for all regular meetings will contain the following two agenda items:
- Question period for students;
- Correspondence from students.

7.2   *Information*

In order to facilitate participation, the Secretary General will send the calendar of regular meetings of the Council of Commissioners to the principal of every school and centre at the beginning of the school year.

In September of each year, the school and centre principals will forward the calendar of meetings to the student committee or council. He will inform the students that they may communicate in writing with the Council of Commissioners and that they may attend regular meetings either in person or by video-conference, subject to the following processes.

A representative of a student committee or council who wishes to address the Council of Commissioners must first inform the school/centre principal who will guide him in the preparation of the presentation. The school/centre principal will communicate with the Secretary General to ensure that the subject to be addressed falls within the purview of the Council of Commissioners. It is preferable that an elementary level student be accompanied by an adult to support him. In the case of an intervention that does not fall within the purview of the Council of Commissioners, the student representative will be referred to the department best suited to respond.

In the event that a student representative prefers to address the Council of Commissioners in writing, the school/centre principal will guide the student in the preparation of the presentation. The school/centre principal will communicate with the Secretary General to ensure that the correspondence is deposited with the Council of Commissioners.

8.   <u>Review of the Policy</u>

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Director General in collaboration with the Secretary General.

9.   <u>Coming into Force</u>

This Policy comes into force on the date of its adoption.   2013-04-12